

Adam Kenne, Gardner-Edgerton High School, 16, 110, Gardner, KS.

Becky Kenton, Mill Valley High School, 18, 225, Shawnee, KS.

Hunter Kiely, Blue Valley West High School, 16, 150, Overland Park, KS.

Jenny Kim, Shawnee Mission South High School, 17, 120, Overland Park, KS.

Danielle Kopp, St. Thomas Aquinas, 15, 92, Leawood, KS.

Kelly Kutchko, Shawnee Mission North High School, 16, 75, Merriam, KS.

Andrew Lacy, Blue Valley Northwest High School, 18, 200, Overland Park, KS.

Max Lehman, Blue Valley High School, 16, 250, Leawood, KS.

Ethan Levine, Pleasant Ridge Middle School, 14, 250, Overland Park, KS.

Emily Limpic, Shawnee Mission East High School, 17, 75, Shawnee Mission, KS.

Blake Lindsay, Olathe South High School, 18, 100, Olathe, KS.

John Liu, Blue Valley High School, 16, 262, Overland Park, KS.

Magdalena May, Olathe North High School, 15, 300, Olathe, KS.

Greg May, Olathe North High School, 17, 300, Olathe, KS.

Emily Minion, Blue Valley West High School, 18, 155, Overland Park, KS.

Jennifer Moore, Shawnee Mission North High School, 17, 150, Overland Park, KS.

Josh Morgan, Gardner-Edgerton High School, 16, 135, Olathe, KS.

Kate Motter, Shawnee Mission West High School, 17, 300, Shawnee Mission, KS.

Rhea Muchalla, Shawnee Mission North High School, 17, 50, Shawnee, KS.

Caroline Mueller, St. Thomas Aquinas, 15, 75, Leawood, KS.

Katheryn Mueller, St. Thomas Aquinas, 17, 100, Leawood, KS.

Lindsay Murphy, Olathe South High School, 18, 265, Olathe, KS.

Katie Murray, Blue Valley North High School, 17, 325, Leawood, KS.

Kasey Nelson, St. Thomas Aquinas, 18, 100, Overland Park, KS.

Hannah Oberkrom, Shawnee Mission West High School, 18, 90, Shawnee, KS.

Miranda Oley, Pioneer Trail Junior High, 14, 10, Olathe, KS.

Jessica Pohl, Blue Valley Northwest High School, 100, 100, Overland Park, KS.

Justin Pohl, Blue Valley Northwest High School, 75, 75, Overland Park, KS.

Ashley Racca, Olathe North High School, 18, 100+, Olathe, KS.

Justice Randolph, Shawnee Mission South High School, 16, 100, Overland Park, KS.

Jennifer Ray, Spring Hill High School, 17, 80, Olathe, KS.

Kelly Regan, Blue Valley West High School, 15, 100, Overland Park, KS.

Brendan Reilly, St. Thomas Aquinas, 18, 200, Overland Park, KS.

Chris Rhodes, Spring Hill High School, 17, 300, Spring Hill, KS.

Cassie Rhodes, Spring Hill Middle School, 14, 200, Spring Hill, KS.

Amber Lynn Roan, Shawnee Mission North High School, 17, 158, Shawnee, KS.

Amy Schneider, Olathe South High School, 18, 165, Olathe, KS.

Amanda Sherraden, Olathe South High School, 18, 159, Olathe, KS.

Stephen Stahl, Home School, 16, 110, Overland Park, KS.

Jonathan Stahl, Home School, 16, 110, Overland Park, KS.

Nate White, Home School, 16, 175, Leawood, KS.

Mary Zima, Notre Dame de Sion, 17, 60, Leawood, KS.

EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT FOR DEFENSE, THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERROR, AND TSUNAMI RELIEF, 2005

SPEECH OF

**HON. XAVIER BECERRA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 16, 2005*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1268) making emergency supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2005, and for other purposes:

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Chairman, while I will support the bill before the House today, I will do so with deep and serious reservations.

In October of 2002, I cast an important vote to deny the President authorization to send American troops into Iraq to strike unilaterally. I thought then, and I know now, that his actions were not the best course for our nation.

One year later in October of 2003, I made yet another testing decision to oppose legislation, which on the one hand allocated \$87 billion to support American operations in Iraq but on the other hand lacked accountability for these taxpayer dollars and placed the mounting cost of rebuilding Iraq and Afghanistan squarely on the shoulders of our children and grandchildren.

The apprehensions I had then about sending America's sons and daughters into harm's way in Iraq and about signing a blank check for this military adventure, have now materialized. Congress is now attempting to address the glaring consequences of an ill-advised, preemptive and unilateral military action through this third emergency supplemental appropriation of \$81.4 billion. To date—and I say "to date" because there is no end in sight—President Bush has directed over \$275 billion of taxpayers' monies away from schools, healthcare, Social Security, and the like to pay for his decision to go to war in Iraq.

Today we know that President Bush's premise for commencing a war against Iraq—the alleged weapons of mass destruction possessed by Saddam Hussein—was not true.

The Bush Administration's confident prediction of a quick and easy victory followed by a quick return home for our troops has become a nightmare. And now the Administration refuses to commit to a time-table for the withdrawal of our troops from Iraq.

The Bush Administration's estimate that reconstruction in Iraq would cost between \$1 and \$2 billion and could be financed by Iraqi oil revenues has now turned into a reconstruction quagmire. We hear more about military contractor Halliburton's billing excesses and contract abuses than about any re-built school or hospital.

In terms of accountability, the Inspector General has reported that almost \$9 billion in funds designated for reconstruction efforts have been mishandled and remain unaccounted for. The FY 2005 Defense Appropriations Act passed in July of 2004 instructed the Department of Defense to submit two accountability reports to Congress, one by October 31, 2004 and the other by January 1, 2005. In these reports, the Pentagon must provide a comprehensive review of all military oper-

ations, including reconstruction and military readiness, and provide detailed cost estimates for these operations. Congress has yet to receive either report or any concrete information about the future costs of this war.

I still do not believe that our troops should have been in Iraq under these conditions, facing these obstacles virtually alone, fighting battles for which the Pentagon did not properly plan or prepare. But with over 150,000 of America's brave men and women still in Iraq, it would be difficult to cast a vote against providing the much-needed funds that this supplemental provides to them. Far too many of our soldiers have died and remain in harm's way because of their superiors' miscalculations. As long as our troops remain in harm's way, it is our duty to provide them all of the equipment, tools, vehicles, weapons, and benefits that they need and deserve to protect themselves and give democracy a chance in Iraq.

Democrats have fought hard to include accountability measures in this legislation, to extract from it extraneous and unnecessary projects, and to focus America's precious taxpayer dollars on resources for our nation's veterans and troops. This bill, unlike previous Bush Administration requests, allocates the dollars for armor and equipment that our troops on the ground need if they must patrol the streets and roads of Iraq. Democrats also fought hard to cure deficiencies in the bill which put at risk increased death benefits and life insurance for the families of our fallen soldiers.

Unfortunately, despite \$9 billion of unaccounted funds, an amendment by Mr. TIERNEY of Massachusetts that would have provided \$5 million to establish a select committee to investigate reconstruction efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan was defeated by my Republican colleagues. The Bush Administration, it seems, will continue to spend money without adequate oversight and accountability.

Additionally, the bill includes funding for extraneous non-emergency projects that would more properly be addressed through the regular appropriations process. While some of these projects were removed on the House floor through the amendment process, funding for unrelated military construction and \$4.6 billion for an Army "transformation" plan remain.

Most blatant of all the extraneous provisions are those of H.R. 418, the REAL ID Act, which the Republican procedural rule has allowed to be attached to this supplemental following its passage. The immigration policies of our nation deserve a proper and thorough debate, and legislation that provides emergency funding for our troops, for humanitarian aid, and for foreign assistance is not the appropriate vehicle to enact the sweeping, controversial immigration policy embodied in HR 418.

I will support H.R. 1268 because of the critical funds and resources that it provides to our troops and their families. However, as this bill moves forward I will work with my colleagues to ensure that my concerns are addressed in the final version of the bill that comes back for final approval after joint House and Senate consideration. I do not foreclose the possibility of voting against the final version of this legislation should it come back in a form departing further from its core purpose of focusing on our men and women in uniform. These are the tough decisions, and they must be made in the best interest of the American people.