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Washington, DC - Today, Congressman Dan Lipinski (IL-3) joined a bipartisan majority in the House of Representatives in passing H.R. 1 which will make our nation safer by providing for the implementation of the remaining 9/11 Commission recommendations.

The 9/11 Commission, which was created in late 2002 to prepare a full and complete account of the circumstances surrounding the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, also provided recommendations designed to guard against future attacks. While several of these recommendations were implemented as part of the Intelligence Reform Bill of 2004, several key provisions had been neglected until today.

"Finally, Congress has taken action on the 9/11 Commission recommendations, and in doing so has taken a substantial step forward in protecting our nation from any future terrorist attacks," said Lipinski. "I am hopeful that the Senate will follow the lead of the House on this issue and work with the President to make H.R. 1 law."

H.R. 1 includes a number of long-overdue steps that will substantially improve homeland security, including:

- Providing for better communication among first responders during emergencies;
- Phasing in a requirement of inspecting all passenger aircraft cargo and checked baggage (most of this cargo is still not inspected);
- Phasing in a requirement of scanning all U.S.-bound shipping containers;
- Strengthening provisions to better protect against terrorists acquiring WMD; and
- Reducing the appeal of extremism through the promotion of economic opportunities, education reform, human rights, and democratic processes in the countries of the Middle East.

While domestic security will be greatly enhanced by making H.R. 1 law, the "dire" situation in Iraq continues to threaten to increase the risk of future attacks. It is clear that the U.S. Iraq policy must change. Congressman Lipinski today released his plan for a new strategy that rests on three key recommendations:

- (1) Bring the world community together to seek solutions in Iraq, including calling an international conference that will work on putting together a peacekeeping force and setting up an international reconstruction program.
- (2) Encourage achievement of important goals in national reconciliation, security, and governance by arranging a

peace conference for Iraq's ethnic and religious factions, similar to the conference that led to the Dayton Accords.

- (3) Require the Administration to give Congress detailed reports on the situation in Iraq so that informed decisions can be made regarding funding Iraq's reconstruction and deciding when American forces can be redeployed.

"While the situation in Iraq is 'grave,' it could get much worse," said Lipinski. "While it is tempting to bring our troops home immediately, the strategic importance of Iraq's location, its potential as an oil-rich safe-haven for terrorists, and the real possibility of a region-wide war, require that we do all we can to stabilize the country. However, I do believe that my plan, which calls for greater international involvement as well as improved congressional oversight, offers the best chance for bringing stability to Iraq and beginning the initial redeployment of our troops this year."

Congressman Lipinski's full plan for Iraq can be found on his website.