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Inglis undecided on troop vote  
*Barrett vocal on House floor in opposition to nonbinding resolution due up Friday*

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By Ellyn Ferguson

WASHINGTON -- U.S. Congressman Bob Inglis is undecided about how he will vote on a nonbinding resolution that opposes President Bush's plan to send an additional 21,500 U.S. troops to Iraq.

But his Upstate colleague Gresham Barrett, R-Westminster, said he'll reject it.

The other four South Carolina House members are expected to split over the symbolic vote scheduled for Friday.

The resolution says, "Congress and the American people will continue to support and protect" U.S. forces serving in Iraq and that Congress "disapproves" of Bush's decision.

**Advertisement** Republicans were denied the opportunity to submit their own resolution, which would have opposed cutting war funding. That was how Congress got U.S. forces out of the Vietnam War.

Democratic leaders had said Republicans would be allowed to offer their own language but reversed course Monday, claiming they wanted to keep debate focused on the troop surge.

Republicans argue that Democrats are moving toward eventual funding cuts for the troops.

"It's a first step toward ultimately cutting off funding," said Rep. David Dreier, R-Calif.

Many Democrats have stopped short of advocating that funds be withheld to stop the troop surge -- at least for now.


The resolution is likely to pass with the backing of the Democratic majority although an estimated 20 Republicans, including Walter Jones of North Carolina, the measure's GOP co-sponsor, are expected to support it.

Inglis, R-Travelers Rest, has talked with South Carolina military personnel serving in Iraq, attended a briefing for lawmakers by national security adviser Stephen Hadley and discussed the matter with staff, said Inglis spokesman Price Atkinson.

"He's taking it very seriously," Atkinson said.

Inglis, who represents the state's 4th Congressional District, has said the Iraqi military and Iraqi political leaders, not U.S. soldiers, must shoulder the responsibility for ending sectarian violence in the capital city of Baghdad.

He's questioned the effectiveness of the president's troop surge and whether it's the step that will break the cycle of violence in Baghdad and the province of al-Anbar.

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However, Inglis has said he won't support any proposals that would cut off funding for troops.

Barrett, who represents the state's 3rd Congressional District, said he believes the resolution is defeatist and plans to repeat his message as often as possible before the vote.

He's already spoken on the House floor three times and will be part of a news conference today by the Victory in Iraq caucus.

"There is only one way out of Iraq, one way out of this war: victory," Barrett said Wednesday.

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