

My Son, a United States Marine

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Published: Oct 7, 2004

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I am writing this in hope that it will open some eyes, enrage, and disgust everyone that reads it. I am a PROUD mother of a U.S. Marine. My eyes have been opened and I am now enraged and disgusted with "OUR GOVERNMENT! My son is now in Iraq. Before he left Camp LeJuene, my side of the family and his wife had to get money together because my son had to spend over \$300 to buy things he was "REQUIRED" to have in his gear. If he were missing one thing, he would not have been allowed to come home on his Block Leave to see his family before being deployed to Iraq! Almost \$100 of this money had to be spent on a third set of "new and improved" Digital Cammies. He was lucky! He had been issued one set and had already bought a second set. Some of the Marines were not even issued one set so they spent almost \$300 on just their Cammies. Money is being deducted from their pay for "equipment". My son has never really been sure WHAT equipment, but he paid for it.

I was enraged when I found out that the Flack Jacket (their bullet proof vests) were the woodland version, the ones that are supposed to blend in with TREES! No one in Sierra Battery was issued Desert Flack Jackets! These marines will look like a group of trees in the middle of the desert!

Soon after my son arrived in Kuwait, his eyes were hurting so bad from the dust and sand in the air that he could hardly stand to blink. He noticed some Marines were wearing eye-protectors. He asked where they had gotten them. A Marine told him that he was "ISSUED" a pair. Sierra Battery was NOT issued any! My son had to spend another \$100 at the PX to buy himself a pair TO PROTECT HIS EYES!! Wouldn't you think that if the soldiers need their eyes protected in the environment our government is sending them into, that the military would make sure to issue a pair to every single soldier?! HOW DARE THEY!!!

President Bush said we "must support our military personnel." I did not know he meant literally! Support with money to buy equipment they MUST have because it is required or needed to protect their health, eyes, and for their VERY LIVES!! What in the hell is \$137 BILLION paying for? The new rifles they were supposed to be issued were not. Some military personnel do have the new rifles that have been modified for the desert conditions. NOT MY SON! How many of our sons, daughters, husbands, and wives are in this situation? Do we need to buy their rifles also??

Support our Military? Why is the government not fully supporting and protecting our Military? Issue everything they need or do not send them until they have it! I was not fortunate enough to have been born RICH. I have to scrounge to help my son. My family, his wife, and her family got together to help my son purchase everything he was "required" to have. I have met other Marines and their families who are in the same situation. Apparently our "Commander and Chief" meant SEND YOUR MONEY TO SUPPORT YOUR CHILDREN AND RELATIVES, because the government is unable to do so. This administration is NOT PUTTING THEIR MONEY WHERE THEIR MOUTH IS!!

This is just one reason why I will vote for Senator Kerry! I believe that under his command, all or our Military personnel will be treated fairly and equally. I also believe that he will have a PLAN to bring ALL our children home! I also support Senator Kerry because I believe if the need arises to call again on our Military, President Kerry will not send our children into

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situations without everything they need to protect themselves and their lives!

I sent my letter to John Kerry but I also sent it to the following people. President George W. Bush, Representative Robert S. Rangel/Committee on Armed Services, Senator John Warner/Committee on Armed Services, Representative Robin Hayes, and Senator Elizabeth Dole. The only people who cared enough to read my letter and respond was John Kerry's office. I wonder why no one else cared!

Della T. Austin
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