

May 23, 2007

WASHINGTON, DC—U.S. Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-Springfield) voted against the most recent version of the supplemental spending bill for the war in Iraq because, unlike earlier versions considered in the House this year, today's bill negotiated with the White House included no enforceable benchmarks for the Iraqi government and abandoned binding timelines for redeploying U.S. troops out of Iraq.

"The Iraqi people have repeatedly indicated their support for a U.S. withdrawal. A majority of the American people want U.S. troops to come home.

And the Iraqi parliament is reportedly weighing a resolution calling for a timeline for the withdrawal of U.S. troops.

It seems that only the President, his allies in Congress, and the leaders of Iran want the U.S. to remain mired in the civil war in Iraq, which is sapping our military and diplomatic strength," DeFazio warned.

DeFazio continued, "The president and his allies justify the continuing U.S. presence in Iraq by trotting out the tired phrase that if we don't fight there, we'll have to fight here at home. However, the Iraqi Sunnis and Shias, who combined make up the vast bulk of the insurgents and militias committing violence in Iraq, just want U.S. military forces out of their own country. They have no capability to attack Americans here at home."

"It is also misleading to say that if the U.S. leaves, Osama bin Laden will take control and have a safe haven in Iraq. There is no chance that the Shia and the Kurds, who represent around 80 percent of Iraq's population, will allow foreign terrorist elements to take control of the country. Even the majority of Sunnis have grown tired of foreign terrorists operating in Iraq and are fighting back," DeFazio concluded.

The Senate will now consider the final version of H.R. 2206. It is expected that the bill will be sent to the President for his signature by the end of this week.