

Rep. Ellen Tauscher Introduces "The Change Course in Iraq Act"

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Rep. Ellen Tauscher Introduces "The Change Course in Iraq Act";

Legislation Terminates the Existing Authority and Conditions Future Funding on Benchmarks

Washington, DC – Today, Rep. Ellen Tauscher, along with her colleague Rep. Adam Smith (D-Wash), introduced

“The Change the Course in Iraq Act.” The bill recognizes that the U.S. military mission in Iraq has changed dramatically from when President Bush first sought Congressional authorization. As such, it terminates the existing authority on the use of force in Iraq. It requires the Secretary of Defense to submit a plan for phased redeployment of U.S. forces. Furthermore, it requires the President to appoint a high-level Coordinator for Iraq Stabilization to step up regional cooperation in the stability efforts.

The bill forces the Iraqi government to take on a greater role in stabilizing Iraq. It conditions further funding for Iraqi security and reconstruction, beginning in 2008, on the President certifying that the Iraqis have met specific benchmarks recommended by the Iraq Study Group.

“Almost five years ago we authorized the President to use force in Iraq for a myriad of reasons many of which are outdated or have been proven to be patently false,” said Rep. Ellen Tauscher. “American Troops were not sent to Iraq to fight a civil war, they must be brought home sooner and safer.”

Tauscher went on to note that “this bill also calls for a plan for the re-deployment of our combat troops, as recommended by the Iraq Study Group, so that the United States Military can focus on the core missions of fighting foreign terrorists, training Iraqi troops, and force protection.”

Details Below

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Section 1 commends the troops on a job well done. Revokes the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution of 2002 (H.J.RES.114). The original authorization signed by the President on October 16, 2002 was based on the Bush administration’s rationale and objectives of the war, which no longer bear any resemblance to current military operations in Iraq. Repealing the authorization would allow a new vote on U.S. military involvement and force the Bush administration to make its case for continued involvement in Iraq.

Requires the Secretary of Defense to submit to the defense committees a plan for phased redeployment of the troops based on a mission that is focused on training Iraqi troops, fighting terrorism, and force protection.

Section 2 mandates that the President appoint a Coordinator for Iraq Stabilization to pursue diplomacy with bordering and regional powers to secure Iraq’s borders, encourage national reconciliation and stabilization of Iraq, and promote economic assistance.

Section 3 using the benchmarks recommended by the Iraq Study Group, requires the President to submit a certification by December 31, 2007, to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations and Armed Services that the government of Iraq has made significant achievements in approving laws regarding Iraqi oil revenue sharing, de-Baathification, and disarming the militia. Additionally, as recommended by the Iraq Study Group, Iraq’s security forces must be in the lead of operations and exercise control in all Iraqi provinces and the Iraqi Constitution must be reviewed and amended if appropriate. If the President fails to certify the Iraq government has met each of these benchmarks by December 31, 2007, no further funds shall be obligated for the Iraq Security Forces Funds or the Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Fund until such certifications are made.

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