

## (March 23, 2007) Lipinski Announces his Support for Bill to Change Iraq Policy and Increase Funding

Lipinski Announces his Support for Bill to Change Iraq Policy and Increase Funding for Troops and Veterans

[WASHINGTON, DC] Today, Congressman Dan Lipinski announced his support for H.R. 1591, the U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Health, and Iraq Accountability Act of 2007. This landmark legislation puts pressure on the Iraqi government to take more control of their country, while also providing funds to better protect American troops, successfully conclude the war, and bring the troops home. The bill also provides significant increases in funding for veterans' health care and homeland security.

"The Iraqis must take the necessary steps to provide for their own security and to work for reconciliation in their country," said Lipinski. "This bill for the first time provides benchmarks to force the Iraqi government to take this responsibility, while also providing increased funding to protect our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, and to provide better health care for our veterans who have sacrificed so much for us."

The benchmarks the Iraqi government must meet to promote ethnic and religious reconciliation include a plan for equitable allocation of oil revenue and scheduling provincial and local elections. The military benchmarks include providing necessary Iraqi Security Forces for Baghdad, giving authority to Iraqi and U.S. forces to pursue all extremists, and eliminating militia control of local security.

"In addition to changing direction on the war in Iraq, this bill will help make America more secure by funding the fight against terrorist threats from Afghanistan and providing \$1.25 billion for aviation security and \$1.25 billion for transit, border, and port security," continued Lipinski. "Furthermore, this bill provides over \$4 billion to address the lack of funding and oversight that have plagued the health care systems of the Department of Defense (DOD) and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). When our brave soldiers return from serving our country, they deserve the highest quality care and facilities that we can provide."

Earlier this week, Congressman Lipinski testified at a House Foreign Affairs Committee hearing in support of his resolution calling for a diplomatic offensive on Iraq. Introduced in February, H.Res.152 calls on the President of the United States to convene a peace conference for Iraqi leaders, diplomatically engage all countries interested in Iraq's future, and provide Congress with greater information regarding security and reconstruction in Iraq.

"My resolution would compliment provisions of the supplemental by calling for a diplomatic offensive to reconcile Iraq's competing factions and rally international support for stabilizing and reconstructing the country," said Lipinski. "I believe following these new policies will provide us with the best chance of bringing our troops home and leaving a stable, secure Iraq."

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