



## Klein Leads Freshmen Democrats in Call For Real Change in Iraq Funding

**Washington, D.C.** – U.S. Representative Ron Klein (FL-22) today led fellow freshmen House Democrats in calling for a new, common-sense direction for Iraq funding.

The 47-member freshman class, which represents tremendous demographic, economic and geographic diversity, came together to sign a letter, authored by Rep. Klein, calling on the Chairmen of the Appropriations Committee and Defense Appropriations Subcommittee to include in upcoming spending bills specific language requiring future U.S. funding for reconstruction, training and fuel in Iraq be repaid out of Iraqi oil revenues.

“I am proud to stand beside these distinguished colleagues and say that after five years and 600 billion American taxpayer dollars spent in Iraq, enough is enough,” Klein said today. “The freshman class represents dramatic diversity, and when all of us stand united on any one issue, it is time to stand up and take note.”

The class represents a total of 24 states – nearly half the country. Members of the class that gathered today to discuss the letter represent the Rocky Mountain through the American heartland, the Great Lakes to the deep South and New England to South Florida.

“Our constituents represent the true face of America,” Klein said of himself and his freshman colleagues. “They come from every different demographic group imaginable, and stretch across the width and breadth of our great country. Despite these differences, in all of our districts, people are saying the same thing: the Iraqi government must stand up and take responsibility for rebuilding their own country. The American taxpayer cannot, and should not, foot the bill any longer.”

Klein is also the author of legislation (H. Res. 1111) expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that all future funding provided by the United States to the government of Iraq for reconstruction, training for security forces and fuel be provided as a loan. His legislation also requires the Iraqi government to utilize its own budget surplus for reconstruction projects before reconstruction aid from the United States is spent.

“This is truly a seminal moment, when 47 members of Congress, from all over the map and all over the political spectrum, have come together to call for real change,” Klein said today. “I am proud to lead the fight for fiscal responsibility when it comes to Iraq funding.”

The full text of Klein’s letter, signed by the entire freshman class, is below.

The Honorable Dave Obey, Chair  
Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable John P. Murtha, Chair  
Subcommittee on Defense Appropriations

Dear Chairman Obey and Chairman Murtha,

As you work with our colleagues to craft upcoming spending bills, we ask you to consider language emphasizing the government of Iraq's cost-sharing responsibility.

With so many competing priorities, from emergency domestic spending to funding for our national security, it is clear that taxpayer dollars will be stretched thin. As you know, with the amount of money that we have spent in Iraq, we could fund virtually every emergency domestic priority in this country, as well as fully fund the war against terrorism in Afghanistan. As new Members of Congress, we hope to be able to return to our districts with news that Congress is asking the Iraqi government to stand up for itself.

Specifically, we hope that you will consider language in upcoming spending bills that requires the Government of Iraq to take more ownership over the reconstruction projects and training for security forces. Additionally, the Iraqi government should take responsibility for the \$153 million per month that the United States Government spends on fuel in Iraq. Both the American and Iraqi people will gain from increased involvement of the Iraqi government in these endeavors.

Whether our colleagues support or oppose the Iraq war strategy, we can all agree that when it comes to the \$600 billion in American taxpayer dollars that we have spent over the last five years, we must find another way. American taxpayers are spending \$339 million a day in Iraq. The amount of money we spend in Iraq each day could house 48,000 homeless veterans, hire over 2,000 new Border Patrol guards for a year or give 2.6 million uninsured Americans access to health care. We write to you in the hopes that you will agree that it is time for us to pursue this issue in a more fiscally responsible manner.

Sincerely,

Representative Ron Klein (FL-22)  
Representative Ed Perlmutter (CO-07)  
Representative Chris Murphy (CT-05)  
Representative John Yarmuth (KY-03)  
Representative Hank Johnson (GA-04)  
Representative Keith Ellison (MN-05)  
Representative Carol Shea-Porter (NH-01)  
Representative Harry Mitchell (AZ-05)  
Representative Albio Sires (NJ-13)  
Representative Paul Hodes (NH-02)  
Representative Steve Kagen (WI-08)  
Representative Mazie Hirono (HI-02)  
Representative Kathy Castor (FL-11)  
Representative Kirstin Gillibrand (NY-20)  
Representative Joe Sestak (PA-07)  
Representative Jason Altmire (PA -04)  
Representative Tim Mahoney (FL- 16)  
Representative Brad Ellsworth (IN-08)  
Representative Bruce Braley (IA-01)

Representative **Ciro Rodriguez** (TX-23)  
Representative **Phil Hare** (IL-17)  
Representative **Joe Courtney** (CT-02)  
Representative **Nancy Boyda** (KS-02)  
Representative **Steve Cohen** (TN-09)  
Representative **John Sarbanes** (MD-03)  
Representative **Laura Richardson** (CA-37)  
Representative **Nick Lampson** (TX-22)  
Representative **Tim Walz** (MN-01)  
Representative **Patrick Murphy** (PA-08)  
Representative **Chris Carney** (PA-10)  
Representative **Mike Arcuri** (NY-24)  
Representative **Andre Carson** (IN-07)  
Representative **Betty Sutton** (OH-13)  
Representative **Charlie Wilson** (OH-06)  
Representative **Bill Foster** (IL-14)  
Representative **Jackie Speier** (CA-12)  
Representative **Dave Loebsack** (IA-02)  
Representative **Yvette Clarke** (NY-11)  
Representative **Heath Shuler** (NC-11)  
Representative **John Hall** (NY-19)  
Representative **Jerry McNerney** (CA-11)  
Representative **Peter Welch** (VT-AL)  
Representative **Gabrielle Giffords** (AZ-08)  
Representative **Zach Space** (OH-18)  
Representative **Nikki Tsongas** (MA-05)  
Representative **Joe Donnelly** (IN-02)  
Representative **Baron Hill** (IN-09)