



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on October 28, 2009

GOP Congressman Repents Iraq War Vote

A veteran Republican congressman and self-described "Pat Buchanan American" now regrets he "didn't vote my conscience" in the fall of 2002, when he voted to authorize President George W. Bush to take military action against Iraq. As reported in [NationalJournal.com](#), the "conscience-stricken" Walter Jones of North Carolina, a member of the House Armed Services Committee, is now writing a book he hopes will atone for what he now considers a sinful vote.



Jones is calling his book *Daddy's Not Dead Yet*, a title he has taken from a statement made in 2007 by a child in a classroom at Camp Lejeune, the large Marine Corps base located in Jones's Third Congressional District in the eastern part of the state. Jones had been invited to read a Dr. Seuss story to the students in a class at an elementary school on the base. When he asked for questions, one little boy said "Daddy's not dead yet." "Daddy's not dead yet," he repeated. Jones told the *National Journal* that he realized he had played go-along-politics with the life of the little boy's father instead of "listening to God" and voting against the House resolution authorizing the war.

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"I profess to be a man of faith," Jones said, "but I didn't vote my conscience." Jones said that money from the book will be donated toward helping Americans wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan. His book will describe the cost in both lives and dollars of America's far-flung military commitments all around the world. The long-term costs of medical care for veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars alone will be staggering, he said.

"The American people have no idea of what's coming as it relates to taking care of those veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan with traumatic brain injuries and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder," Jones said. Some physicians who have studied the extent and cost of treating the mentally wounded have told him it will overwhelm both the government and private medical systems, he said. He told the magazine that he has also been conferring with retired generals over calls for increasing the number of American forces in Afghanistan. President Obama is still assessing the request of General Stanly McChrystal,



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America's commander in Afghanistan, for another 40,000 men, in addition to the 68,000 scheduled to be on the ground there by year's end. Jones said several of the retired generals have urged him to vote against sending more troops, arguing that America's all-volunteer armed forces are stretched to the breaking point. One told him both the Army and the Marine Corps are worn out, he said.

"We're trying to police the world," Jones said. "Every great nation prior to America that tried to police the world has failed economically. That's why I tell people that I'm a Pat Buchanan American. I want to stop trying to take care of the world and fix this country. Our problems are so deep that there is no easy way to fix them."

Jones is the son of a Congressman, the late Walter Jones, Sr., a Democrat who became chairman of the Merchant Marines and Fisheries Committee. The younger Jones was also a Democrat, but joined the Republican Party in 1993. He was elected to the House the following year and is now in his eighth term. Prior to his election the U.S. House, he served for 10 years in the North Carolina General Assembly.

According to the biography posted on his congressional website, Jones "has been a strong voice in fighting for an effective, commonsense government that returns power and control back to the people." On the latest "Freedom Index" published by *The New American*, Jones's votes on key issues before the House received an 80 percent favorability rating for consistency with the provisions of the U.S. Constitution. In his first term, Jones introduced the War Crimes Act of 1996 that gives former American prisoners of war the right to sue their captors in U.S. courts. The bill was signed into law by President Bill Clinton. *The Hill* newspaper has ranked Jones among the most bipartisan members of Congress in 2009.

Finally, a survey of Capitol Hill staff members conducted by *Washingtonian* magazine in 2004 found Jones ranked Number One among the 435 members of the House in the category, "Just Plain Nice."

Photo: Congressman Jones Visits Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune



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