



Rep. Klein Renews Call for Iraqi Fiscal Responsibility

New government report reveals billions in Iraqi budget surplus while American taxpayers foot reconstruction bill

Washington, DC – Congressman Ron Klein (FL-22) today renewed his call for Iraqi fiscal responsibility following the release of U.S. government report which found that the Iraqi government acquired a budget surplus of nearly \$80 billion in the last three years.

Klein is the author of H. Res. 1111, which states that all future U.S. funding for reconstruction and fuel in Iraq be provided as a loan to the government of Iraq, to be repaid out of oil revenues. Language from Klein's resolution passed the U.S. House in May as part of the supplemental spending bill.

“The Iraqi government continues to reap billions in budget surpluses from record-high oil prices, yet American taxpayers have spent an outrageous \$48 billion in Iraq for reconstruction projects alone,” Klein said. “It defies common sense and any semblance of fiscal responsibility. This new report makes it crystal clear: it is long past time for the government of Iraq to step up and take responsibility for rebuilding its own country.”

The Government Accountability Office report, requested by Senators Carl Levin (D-MI) and John Warner (R-VA), concluded that the Iraqi government has a cumulative budget surplus of as much as \$79 billion from 2005 to today. The report also estimated that due to record-high oil prices, Iraq will have a budget surplus of \$38 billion to \$50 billion this year.

“I commend Senators Levin and Warner for requesting this important study,” Klein said. “Their cooperation and involvement demonstrates again that this is not a Democratic or Republican issue. It is an issue of common sense for the American taxpayer. In these difficult economic times, we can no longer spend billions of taxpayer dollars rebuilding a country which is sitting on massive oil reserves and tens of billions of dollars in budget surplus.”

Earlier this year, Klein led the entire 47-member freshman class of House Democrats in a call for a fiscally responsible new direction in Iraq funding. The freshman class has a geographic reach from Brooklyn, New York to Sugarland, Texas, and includes conservative, moderate and more liberal members. Klein's leadership led to language passing the U.S. House which requires Iraqis to pay for the reconstruction of Iraq, and also requires fair fuel cost negotiations to ensure American taxpayers are no longer being overcharged for gas in Iraq.

The United States spends \$153 million every month on fuel in Iraq, at a cost of approximately \$3.23 per gallon, while Iraqis pay just \$1.30 per gallon for fuel.

After its passage, Klein called the language “a real victory for the American taxpayer.”

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