

Statement from Congressman Chris Murphy on Passage of the U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Health, and Iraq Accountability Act

This afternoon, the House of Representatives passed HR 1591, the U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Health, and Iraq Accountability Act to ensure that U.S. troops have the resources they need, direct more funding to the war against terror in Afghanistan, improve healthcare for returning service members and veterans, and set a timeline for ending our participation in Iraq's civil war.

Contact: Kristen Bossi
(202) 225-4476

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"I am proud to have voted for the U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Health, and Iraq Accountability Act today because it supports our troops before, during and after their service to this country.

"Nine years ago on this floor, Congressman Floyd Spence, the Republican Chairman of the Armed Services Committee, had this to say about the bill withdrawing American forces from Bosnia. 'The time is long overdue for Congress to express its will on behalf of the American people.' I couldn't say it better myself.

"In this place, the People's House, the will of the people must mean something. Elections must mean something. And if the 2006 election represented anything, it was that the American people were tired of the lack of oversight and accountability from this Congress, and they were tired of a war with growing numbers of casualties, and mounting costs with no end in sight. They asked for a new direction from this Congress, and The U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Health, and Iraq Accountability Act, is the answer to their call.

"There are many of us who feel uncomfortable giving this President another dime to spend to perpetuate this misguided and shortsighted strategy in Iraq. But I come here to support this legislation because for the first time since the start of this disastrous engagement, Congress is making sure that any further spending on this war comes with unprecedented support for our troops and veterans, and a real plan to redeploy our forces and resources to fights that we can still win.

"This Administration has been wrong on just about everything about Iraq – there were no weapons of mass destruction, we were not welcome as liberators, the country has plunged into a civil war, and we have no exit strategy.

"The days of issuing a blank check to this Administration with no questions asked are over. As we enter the fifth year of this war, people in Connecticut and across the country demand a change in our policy in Iraq. This bill is the change that they asked for."