

Press Release

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SCHAKOWSKY CALLS ON ROVE TO APOLOGIZE FOR OFFENSIVE COMMENTS

WASHINGTON, DC - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky today joined over 50 Democratic Members of Congress in writing a letter urging White House political advisor Karl Rove to take back comments he made at a fundraiser yesterday in New York City. As reported by today's *New York Times*, Rove said Democrats "saw the savagery of the 9/11 attacks and wanted to prepare indictments and offer therapy and understanding for our attackers."

Representative Schakowsky also issued a statement calling on Rove to apologize for his remarks, the text of which is below:

"In his obsession with demonizing liberals, Karl Rove seems to have forgotten that liberals and conservatives alike were unified in their response to 9/11. Congress voted 434-1 to authorize the President to go to war to find and destroy the perpetrators of these attacks. It is the Bush Administration that has now bungled our efforts to fight the terrorists, overstretching our military and sending our troops into a war that has created more terrorists than it has destroyed, and leaving holes in our homeland security by ignoring port security and leaving our nuclear and chemical plants open to attack. President Bush should demand that Mr. Rove apologize for his shameful choice of words first to the 9/11 families whose loved ones were lost, and then to the nation."

The full text of the letter follows:

Dear Mr. Rove:

We are writing to request a retraction of your comments at last night's fundraiser for the Conservative Party of New York State.

We read with great dismay a report in today's *New York Times* that you made several reckless and baseless remarks about what you alleged to be the difference between Democrats' and Republicans' responses to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Your nasty words merit an immediate correction.

First and foremost, your assertion that after the towers fell Democrats "wanted to prepare indictments and offer therapy and understanding for our attackers" is ridiculous, insulting, and false.

While we know that you do not serve as an elected official and were not required to be present at the Capitol on September 11 and the days following, it is surprising that you wouldn't remember that the House authorized a swift and potent military response to the attacks on a vote of 434-1. That is hardly the picture of moderation and restraint - to say nothing of therapy and hospitality - that you so venomously offered at last night's event.

It seems to be a popular pastime for you and some in your party to tout the nation's post-9/11 unity and subsequent actions as a cherished accomplishment of the Bush administration. It would be nice if unity were your actual intent. Instead, as we saw in your performance last night, you continue to use 9/11 as a political tool to divide the nation. This must come to an end.

As we continue to prosecute the war on terrorism, it is more essential than ever that we focus our energy on solutions - not empty, false attacks and inflammatory rhetoric. That you would travel to Manhattan, of all places, to trash-talk and belittle our response to the attacks is staggering. This type of nonsense can only make it appear to Americans that when it comes to looking out for the nation's interests and security, the Administration has a tin ear.

As a first step toward restoring proper focus and respect to the governance of this country we request that you take back your comments from last night.□ If you are as committed to unity and progress as you claim to be, we are sure you will agree that a retraction is in our nation's best interest.