

Iraq Accountability Act Passes House of Representatives, Contains Fixed Timetable for Withdrawal

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Washington, DC - Congresswoman Doris O. Matsui (CA-05) today joined with a majority of the House of Representatives to pass the U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Health, and Iraq Accountability Act (H.R. 1591). The legislation passed by a vote of 218 to 212 after two days of intense floor debate, during which Congresswoman Matsui praised the bill for its inclusion of the first binding timetable for withdrawing our troops from Iraq. Said Congresswoman Matsui: "This legislation gives us the chance—for the first time—to take a concrete step towards bringing the war to a close." The Congresswoman noted that the legislation is the imperfect product of compromise: "This bill does not go as far or as fast as I would like. For example, I support bringing our troops home on a faster timetable than provided for in this legislation. But it has become clear during difficult negotiations over the past several weeks that this is the most aggressive approach that can actually pass the House of Representatives." Despite this bill's flaws, a fixed timetable to bring our troops home is a very significant leap forward in our Iraq policy. It provides a foundation for further action, and increases pressure on the President. That is why the President opposes it so strongly. Support for H.R. 1591

Support in Congress: The bill passed the House by a vote of 218 to 212, with 1 Member voting present. All but two of those voting in favor were Democrats, with 92% of the Democratic Caucus supporting the legislation. Only two Republicans voted for it, with 98% of the Republicans in Congress casting their votes against the bill. Of the 75 members of the Congressional "Out of Iraq" Caucus—the preeminent anti-war group in the House of Representatives—all but seven voted for it, representing 93% of the group's membership. **Support From Other War Opponents:** In addition to this near-universal Democratic support, a diverse group of outside experts and organizations publicly endorsed the legislation: According to MoveOn.org, "Bush wants endless war; the Democratic plan would safely end the war." The Council for a Livable World echoed this assessment: "Defeat of the supplemental will hand President Bush the policy and political victory he longs for by enabling the passage of a funding bill with no restrictions or timeline for withdrawal at all. That would be an irresponsible and tragic outcome." Former National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski and Iraq Study Group Co-Chairman Lee Hamilton also joined Congresswoman Matsui in support of today's legislation. **Opposition from President Bush:** President Bush and his supporters in Congress strongly opposed the legislation. In Congress, 98% of Republicans voted against it. The President cited its binding troop withdrawal deadline as a main reason for his opposition.

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