

## House OKs Ending U.S. Combat Role in Iraq

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House Passes Bill to End U.S. Combat Role in Iraqi Civil War

Legislation also includes Rep. Rothman's chemical plant security provision.

(Washington, DC)—Today, Congressman Steve Rothman (D-NJ) voted for the U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Health, and Iraq Accountability Act, which passed the House of Representatives by a vote of 218 to 212. This supplemental spending bill ends the war in Iraq, specifically redeploying all U.S. troops out of Iraq by summer 2008 at the latest. It also includes a provision written by Rothman with the Committee that would prevent the Bush Administration from weakening New Jersey's chemical plant security regulations.

"Today's vote is a giant step forward for those of us opposed to keeping our young men and women in the middle of an Iraqi civil war indefinitely. As I have said repeatedly, this bill ends the war in Iraq and that's why I support it. I wish it called for the immediate withdrawal of our troops, but there are not the votes to accomplish that objective," said Rothman.

In commenting on the chemical plant security provision in the bill, Rothman added: "New Jersey's smart, bipartisan chemical plant security regulations must be protected from the Bush Administration's attempt to apply a much weaker federal standard. Our 'chemical alley' of plants is a known terrorist target and the state of New Jersey has the right to protect its people from an al Qaeda attack on our soil. It is vital that the Senate protect this provision when ironing out the differences between their bill and the House bill."

The U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Health, and Iraq Accountability Act — a spending bill — originated in the House Appropriations Committee's Subcommittee on Defense, of which Rothman is a member. Last week, the full House Appropriations Committee passed the legislation by a vote of 36 to 28, with Rothman voting in favor of it.

"The choice, as I saw it, was simple. Either I could vote for this bill, which supports our troops, supports our veterans, rebuilds our military, and gets our young men and women out of the middle of an Iraqi civil war. Or, I could vote against it and allow the President to continue pursuing a stay-the-course strategy in Iraq that is harming our national security. I chose to vote to end the war.

"More than 3,200 U.S. troops have given their lives, more than 23,000 are wounded, and our taxpayers have spent more than \$400 billion so that the Iraqis can have a chance to live together in peace. We've trained over 350,000 Iraqi soldiers and special forces. Now, it is up to the Iraqi people to decide to end their civil war — our military cannot do that for them," said Rothman.

In the last eight days, this bill was endorsed by six retired generals and other retired military officers, the Paralyzed Veterans of America, former NATO Supreme Allied Commander, Wesley Clark, and the 3.2 million members of MoveOn.org.

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