

Blue Sky Institute on President Bush's State of the Union: A State of Delusion

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Contact:

Eileen McCabe 801-201-0219

Deanna Taylor 801-631-2998

Green Action Utah, the Committee for Environmental and Social Justice program of BSI and People for Peace and Justice of Utah, the Peace and Justice program of BSI commented after watching and reading the President's State of the Union Address.

The president's address covered some domestic policy issues, and offered some new goals, although very little was said about how to achieve them. Most of the speech focused on Iraq, essentially dictating that we must "stay the course" and that "we didn't vote for failure."

"Failing to provide for the care of our veterans is not keeping 'faith with those we have sent forth to defend us,'" said Nate Smith, member of People for Peace and Justice of Utah, the Peace and Justice program of BSI, and a member of Military Families Speak Out.

"While the President's call for fiscal discipline is admirable, the reality is that under his leadership, the number of 'earmarks' has grown exponentially. He also makes no suggestions on where sacrifices should be made. We suggest massive cuts in the defense budget, specifically on weapons programs," said Chuck Tripp, member of People for Peace and Justice of Utah, and a political science professor.

"With its unfunded mandates and pressure on teachers to "teach to the test" NCLB had eroded the quality of education in this country," said Deanna Taylor, a local educator and member of Green Action Utah, the Environmental and Social Justice Program of BSI.

"Offering tax deductions does nothing to make health insurance policies more affordable, nor does it address the needs of those Americans who are refused coverage because of age or health. Requiring healthcare to be provided by employers puts an unfair burden on small businesses. Health care should be a basic right, not one tied to job, income or health status," said Raphael Cordray, member of People for Peace and Justice of Utah, and owner of activist retail shop Free Speech Zone.

"A temporary worker program will not take pressure off our borders. We need to stop interfering with the resources and industries of other countries destroying local economies and driving down their wages. This is what drives the motivation, and in some cases dire need to immigrate, "legally" or not to the United States. Temporary worker programs create incentive for immigration, and the disruption of families. They also create incentive for employers to threaten temporary workers with non-renewal of their permits or impose unjust working conditions," said Nate Smith.

"It is admirable for the president to talk about energy independence. However, nuclear energy is not the answer to dependence on foreign oil, as nuclear is not used to power cars. Further, a large proportion of our nuclear fuel comes from Russia, because of enrichment issues in this country. There are no concrete plans to relieve these issues before the anticipated "nuclear renaissance." This is just another form of energy dependence," said Eileen McCabe of Green Action Utah.

“Republicans look to the market to solve many of our problems. How about looking to the market to solve our gasoline consumption challenges? Applying carbon taxes on fossil fuel use, and eliminating subsidies to all fossil fuel industries will expose the true market costs of these fuels, and stimulate conservation and the development of renewable energies,” said Tom King, member of the Blue Sky Institute.

“The President’s speech reveals yet more rhetoric that does not match the realities on the ground. The US has been guilty of blowing up mosques, particularly in Falluja, sometimes called the “city of mosques.” The US has been complicit in the development of the sectarian death squads,” said Eileen McCabe.

“Asking us ‘to give it a chance to work’ – is giving countless young men and women the chance to die,” said Deanna Taylor.

Eileen McCabe
4696 S. Sunstone Rd # 201
Taylorsville, UT 84123
(801)268-1764
(801)201-0219