



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on June 8, 2017

## Rep. Jones: “Asking God to Forgive Me” for Voting for Wars in Iraq, Afghanistan

In 2001, Representative Walter Jones (R-N.C.), shown on right, voted to give then-President George W. Bush authorization to go to war with Iraq. Claiming that such an act was justified as a response to the terrorist attacks of September 11 of that year, Bush began bombing Iraq and Afghanistan.



In 2003, Jones began to believe that he had made a grave error in approving the authorization for the use of military force. It was in that year that Jones attended a funeral of a young soldier killed in action in combat operations in Iraq. Here’s Jones’s story of that wrenching realization as told by NPR:

“This is the first funeral I went to that made me started thinking that I made the wrong decision of giving (President George W.) Bush the authority to go into Iraq,” said Jones, pointing to a picture of Marine Sgt. Michael Bitz.

Bitz was killed in action in Iraq on March 23, 2003. He died without meeting his youngest children — twins born a month earlier. Jones, a Republican from North Carolina, attended Bitz’s funeral and recalled how Bitz’s wife spoke and read the last letter she received from her husband.

“She reads the letter, obviously very difficult for her to read, because it’s a letter of love and appreciation, and I think everybody there was teary-eyed. And the closing of the letter, I’m paraphrasing, was that, ‘I might not see you on Earth but I will see you in heaven. Love, Michael,’ ” Jones said.

Jones now keeps a memorial to the more than 500 Marines from his district that were killed in action in Iraq and Afghanistan.

What motivated Jones to erect such a shrine? His faith in God.

Walter Jones is a devout Roman Catholic, and as such he believes in the sanctity of life, and his memorial is an “act of penance,” an attempt to obtain God’s forgiveness for a vote that he now regrets.

“I have signed over 12,000 letters to families and extended families who’ve lost loved ones in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, and that was for me asking God to forgive me for my mistake,” Jones told NPR.

Jones is now an ardent non-interventionist, one of few lawmakers on Capitol Hill who are true and faithful to their oath of office and who insist on remaining within the boundaries of congressional power as drawn in the Constitution. Another constitutionally consistent congressman praises Jones and worries that we’ve become a belligerent country, one with a tragically short memory.



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“My concern is that our colleagues have forgotten about the war in Afghanistan,” said Representative Thomas Massie (R-Ky.). “These wars that are dragging on. There are lives over there — and we’re still losing lives over there — for goals that I don’t think our colleagues can define.”

Massie told NPR that there is something wrong with the fact that the House of Representatives has never really debated the pros and cons of sending thousands of Americans to die in Iraq and Afghanistan. Representatives of the people should not be able to order thousands of the people to offer their lives on the altar of globalism and “the War on Terror” without being required to engage in sober deliberations of the moral and constitutional issues connected to combat.

NPR reports that “nearly eight of 10 sitting House members were elected after the wars were authorized in 2001 and 2002. In the years since, Congress has never revised that debate, except to provide trillions in funding for the ongoing military operations.”

To correct this travesty, Jones, Massie, and a bipartisan group of nine other legislators have joined together to cosponsor a bill that would turn off the spigot of cash being poured into Afghanistan. The bill would allow funds only for operating an embassy and for carrying on intelligence operations.

H.R. 1666 lays out the many reasons the United States should stop sending money and men to Afghanistan.

First, the bill recites the fact that the war in Afghanistan is now 16 years long and is the “longest war in American history.”

During that time, Jones’s bill states, the Defense Department reports that “2,216 United States service members have been killed in Afghanistan, and over 20,049 service members have been wounded.”

Furthermore, since 2001, 150 coalition personnel, including United States service members, have been killed by the Afghan security forces personnel that American taxpayers are paying to train. Another 189 service members have been wounded.

In addition to the many lives ended or irreparably damaged by this protracted combat mission, the measure exposes the monetary cost, as well. “Over the past 15 years, nearly \$800 billion of United States taxpayers’ money has been spent on Afghanistan,” the legislation reads.

The bill then goes on to recite the massive fraud being perpetrated in Afghanistan, including the following egregious examples:

According to a 2016 *USA Today* article entitled “Report cites wasted Pentagon money in Afghanistan”, among the more egregious examples of boondoggles Sopko cited included “importing rare blond Italian goats to boost the cashmere industry”. The \$6 million program included shipping nine male goats to western Afghanistan from Italy, setting up a farm, lab, and staff to certify their wool.

An ongoing SIGAR investigation found that American taxpayers are paying as many as 200,000 fictitious Afghan “ghost” soldiers, potentially costing hundreds of millions of dollars annually.

Laudably, Jones doesn’t dodge the issue of blowback in his bill. “In a January 2017 article in the *Wall Street Journal*, Hamid Karzai, former president of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan from 2004 to 2014, stated, “The fact is that the U.S. presence in Afghanistan has not brought security to us. It has caused more extremism,” one section of the bill states.

Jones believes the only acceptable answer to this deadly dilemma is for the United States to completely



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terminate its military operations in Afghanistan. For Jones, it is personal and it is a moral imperative.

From the NPR report:

“I got many good friends in both parties, but this to me is my journey — it is my journey,” he said.

Every day at his congressional office, Jones walks past the faces of the dead. He said on occasion someone will pop into his office and thank him for the memorial, or say they knew someone on the wall. For him, the past 14 years haven’t just been about trying to end the wars, but also about seeking redemption for those early votes to go to war.

“Everybody has their way of dealing with pain, and my pain is primarily because all these faces never had a chance to live,” Jones said.

For now, Representative Jones will do all he can to prevent the unnecessary death of another American serviceman in the unconstitutional and undebated war in Afghanistan and to receive the forgiveness of God.



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