

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
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REP. MAZIE HIRONO VOTES FOR
A NEW DIRECTION IN IRAQ

*Rep. Mazie Hirono Votes to Provide More Funds for Troops and Veterans
and Establish Timeline for Redeployment*

Washington, D.C. – Rep. Mazie Hirono today joined a majority in the House of Representatives to approve the conference report on the U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Health and Iraq Accountability Act.

The measure maintains a timeline for the redeployment of U.S. combat troops from Iraq with redeployment beginning on October 1, 2007 at the latest, with a goal of being completed by March 2008. President Bush would be required to certify that the Iraqi government is meeting diplomatic and security benchmarks. If he does, redeployment will begin no later than October 1, 2007. This represents the approach recommended by the bipartisan Iraq Study Group, which also called for a goal of redeployment being completed by March 2008.

Rep. Hirono stated: “The President has lost touch with reality. Despite the increasing violence reported by the military, more deadly bombings and more Americans being killed, including nine brave soldiers in one attack, he claims that his surge is working.”

“This report fully funds our troops and sends a clear message to the Iraqi government that American forces will not be there forever. It also sends an unmistakable message to the President that it is time to change course as the American people and a growing number of military leaders are demanding,” Hirono said. “If the President does decide to veto this bill, it will be he alone that denies our troops the resources that they deserve.”

The measure supports U.S. troops, providing \$24 billion more than the President requested. This includes additional funding for military health care, military housing, Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles for troops, and requires combat readiness of troops before they can be sent into battle. The measure provides veterans with necessary medical services, appropriating \$1.8 billion more than the President requested, to meet health care needs of troops returning from Iraq and Afghanistan and increasing Veterans Administration funding.

Rep. Hirono said, “Our troops are being sent into dangerous situations in Iraq without the support they need. The very least we must do for our brave servicemen and women in harm’s way is to provide the best protective equipment and to make sure that when they come home that they receive needed health care and support services.”

It is anticipated that the Senate will take up and pass this legislation on Thursday and then send it to the President’s desk.

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