



March 20, 2007

Dear Representative:

We write in strong support of a responsible, phased redeployment of our U.S. Armed Services from Iraq and critical appropriations for our national priorities contained in the 2007 Supplemental Appropriations bill. Most notably, the increased spending for: continued support for equipment and readiness of our troops; support for the health care needs of our enlisted veterans; \$750 million to address state shortfalls in the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP); and finally raising the nation's minimum wage.

On behalf of the 1.8 million members of SEIU, we write to express in the strongest terms necessary the support we feel for our service women and men. Our troops and their families, many of whom are SEIU members, are shouldering the burden of this misguided war – prolonged and repeated separation from their families and loved ones, and in the most severe instances the sacrifice of their lives – in their service of all of us and our country. SEIU is strongly opposed to the Bush Administration's "surge" of troops to Iraq. Our opposition to the war was set by a 2004 Convention Resolution and was just reaffirmed by the International Executive Board in its January 2007 Resolution (see attached).

SEIU supports the principles embodied in the report of the Iraq Study Group and calls for the Congress to implement a steady withdrawal of our Armed Forces from Iraq. We have heard from our own SEIU members – serving in National Guard units – that active duty forces are without proper protection, equipment, and training. SEIU members employed in many DOD and Veterans Affairs Medical Centers are all too aware of the human cost of this war. SEIU supports the inclusion of the proper restrictions on the use of our troops, for their well-being, in the Supplemental. We also support additional funding included in the supplemental for veterans health care. In addition funding specific to Iraq and troop support, SEIU supports other critical national funding initiatives included in the supplemental – Gulf Coast relief, rural school funding, and two items on SEIU's national legislative agenda, specifically:

SCHIP – Hundreds of thousands of children face the loss of health care coverage under SCHIP due to shortfalls in federal funding. At least 14 states have exhausted their federal allotments for this successful program. SEIU supports the inclusion of \$750 million to help states continue to cover children and families who qualify for the program. Congress should assist those states who have fulfilled their partnership role in SCHIP and enrolled eligible children and families by providing them with additional immediate funding and by improving overall funding for SCHIP later this year when the program is reauthorized.

ANDREW L. STERN
International President

ANNA BURGER
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Minimum Wage – The minimum wage was last increased in September 1997, to its current rate of \$5.15 per hour. Minimum wage earners have not seen an increase in a decade due to Congressional inaction, while Members of Congress have received eight pay raises, totaling more than \$31,000, during that same period. SEIU has long supported a minimum wage increase as embodied by the Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2007 (H.R. 2). We believe it is important not to delay passage any further. Therefore, we support the inclusion of H.R. 2 in the emergency supplemental, which boosts the minimum wage from \$5.15 to \$7.25 over two years coupled with the package of smaller small-business tax breaks contained in H.R. 976.

The SEIU Scorecard can be found at www.seiu.org and reflects votes critical to our working family agenda. The vote on final passage will be added to the SEIU Scorecard.

We urge your support and YES vote for the 2007 Supplemental Appropriation. Please contact Alison Reardon, Director of Legislation, if you have questions regarding information contained in this letter at 202-730-7706.

Sincerely,



Andrew L. Stern
International President



Anna Burger
International Secretary-Treasurer

ALS:AB:AR:gmb

Attachment: SEIU Resolution

opeiu#2
afl-cio, clc

Adopted
by IEB
1/27/07

RESOLUTION

Before SEIU International Executive Board – January 26, 2007

OPPOSITION TO PROPOSED ESCALATION OF US TROOPS TO IRAQ

WHEREAS, at our last International Union convention in May of 2004, in San Francisco, our delegates unanimously adopted a strong resolution opposing the US led invasion of Iraq, and calling for the withdrawal of US troops; and

WHEREAS, at the same time we strongly support our soldiers – the men and women risking their lives in Iraq – who come from America's working families. They are our son's and daughter's, our sisters and brothers, our husbands and wives. They are co-workers and members of our Union. To date more than 3,000 of them have already died and more than 20,000 have been wounded, many of whom will be disabled for life; and

WHEREAS, tens of thousands of Iraqi civilians have been killed since 2003 – 36,000 last year alone; and

WHEREAS, the American people sent a strong and clear message in last November's elections that a majority of us are opposed to this war, and believe it is time to begin to bring our troops home now; and

WHEREAS, in recent weeks President Bush and his Administration has instead announced plans for a significant escalation of troops and plans to seek an additional \$160 billion to fund this escalation and continuation of the war, with no plan for how resolve this conflict or begin to bring our troops home; and

WHEREAS, on January 11, 2007 our International Union President Andrew L. Stern, joined the call in opposition to this proposed escalation stating, in part "the decision by President Bush is the wrong direction, the wrong judgement, and is a step backwards that puts our brave soldiers in greater danger. It is time to begin to allow the Iraqis to take over the future of their country and begin to bring our troops home."; and

WHEREAS, at this very moment as we are meeting here today, in our Nation's Capitol, thousands of our fellow American's are marching in the streets, just blocks from here calling on Congress to put an end to this madness;

NOW THEREFORE, be it resolved that the SEIU International Executive Board join our International Union President in opposing any escalation of US troops in Iraq, and to call on Congress to take the leadership necessary, including opposing additional funding, as long as we protect our troops while they remain in Iraq, in order to begin the process of ending this war and bringing our troops home now.