

Rep. Ellen Tauscher Applauds Passage of U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Health and Iraq Accountability

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Benchmarks Passed by Congress are Similar to Tauscher's "Change the Course in Iraq" Bill

Washington, DC — Today, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Health and Iraq Accountability Act by a vote of 218-214. The supplemental funding bill provides our troops with the equipment they need, requires Iraqis to take greater responsibility for stabilizing their own country, helps fight the war on terror, and establishes a responsible strategy for the redeployment of U.S. troops. The bill also provides critical support for the war on terror in Afghanistan, where progress is currently threatened and provides additional assistance for our veterans and returning troops here at home.

The bill further requires Iraqis to take more responsibility for success in Iraq — by meeting the key security, political and economic benchmarks established by the President and recommended by the Iraq Study Group. Failure to meet these benchmarks will mean the beginning of U.S. redeployment from Iraq and will restrict economic aid to the Iraqis. This language is very similar to language Rep. Tauscher has authored in similar legislation, the "Change the Course in Iraq Act."

Rep. Tauscher, Chairman of the House Armed Services Strategic Forces Subcommittee, issued the following statement.

"I am proud that Congress has come together on behalf of our troops in Iraq, our veterans, and the will of the American people to pass this bill and finally begin to change the course in Iraq.

The Iraq War has already lasted longer than our involvement in World War I and World War II, yet, for the first time since this war began Congress is refusing to hand the President another blank check for his failed policies. It's time to end what has become the Bush Administration's open-ended commitment to fighting the Iraqis' civil war for them.

The benchmarks in this bill are responsible and reasonable, and they institute some long-overdue accountability that will force the Iraqi government to step up to the plate.

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