



Support Senator Dorgan's Amendment to Authorize a Special Commission on War and Reconstruction Contracting

April 18, 2005

Dear Senator:

Taxpayers for Common Sense Action (TCS Action), a non-partisan budget watchdog, urges you to support Senator Byron Dorgan's (D-ND) amendment to the *Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for Defense, the Global War on Terror, and Tsunami Relief of 2005* that would create a Special Senate Commission on War and Reconstruction Contracting. Similar commissions have played critical oversight roles in past wars, saving both money and the lives of American soldiers by reviewing weapons systems, streamlining the procurement process, and auditing expensive contracts.

The commission would be similar in structure to the famously successful Truman committee, which saved American taxpayers nearly \$15 billion in World War II while costing them just \$15,000 in the first year of operation. The Truman committee remains one of the greatest investigative committees ever commissioned by Congress. It held 432 hearings in its seven year lifespan and made many critiques of the contracting process that are still serious concerns today.

Moreover, the Truman committee saved the lives of countless soldiers over the course of the war. In one instance, the committee found that the Navy was buying expensive tank lighters (landing boats similar to those used on D-Day) that were prone to sink in rough waters. The Truman Committee questioned the Navy's single-minded focus and found that another contractor built a much sturdier and cheaper tank lighter, which the Navy was eventually compelled to use.

The time is right for a new investigative wartime commission. If this bill passes, the Department of Defense will have received \$275 billion for operations in Iraq, and our involvement in Iraq is likely to continue for several years. Accounting errors and procedural flaws have already led to finger pointing on all sides. Existing auditing agencies and Congressional committees are not up to the task of a methodical, intensive study of wartime spending. The increasing complexity of the contracting process and the sheer enormity of the war effort require a specialized commission to provide adequate oversight for federal funds.

Once again, we urge you to support Senator Dorgan's efforts to create a Special Commission on War and Reconstruction Contracting. Such a commission will guarantee the best equipment for our soldiers, a fair playing field for contractors, and an efficient use of taxpayer dollars. For more information, please contact Austin Clemens at (202)546-8500 x106 or austin@taxpayer.net.

Sincerely,

Jill Lancelot
President / Co-founder