

People may not always believe...

<http://daytondemocrats.ods.org>

It was the third time we'd asked him to clean his room. "I'll do it, Dad," he said, somehow ignoring that he'd said the same thing before and the room was still a pigsty. Neither my wife or I said anything, we just pointed to the truism on the poster.

People may not always believe what you say, but they'll always believe what you do.

It's a bit of conventional wisdom that any race involving a sitting president revolves around that president's record. Fair enough. All the quotations below come from George W. Bush.

"If you overspend, it creates a fundamental weakness in the foundation of economic growth." Less than six months later, Bush's budget was going to put us \$300,000,000,000 in debt. That number of zeroes makes our mortgages look like chump change. In contrast, Kerry wants to cut the deficit in half during his first four years in office, while making sure that normal people get good paying jobs – the jobs we've lost under Bush.

SPENDING NEEDED	IRAQ SPENDING EQUIVALENT
Amount needed for basic security upgrades for subway and commuter trains in large cities: \$6 BILLION	20 days
Bush budget allocation for train security: \$100 MILLION	8 hours
Amount needed to equip all U.S. airports with machines that screen baggage for explosives: \$3 BILLION	10 days
Bush budget allocation for baggage-screening machines: \$400 MILLION	32 hours
Amount needed for security upgrades at 361 U.S. ports: \$1.1 BILLION	4 days
Bush budget allocation for port security: \$210 MILLION	17 hours
Amount needed to buy radiation portals for U.S. ports to detect dirty bombs in cargo: \$290 MILLION	23 hours
Bush budget allocation for radiation portals: \$43 MILLION	3 hours
Amount needed to help local firefighters prepare for terrorist attacks: \$36.8 BILLION	122 days
Bush budget allocation for firefighter grants: \$500 MILLION	40 hours
Amount needed to get local emergency medical crews ready for terrorist attacks: \$1.4 BILLION	5 days
Bush budget allocation for emergency medical training grants prior to eliminating program altogether: \$50 MILLION	4 hours

"We...should and must provide the best care for [our troops] who [are] willing to put their life in harm's way." That very day, Bush's administration cut off medical access for over 150,000 vets. Our veterans sacrificed for our sake – we owe them. Yet paying them back for their service is "discretionary". Kerry will make sure that it's mandatory that we repay their service – and take care of our current servicemembers and their families.

"We're dealing with first-time responders to make sure they've got what's needed to be able to respond." Bush's "new" grants tried to get a third of their money by taking money away from already existing – and needed – funds. Robbing Peter to pay Paul doesn't convince our creditors; why should we let Bush boonswaggle us? Kerry will close this gap in our safety and security by providing direct assistance to police officers and firefighters to make sure they have what they need to protect us.

"Clear Skies...will significantly reduce smog and mercury emissions, as well as stop acid rain." Bush's misnamed "Clear Skies" law lets polluters keep poisoning the air for another ten years, keeps the states from fighting for our right to breathe, and allows outdated plants to keep poisoning us indefinitely. Throughout his career, John Kerry has fought to clean up toxic waste sites, to keep our air and water clean; he'll keep protecting our air and water for us and our children.

Is Bush is strong on security? Look at the chart. Bush has made us weaker by not giving enough funding to what we need to keep us safe

from terrorists. It's a Republican Congress right now, folks – there's no excuse. All for the same price as 170 days of Bush's unneeded war. A report from the U.S. Iraq Survey Group reports that Iraq didn't even have "programs", let alone WMD. Why not? Iraq didn't develop WMD because of the UN inspections and embargo that Bush bashed before going it alone. Bush's war has diverted money from Afghanistan and our troops there. Osama's escaped, and Afghanistan has largely turned into a lawless land of warlords, re-emerging as the world's leading source of opium and heroin. Our country has been made more vulnerable to terrorists and drug dealers thanks to Bush's war. Kerry will change this by using our intelligence and troops wisely and by working with our allies instead of against them. Bush's bullying bravado has weakened us; with Kerry at the helm, we will defend ourselves from a position of strength with the support of our allies.

The poster we used with our son is handy this election, as we look at what Bush has said... and not done. I'd like to finish by correcting another truism, or bit of conventional wisdom.

Don't change a horse in mid-stream – unless it's not taking you towards the shore.

Quotations are from 9/16/02, 1/17/03, 3/27/02, & 4/22/02 Other sources are:

US State Department report <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/pgtrpt/2003/33771.htm>

US House Appropriations Committee http://www.house.gov/appropriations_democrats/caughonfilm.htm

The Guardian, 9/18/04 <http://politics.guardian.co.uk/iraq/story/0,12956,1307530,00.html>

The Washington Times 8/11/03 <http://www.washtimes.com/national/20030811-100200-8928r.htm>

The chart is reprinted with permission from the Sept/Oct 2004 issue of *Mother Jones* magazine, accompanying Matthew Brzezinski's cover story, "Red Alert", which details how the Bush administration's obsession with Iraq has left the Department of Homeland Security underfunded, beholden to special interests, and ignored by the White House. The full article is available on their website: <http://www.motherjones.com>