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## **End 'business as usual'**

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CEDAR FALLS --- I was disappointed to see that the U.S. House of Representatives recently passed, on a 395-13 vote, a \$460 billion defense appropriations bill. The massive military budget represents a nearly \$40 billion increase. If that's not enough, the Pentagon would get another budget increase of billions of dollars through a companion bill covering military base construction. The bill continues funding for all the major weapons systems that President Bush wants, such as the Joint Strike Fighter, the F-22 Raptor fighter jet and a missile defense system.

Nearly every day there is a major news story illustrating why we need to invest our tax dollars differently. The bridge collapse in Minneapolis is just the latest example. There are many others -- - leaking and crumbling schools, kids without health care, our continuing reliance on foreign oil and veterans lacking the services they need.

The Democrats won control of Congress with the promise of "not business as usual." Yet they went along with nearly every gold-plated weapon system Bush wanted. If the Democrats want to invest in education, health care, renewable energy development and veterans' services without adding to our skyrocketing deficit, they will have to come up with the money. The Pentagon budget, is chock-full of savings opportunities.

I challenge Reps. Braley, Loeb sack and Boswell to explain to us how this is not business and usual and how the Democratic Party will lead positive change.