

NEWS RELEASE

Congressman Walter B. Jones

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JONES ASKS O'NEILL FOR ANSWERS REGARDING THE \$17.3 BILLION IN MISSING TAX DOLLARS

“The American Taxpayers look to us to be the leaders who protect and spend their money wisely.”

WASHINGTON, DC - Third District Congressman Walter B. Jones (R-NC) has asked the Secretary of the Treasury, Paul O'Neill for an accounting of more than \$17 billion that has been misplaced by the Federal Government.

According to a statement from the *2001 Financial Report of the United States Government* released this March, the Federal government has “unreconciled transactions” that total \$17.3 billion. Congressman Jones recently sent a letter to Secretary O'Neill, requesting an explanation for this accounting error.

Yesterday evening on the House Floor, Congressman Jones submitted the letter for The Record, as well as several newspaper articles that had been written on the same subject. Mr. Jones cited his shock in learning that not only is the federal government unsure of where billions of dollars have gone, only the New York Post and the London Times are reporting it.

“The American Taxpayers look to us to be the leaders who protect and spend their money wisely, and I think we have a responsibility and an obligation to the taxpayers of this country to explain to them how we lost \$17 billion,” Congressman Jones said on the House Floor. “It is unacceptable, and I am sure my colleagues on both sides of the political aisle will feel the same way I do. We would expect an explanation to the fact we have misplaced and lost \$17.3 billion of the taxpayers' money.”

“\$17 billion dollars is not pocket change. The federal government could do a great deal with that kind of money,” Congressman Jones has explained in the past. “In fact, \$17 billion could buy 8 B-2 bombers or 2 aircraft carriers AND 2 full air wings.”

The letter to Secretary O'Neill read as follows:

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I write to you to bring to your attention a serious situation regarding *2001 Financial Report of the United States Government*.

In March 2002, the Department of the Treasury released this report to the public and included are some shocking revelations about Federal government expenditures. As a member of Congress and, more

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importantly, as a taxpayer, I am frankly offended by these facts. Specifically, on page 110 of the report, it is revealed the Federal government has “unreconciled transactions” totaling \$17.3 billion from FY2001. Put simply, the Federal government cannot account for billions of taxpayer dollars that Americans paid in one fiscal year.

The report provides minimal data and information regarding these “unreconciled transactions”. Not only is the Federal government missing \$17.3 billion, but there is no reason given for this loss. While I appreciate the Department of the Treasury’s statement “...the identification and accurate reporting of these unreconciled transactions a priority...”, the fact remains the public nor the Congress has the requisite information on how this loss occurred.

What agencies were responsible for these “unreconciled transactions”? Will these transactions eventually be reconciled? If so, what is the timeline for the reconciliation? What agency or agencies will be responsible for the reconciliation? Will this reconciliation be available to the public when complete?

The Clinton Administration provided for an enormous erosion of Americans’ confidence in their government. My hope is that these “unreconciled transactions” are nothing more than a bygone relic of the previous Administration. However, members of Congress and employees of the Executive Branch must be accountable to the American taxpayer and my constituents are demanding answers to these important questions.

Mr. Secretary, I believe someone must answer to the American people for this loss of tax dollars. I look forward to your answers regarding these “unreconciled transactions”. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter. Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,
Walter B. Jones
Member of Congress

For additional information or to schedule an interview with Congressman Walter B. Jones please contact Lanier Swann at (202) 225-3415 or via email at lanier.swann@mail.house.gov.

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