

HYPOCRISY AT ITS BEST

On Friday, March 23rd, 2007, President Bush discussed the Iraq War Emergency Supplemental Funding Bill. In reviewing the transcript, there are remarkable similarities between his criticisms of the actions of Congress regarding his emergency war spending bill and educators' criticisms of his actions with NCLB. It is amazing how the President and his spin-masters like Karl Rove fail to see the parallels. As you're reading below, you'll find actual comments from President Bush's speech on the war spending bill located on the left side; you'll find the educator's perspective using almost identical language on the right side.

<u>President Bush's Commentary re: Congressional Mandates for the Iraq War</u>	<u>An Educator's Reality: President Bush's NCLB</u>
<i>"Brings us no closer to getting our troops the resources they need to do their job"</i>	<i>Brings us no closer to getting our teachers the resources they need to do their jobs</i>
<i>"[Congress] voted to substitute their judgment for that of our military commanders on the ground"</i>	<i>Congress voted to substitute their judgment for that of our education professionals in the classrooms</i>
<i>"Abdicated its responsibility by passing a war spending bill that has no chance of becoming law"</i>	<i>President Bush and Congress abdicated responsibility by passing an education bill that has no chance of improving public education</i>
<i>"The Purpose of the emergency war spending bill I requested was to provide our troops with vital funding."</i>	<i>The purpose of NCLB should have been to actually provide our schools, students and teachers with vital funding</i>
<i>"They set rigid restrictions that will require an army of lawyers to interpret"</i>	<i>They set rigid restrictions that will require an army of lawyers to interpret</i>
<i>"They set an arbitrary date for withdrawal without regard for conditions on the ground"</i>	<i>They set an arbitrary date for proficiency goals without regard for conditions in the classroom</i>
<i>"This bill has too much pork, too many conditions, and an artificial timetable for withdrawal"</i>	<i>This law has too little funding, too many unreachable mandates, and an artificial timetable to achieve student proficiency</i>
<i>"It delays the delivering of vital resources for our troops"</i>	<i>It delays the delivery of vital resources to our public schools</i>
<i>"The majority in the House has shown it is willing to undermine the gains our troops are making on the ground"</i>	<i>President Bush and Congress have shown they are willing to undermine the gains our teachers and students are making in the classroom</i>
<i>"Democrats want to make clear that they oppose the war in Iraq. They have made their point."</i>	<i>President Bush and Congress want to make clear that they oppose funding public education. They have made their point.</i>
<i>"These Democrats believe that the longer they can delay funding for our troops, the more likely they are to force me to accept restrictions on our commanders, an artificial timetable for withdrawal, and their pet spending projects"</i>	<i>President Bush believes that the longer he can withhold funding for public schools, the more likely they, along with their students and teachers, are to fail and be replaced by his pet voucher, charter school, and privatization projects.</i>
<i>"If Congress does not approve the emergency funding for our troops by April the 15th, our men and women will face significant disruptions"</i>	<i>If President Bush and Congress fail to provide significant funding for our public schools, students and teachers will face significant disruptions</i>
<i>"Our men and women in uniform should not have to worry that politicians in Washington will deny them the funds and the flexibility they need to win"</i>	<i>Our public school students and teachers should not have to worry that politicians in Washington will deny them the funds and the flexibility they need to succeed.</i>
<i>"I expect Congress to do its duty and fund our troops."</i>	<i>We expect the President and Congress to do their duty and fund our schools.</i>

The point of this article is not at all to question those who align themselves with the Republican party, or to bolster those who identify as Democrats. It's not to make a statement about the Iraq war and what should or should not be done. The point is that we have an awful education law that is undermining public education as we know it – it doesn't matter to which party you belong. It is an absolute double standard for the President of the United States to make the claims he is making regarding Congress's actions on funding the war while he does exactly the same things to public education. We have a law that sets out unreachable goals. We have a law that sets up artificial timelines. We have a law that fails to provide adequate resources. We have a law that lacks funding to even attempt to achieve what has been set before us. How would the President expect Congress to act considering the example he has set?