

Murphy Supports Troop and Veteran Funding Bill

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a bill that funds the nation's troops, veterans, and homeland security needs, while holding the President accountable for this war and the Iraqi people responsible for the future of their country.

"This bill provides every dollar that the President requested, and more, for our troops, our veterans, and for the protection of Americans at home. This unprecedented support, combined with clear benchmarks designed for the Iraqis to take responsibility for their future, is what the American public wants. I urge the President to stop threatening to veto this bill and listen to the American people, who want to end our open ended commitment in Iraq.

"I recently traveled to Iraq and Afghanistan, and it was a remarkable experience. I returned with a deep appreciation for the bravery and capability of our troops. It also reaffirmed my belief that the war in Iraq cannot be solved with military might but with diplomatic acumen. In Afghanistan, on the other hand, we have the opportunity to root out al-Qaeda and weaken the Taliban's strength if we shift some of the resources we are using in Iraq to Afghanistan.

"There is a saying in Afghanistan that, 'where the road ends, the Taliban begins.' While in Afghanistan, I realized that every dollar we put into infrastructure is a dollar spent on security. But this Administration is not giving the troops there the resources they need to complete their mission. I returned to the United States with a message for Congress and the President – if we don't put more resources into the fight in Afghanistan, we will be making a grave mistake. We must give our military leaders and troops on the ground what they need to help the Afghans take control of their country outside of Kabul.

"This bill answers my call to begin to put more resources into Afghanistan in order to truly keep the fight off of our soil. We must shift our focus from the civil war in Iraq to the growing unrest in Afghanistan."

Today's vote approved a compromise bill crafted by Members of the House and Senate that provides more for our troops and veterans than the President was willing to allocate. It is anticipated that the Senate will take up and pass this legislation on Thursday and then send it to the President's desk. The bill:

- Provides \$4 billion more for the troops than the President requested.
- Honors our veterans by providing \$1.8 billion more for our veterans' unmet health care needs.
- Requires accountability of the Iraqi government, by setting measurable and achievable benchmarks.
- Provides for a responsible redeployment of U.S. troops, with, at the latest, redeployment beginning in October 2007 with a goal of being completed by March 2008.
- Allocates \$84 million more than the President's request for humanitarian, reconstruction, and related assistance for Afghanistan.
- Strengthens our military, providing \$2 billion more to create a Strategic Readiness Reserve and address the serious readiness crisis our military is facing.
- Adds \$3 billion more for Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles for troops in Iraq. MRAPs are a new class of vehicles that provides the next step of protection after the "up-armored" Humvees.
- Provides \$2.25 billion for urgent homeland security needs, which is necessary because the 109th Congress failed to fund many key homeland security needs. As a result, this bill provides urgently needed funding to help close certain

glaring security gaps, including funding for border security, port security, and aviation security.

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