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Ham House crowd bastes Inglis over vote  
*Lawmaker defends opposition to troop surge amid jeers, boos*

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Fourth District U.S. Rep. Bob Inglis, R-Travelers Rest, said he knew his vote against a troop increase in Iraq would spark controversy, and a crowd gathered at a Greenville restaurant wasn't shy about sharing its disapproval.

Scores of people packed a room at Tommy's Country Ham House on Monday for "Let's Talk," a monthly meeting where Inglis discusses his work in Washington. This week, instead of praise or words of encouragement, most of the crowd said they were "angry" and "disappointed" because Inglis' latest vote indicated that he wasn't fully supporting the troops in Iraq.

One man, who identified himself as a longtime Inglis supporter, said he was considering removing a bumper sticker from his car. Others in the crowd applauded for people who railed against the congressman and jeered and booed the few who expressed their support.

Inglis said he thought at least 90 percent of Monday's crowd disapproved of his vote.

**Advertisement** "I knew this would be a controversial vote. I consciously tried to disregard the political ramifications because I have to be able to sleep at night knowing that I'm putting the interests of the troops ahead of my own political interests," Inglis told The Greenville News Monday.

Inglis was one of 17 Republicans who joined 229 Democrats to support a nonbinding resolution disapproving of the president's plan to send 20,000 additional troops to Iraq. The state's three other GOP House members didn't support the resolution.

Dennis Jones has a son who was wounded while serving in Iraq. Jones told Inglis on Monday that his latest vote emboldened the enemy. "The soldiers are disappointed because their sacrifices aren't appreciated by Congress," he said.

Tom Mims interrupted Inglis several times when he was attempting to address the crowd. At one point, an angry Mims shouted, "Are you on our side? Forget Washington and remember what goes on in your district."

Mims went on to say that Inglis' vote on Friday was the "dumbest political move" that he'd seen a South Carolina politician make.

After letting the crowd speak for around half an hour, Inglis addressed their concerns and explained his vote.

Inglis said his policy on Iraq was very similar to the president's. Inglis said he agrees that it's not time to withdraw the troops and he pledged not to cut troop funds. But, Inglis said, unlike the president, he doesn't support an increase in troops and he'd like for the Iraqis to take on more responsibility.

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"I realize that this is a 'D' resolution and I'm an 'R,'" Inglis said. "I realize that some 'Ds' have malice toward the president. But, it was a mistake for the GOP to spin this as a vote about supporting the troops."

Inglis said that putting in the hours to define a clear mission for the war is the best way he can serve the troops and the country.

Suzanne Hard was the first person to speak in favor of Inglis' vote. She said the Iraq war was based on "lies" and she was glad that Inglis called into question the direction of the war. Hard's comments were drowned out by shouts and boos.

Inglis paused during his talk and asked the crowd to pray with him. Inglis prayed, as he said he does every day, that he made the wrong decision and that the president was right. "I pray that the surge will work and for peace and stability in Iraq," Inglis said.

Next Monday, Inglis will meet with constituents at Wade's in Spartanburg for another "Let's Talk" session.

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