

March 23, 2007 Congressman John P. Murtha Announces that the House Passes the Iraq Accountability Act

For Immediate Release

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CONGRESSMAN JOHN P. MURTHA ANNOUNCES THAT THE HOUSE PASSES THE EMERGENCY WAR SUPPLEMENTAL BILL

Washington D.C. - Today, Congressman John P. Murtha and Democratic Leaders announced that the House of Representatives passed the U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Health, and Iraq Accountability Act -- the FY 2007 Supplemental Appropriations bill.

"My grandmother told me, 'you're put on this Earth to make a difference.' We made a difference today. This bill supports our troops, it reinforces our commitment to our veterans, and it changes the direction of this great country," Murtha said.

The U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Health, and Iraq Accountability Act fully supports our troops and our veterans by containing more funding for them than the President requested. This includes:

Defense Health Care -- \$1.7 billion above the President's Request

- * \$450 million for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder/Counseling
- * \$450 million for Traumatic Brain Injury care and research
- * \$730 million to prevent health care fee increases for our troops
- * \$20 million to address the problems at Walter Reed
- * \$14.8 million for burn care

Veteran's Health Care -- \$1.7 Billion more than the President's Request

* \$550 million to address the backlog in maintaining VA health care facilities - intended to prevent the VA from experiencing a situation similar to that found at Walter Reed

- * \$250 million for medical administration to ensure there are sufficient personnel to support the growing number of Iraq

and Afghanistan veterans and to maintain a high level of services for all veterans

- * \$229 million for treating the growing number of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans

- * \$100 million for contract mental health care - with this funding allowing the VA to contract with private mental health care providers to ensure that Iraq and Afghanistan veterans are seen in the most timely and least disruptive fashion, including members of the Guard and Reserve

- * \$62 million to speed up the processing of claims of veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan

Addressing the Readiness Crisis & Other Steps to Support Our Troops

- * \$2.5 billion more to address the current readiness crisis of our stateside troops, including ensuring that they are better equipped and trained

- * \$1.4 billion more for military housing allowances

- * \$311 million more for Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles for troops in Iraq

- * \$222 million more for infrared countermeasures for Air Force aircraft to address the growing threat against U.S. air operations in Iraq and Afghanistan

The bill sets a responsible timeline for a phased redeployment of U.S. troops -- with a date certain, by August 2008 at the latest, for U.S. combat troops to be redeployed from Iraq.

"This bill sets benchmarks and requires accountability from the Iraqi government. It forces the Iraqis to fight their own war and to take over their own country," said Murtha.

The bill passed by a vote of 218-212