

George W. Bush Charged \$100,000 for Veterans Charity Speech



Dallas, July 10 (RHC)-- Former U.S. president George W. Bush charged \$100,000 to speak at a charity fundraising event in 2012 for US military veterans severely injured during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Bush was also provided with a private jet to travel from Dallas to Houston at a cost of \$20,000, officials of the Texas-based Helping a Hero charity confirmed to ABC News. His wife, former first lady Laura Bush, collected \$50,000 to appear a year earlier for the same fundraising event.

One of the wounded veterans who served on the charity's board said he was outraged that the former commander in chief would charge any fee to speak on behalf of soldiers he ordered into dangerous wars.

"For him to be paid to raise money for veterans that were wounded in combat under his orders, I don't think that's right," said former Marine Eddie Wright, who lost both hands in a rocket attack in Fallujah, Iraq, in 2004.

"You sent me to war," Wright added, referring to the former president. "I was doing what you told me to do."

Some former U.S. presidents and first ladies have turned the speaker's circuit into a major source of income for their post-White House years. Former U.S. president Bill Clinton and his wife Hillary, who is running for president, have earned more than \$125 million on the speaking circuit since they left the White House in 2001.

George W. Bush, similarly, recognized the opportunity, reportedly telling author Robert Draper he planned to "replenish the old coffers" on the lecture circuit. Bush, who was in the White House between 2001 and 2009, has been accused by pundits as being "the worst president" in modern U.S. history.

Critics have accused him of war crimes for ordering the U.S. invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan under false pretexts, as well as authorizing torture techniques and mass surveillance programs after the September 11, 2001 attacks.

More than 1.2 million people have been killed in Iraq and Afghanistan as a result of the so-called U.S. war on terror in over a decade.

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