

Protestors scrutinize security, agenda at Governor's Mansion

AUSTIN (AP) — Texas Gov. George W. Bush's security detail is under orders to arrest protesters at the Governor's Mansion more quickly, according to several activists who have been detained or witnessed arrests in recent months. Protesters contend that the governor, who is in exploratory fundraising for a possible presidential bid, is squelching political criticism around the mansion to tidy

his national image. "They've got a new game in play there," environmental activist Rick Abraham told the *Austin American-Statesman*. "I've been at and seen no telling how many demonstrations at the Governor's Mansion over the years" but never witnessed Department of Public Safety troopers so willing to make arrests. One environmental group, Tex-

ans United Education Fund, prepared today to test the resolve of DPS troopers who protect the governor, the mansion and nearby Capitol. The environmentalists want to return to the scene where one of their members was arrested earlier in the year. Abraham was handcuffed on March 29 while on the sidewalk in front of the mansion near downtown and jailed for 12 hours for blocking

an entrance, which is a Class B misdemeanor under Texas law. But DPS officers deny any stepped-up enforcement. "The rules haven't changed," O.K. Elision, the DPS major in charge of Capitol Police, told the newspaper. Instead, troopers say, there is increased concern for protesters' safety and that of others walking near the mansion as the historic

building undergoes renovation. Bush announced this month that he has raised more than \$7 million for his presidential exploratory committee in advance of a possible 2000 bid. But the governor did not ask for the tighter security, according to spokesman Scott McClellan. "This was a decision by the DPS," said McClellan. However, critics of the stricter

mansion perimeter that at least 18 people arrested for demonstrating their First Amendment rights on public sidewalk entrance. The DPS does not have statistics for the mansion perimeter, DPS spokesman Scott McClellan said, so it is impossible to compare 1999 arrests with

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