

The federal government's lack of enforcement to confirm that the racial and ethnic makeup of Head Start participation matches that of the community.

Even though Angelica Jones' 6-year-old son attended Head Start two years ago and her younger daughter has been eligible to do so as well, she is patiently waiting for a spot in the program.

"I think I got lucky the last time because I got in with no problems," said Jones, a stay-at-home mom who visited several north Fort Worth Head Start centers for availability earlier this week.

"I know there's a long waiting list and there are several of us who go to different [centers] to check for any spots every week."

NCLR, Gonzalez's group, hasn't officially opposed Bush's proposed changes. And although he said the bill doesn't outline a specific plan to increase Hispanic participation "by even one child," he welcomes some of the recommendations.

"The bill is by no means a perfect bill, but does allow for better assessment of communities that make sure the people in most need are the ones being served," he said.

Gonzalez said that assessment could increase Hispanic participation in areas with large or emerging Hispanic populations like Fort Worth.

Still, Whitcamp said that in the long run, the bill would hinder services in Fort Worth because the state would use some of its monies to help other state-funded children programs like CHIPS, that are struggling for a budget.

Handing over Head Start control to the states would further diminish funds by creating an additional filter of overhead costs, said Whitcamp, who oversees 40 centers throughout the county.

"We have been making the argument about our kids being underserved for years," Lopez said.

"This is not a new issue for us."

IRAQ'S WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I am here tonight to talk about something that is truly scary, the President's credibility gap. The fact that Members of Congress, the American people, and our international allies can no longer trust the evidence President Bush uses to justify war is a terrible threat to his credibility and, therefore, to America's security.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will remind Members that it is not in order to question the credibility of the President.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Do not take my word for it. Listen to one of my constituents, Roy, from San Rafael. He writes:

I was one of those who, traumatized by 9/11, trusted our government to lead us down the right path based on indisputable evidence and sound judgment. I supported their decision to go to war. I deserve to know if I was duped.

Mr. Speaker, the fact is that many people in this country are faced with a similar and terrible dilemma. Are they

to believe whether or not the administration lied to them? Are they to believe that the White House is inept, that they based a decision to send young Americans to die on faulty information?

Another constituent of mine, William, from Sebastopol, wrote about what President Bush's untruths meant to him:

I love my country but I am not very proud of it right now. This administration must answer for their deception. Business as usual is not acceptable.

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And Reede from Forest Knolls, California, sums up exactly why the White House must talk about these untruths and their unwillingness to come clean about them:

There is nothing more essential to democracy than information. The administration's calculated disinformation campaign about Iraq's weapons of mass destruction is a direct attack upon our most cherished democratic values. Such flagrant contempt for the right of the people to control their government is unacceptable.

After September 11, Mr. Speaker, we all wanted to trust. We wanted to give our administration the benefit of the doubt. However, it is increasingly obvious that it is either not worthy of that trust, or it is simply not trustworthy. Either way, the administration must be held accountable for the untruths that came out of their mouths.

Don and Pam, two of my constituents from Santa Rosa, write,

One of the Bush administration's favorite words is accountability. But because of their obsession with secrecy and control, they have successfully avoided making themselves accountable. Reasons for going to war in Iraq and, beyond that, the Bush foreign policy, including preemptive strikes and unilateral action, demands accountability, accountability through thorough investigation.

Mr. Speaker, Americans want answers. They want answers from their administration, and they are getting the runaround.

My constituent, Patrick from Sebastopol, writes,

The administration's repeated use of the phrase, "attempts to rewrite history" is unbelievable. They are the ones attempting to rewrite history.

The simple fact is that the American people demand answers, and it is now up to Congress to get them.

Landis, from my own hometown, Petaluma, says it perfectly:

It is very important to be able to trust one's government. We don't always need to agree, but we do need to believe that our government is working in our best interests. Even if the current administration is able to fool many Americans, it is not fooling the world. Until an independent commission investigates possible manipulations of intelligence data, the world and, indeed, many Americans, will not be able to trust that the Bush administration is working in America's best interest.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for a meaningful investigation into the administration's statements. The people I

work for in Marin and Sonoma Counties and Americans across the country are demanding an investigation, and Congress must carry it out. I am pleased to add my voice to those of my constituents and join the gentleman from California (Mr. WAXMAN) in his call for a bipartisan investigation into weapons of mass destruction.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GINGREY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. GUTKNECHT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GUTKNECHT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

AMERICA CALLS FOR THE TRUTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, tonight I rise to acknowledge the groundswell of support for an investigation into whether or not the Bush administration made its case for war against Iraq. As proof of the growing demand for honest answers from the Bush administration, we need look no further than the support around the country to create an independent commission to investigate whether the Bush administration manipulated and distorted evidence to take the country to war in Iraq.

Now, over 300,000 people have signed this petition and hundreds of thousands of people commented. Of course, I received thousands of letters from my own district, but tonight I would like to read into the RECORD just some of the over 24,000 comments received from outside of my district in the State of California.

The credibility of this administration in front of the American public and the world at large is our most precious commodity. We must know the truth as soon as possible.

This came from Arcadia, California.

I am writing to you as a concerned citizen of this country. I believe that we are heading down a very dangerous and destructive path that is being led by the Bush administration. This country is no more special than all of the countries in the world, and American citizens are just as important as Iraqi citizens. Our actions are not preventing hostility, but I believe it is creating more violence and anger towards America. It is the outrage that stems from within that compels me to write to you and ask you to look into this matter and not merely dismiss it as another policy move.

Again, Arcadia, California.

This one comes from Dublin, California.

As a member of a military family, I am deeply concerned any time a President chooses to send our Armed Forces into danger zones. I have been appalled by the growing evidence that the President may have lied about the reasons for invading and conquering Iraq and fear that many lives may have been lost because of deliberate falsehoods.

From Pleasanton, California:

The credibility of the United States is at stake. Our new preemptive war policy is incredibly dangerous and will result in many innocent lives lost until decisions for war are based on reality. Invading another country should be a very serious act. We did it. Our military performed well. But our President still needs to remain accountable to the United States citizens. Please ensure full disclosure is made on this matter.

By the way, this individual goes on to say, I am a Republican, but I still think that the Presidency must be accountable to people.

Another one from Pleasanton, California:

Leading America into its first war based on a preemptive strike doctrine and against strong international opposition was the most serious act President Bush has committed. Now there is serious doubt that his justification was honest. A democracy can only function if all of these suspicions can be examined and proven either correct or wrong. You can only keep America a democracy if you support the establishment of this commission.

Again, from Pleasanton, California:

Nothing could be less patriotic, more disregarding of the safety of our troops or more injurious to our national security than invading a country under false pretenses. If the Bush administration lied to us, we have a right, and a need, to know.

Pleasanton.

Here is one from Lodi, California:

Our involvement in Iraq has caused the region to become even more unstable. We owe it to ourselves and the world to investigate this matter and put every effort forth to unearth the truth. President Clinton was impeached for lying about sexual involvement with an aide. Evidence is coming to light that Bush and his administration have lied to the world and, to date, little is being done about it. I ask you, which infraction is more serious and warrants our time and money for investigation?

Again, Lodi, California.

Here is one from Tracy, California, Mr. Speaker:

The responsibility of sending young men and women into harm's way should not be taken lightly. It is to this end that I ask you to support a review of pre-war intelligence. I ask this as a former soldier and a member of the district of Tracy, California. I live on Central Avenue which runs through the downtown of Tracy and was lined with yellow banners embroidered with the names of our community's sons and daughters sent to fight in Iraq. You represent those men and woman, they wrote to their Member of Congress, and their families and, he said, you owe it to them and to us to investigate why exactly they are fighting this war. Yes, it is still a war.

Here is one from Thousand Oaks, California, in southern California:

Our country was taken to war with Iraq on the premise that we were under imminent threat by Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. Now, months later, after many deaths on both sides, we have yet to find any real evidence of these weapons that the administration had such "hard evidence" of. In order for the people's confidence in this administration to be restored, I am asking you to let us know the truth by endorsing an independent probe into this matter.

Here is one from San Diego:

If we continue to make war based on misinformation, we will regret it as we did in Vietnam. What is done is done in Iraq, but

we should be honest enough to look at the truth.

Now, here is another one from La Mesa, California, in southern California:

Our system is based on the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Once we feel that we are betrayed by our leaders and that they are not telling us the truth, the whole system might collapse. We paid millions of dollars to investigate the previous President because he lied about his private life. Therefore, it is worth our effort and money to investigate the current President and find out if he lied about taking our country to war. Certainly we need to know how the President used false evidence in his State of the Union speech to make his case for war. Please form an investigation committee and bring out the truth.

Here is one, Mr. Speaker, from Huntington Beach, California, again in southern California:

Isn't it time we got to the bottom of this embarrassment? It is obvious at this point that there were serious distortions given to the American people regarding the necessity for war with Iraq. As a matter of fact, it might be more important to look at why the distortions were necessary at all. Why was it so important to go to war with Iraq that lies had to be used? A lot of time, money, and lies have been spent on this charade and it seems, in due course, that the Bush administration should receive the same grilling that Tony Blair has gotten over the same issues.

Mr. Speaker, believe me, these individuals throughout the State of California believe that this is a matter of national security and national integrity to explore these questions. They want an independent commission to establish an investigation.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would remind Members that it is not in order to accuse the President of lying or stating intentional falsehoods, even by innuendo. Further, a Member may not read into the RECORD the remarks of others if those remarks would be out of order as spoken by the Member.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. PENCE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SOLIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. SOLIS addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ORDER OF BUSINESS

MR. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take the time of the gentlewoman from California.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Washington?

There was no objection.

MANY REASONS TO QUESTION ACTIONS IN IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. McDERMOTT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, last night I could not sleep. Maybe it was the heat, or maybe I was just trying to make some sense of the situation we are in before Mr. Blair arrives in Washington, D.C.

Mr. Blair is in a lot of trouble at home, and Mr. Bush is in a little bit of trouble here.

There are many, many reasons to question our actions in Iraq, but, for some reason, there is a huge focus right now on the Niger uranium claim. So far, nothing the administration said about Saddam's gallons of nerve gas or smallpox or Anthrax or missiles or any other dangers we were supposed to be facing from Iraq have been found to be true. But until the last rock in Iraq has been turned over, the administration can say it is continuing to try hard to confirm the justifications for war it offered just a few months ago.

The uranium claim is different. I think that we are focusing on this claim because it was clear and concrete and seemingly supported by evidence and details. The President told us, "The British government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa."

In retrospect, the administration figures have claimed that the President did not claim that Hussein was trying to buy uranium but only noted the British claim. Leaving aside how truly pathetic that kind of desperate parsing is, the statement was still false. The British government has learned no such thing. The "information" the British relied on came from one source, or perhaps two.

First, there were some crudely forged papers. ABC News has reported that the papers were created by an underpaid African diplomat who was stationed in Rome and sold to the Italian Secret Service which, in good NATO ally fashion, passed the information on. We may know more about that soon, because the Italian judicial system opened an investigation into the matter earlier today.

The other source is perhaps the French. In early April The Washington Post noted that Western intelligence officials were fingering France as the country that circulated the fake papers.

Let us step back a moment from this who-did-what-to-whom and look at the actual claim. Was there anything believable about it? If the documents had been really top-notch forgeries instead