

Tauscher Introduces Legislation to Establish Minimum Periods Between Deployments for National Guard

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CONTACT: Kevin Lawlor, 202/225 1880 July 24, 2007

Ellen Tauscher Introduces Legislation to Establish Minimum Periods Between Deployments for National Guard and Reserve Units Washington, DC – Today, Rep. Ellen Tauscher introduced legislation in the House that would establish minimum periods between deployments for units and members of the Armed Forces for Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. “The administration’s current strategy of multiple back to back deployments is stretching military and breaking our all-volunteer force,” said Rep. Ellen Tauscher, Chairman of the House Armed Services Strategic Forces Subcommittee. “We need to act now to begin correcting the damage done to our military readiness. The men and women of our Armed Forces are stuck in a revolving door in Iraq that undermines the readiness of our military. If we want to get serious about our commitment to our troops and our ability to protect American interests around the globe on a moment’s notice, then we need to change the current troop-rotation policy. We need a posture that allows units adequate dwell time to recover, train, and deploy for their next assignment. If we do not fix this problem immediately, we will suffer massive recruitment and retention problems in the near future.” The legislation, which mirrors an amendment offered by Senator Jim Webb (D-Va.), states that if a unit or member of a regular component of the Armed Forces deploys to Iraq or Afghanistan, they will have the same time at home before they are redeployed. No unit or member of a Reserve Component, including the National Guard, could be redeployed to Iraq or Afghanistan within three years of their previous deployment. The legislation provides fair and reasonable waivers. In event of an operational emergency posing a threat to vital national security interests, the President may waive the limitations by certifying to Congress that the deployment of the unit or member is necessary. The military departments also are provided waiver authority for individual volunteers who seek to redeploy before the expiration of the mandated time between deployments. “This bill will support our troops by supporting their right to have a break from combat, and it will support our military families by protecting their right to spend time with their loved ones between deployments,” said Congresswoman Carol Shea-Porter, who co-sponsored the bill. “Under the current policy, our armed forces are at their breaking point. If we allow this to continue, it will undermine our readiness and threaten our national security.” Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution empowers Congress “to make rules for the government and regulation of the land and naval forces.” “The precedent for this is clear and the reasoning could not be any better. We cannot allow the current war strategy to be used as a justification for extending deployments repeatedly without an equal amount of time at home,” said Rep. Tauscher. Rep. Tauscher was joined on the bill by a bipartisan group of original co-sponsors including Reps. Carol Shea-Porter (D-NH), Jane Harman (D-CA), Gene Taylor (D-MS), Solomon Ortiz (D-TX), Rick Larsen (D-WA), Silvestre Reyes (D-TX), Rep. Susan Davis (D-CA), Kendrick Meek (D-FL), Joe Courtney (D-CT), Gabrielle Giffords (D-AZ), Neil Abercrombie (D-HI), Loretta Sanchez (D-CA), David Loebsack (D-IA), Hank Johnson (D-GA), Phil Hare (D-IL), Marcy Kaptur (D-OH), Wayne Gilchrest (R-MD), and Walter Jones (R-NC).