

**Transcript of Closing Remarks of Senator Kent Conrad, D-ND,
at Mark-Up for the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for FY 2006
March 10, 2005**

I want to urge my colleagues to oppose this budget.

I believe this budget adds to the deficit, dramatically adds to the debt, all at the worst possible time, right before the baby boomers retire. As I analyze this budget, it will run operating deficits approaching \$600 billion a year each and every year for the next five years.

It does not have a real paygo provision. Paygo provisions that have provided very important budget discipline in the past that says very simply if you want to have new spending or new tax cuts you have to pay for it. That's absent from this budget.

And finally, this budget contains I think the wrong priorities for the American people. This budget says in the first year the tax reductions for the very wealthiest among us — those earning over a million dollars a year — are going to cost \$32 billion. At the same time, this budget says cut the COPS program 96 percent, cut education from the baseline some 12 to 13 billion dollars below what was promised in No Child Left Behind.

This budget does not meet the funding needs of our nation's veterans. At a time of war, we are telling our nation's veterans in some cases wait a year to get an appointment for specialty care. That's not acceptable.

In area after area, cutting the firefighters grants 30 percent, eliminating the Byrne grants for law enforcement that are so critical in their combating crimes in our states. This budget simply has the wrong priorities.

For those reasons I urge my colleagues to oppose this budget. And we'll go to the floor and try to create a better budget, one more in line with the fundamental needs of the American people. A budget that will reduce deficits, not increase them. A budget that will have the right priorities to meet the needs of the American people.