

Castle Statement on Conference Report of the FY07 Emergency Supplemental Bill -- April 25, 2007

Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the Fiscal Year 2007 Emergency Supplemental Spending bill.

A few weeks ago, the House of Representatives passed a version of this legislation that included billions of dollars in non-emergency spending and numerous provisions relating to troop withdrawal that were not requested by the Administration or our military leaders. The conference agreement before us today endorses these extraneous provisions, and as a result the President has made clear he will veto this bill.

As our nation continues to debate the future of U.S. involvement in Iraq, some of my colleagues have argued that Congress should mandate a hard deadline for the redeployment of U.S. troops. While I believe that Congress has an important role to play in this debate, such crucial decisions should not be made without substantial input from our military and foreign policy leaders and should be considered separately from a bill providing critical funding for our soldiers. I have disagreed with many aspects of our strategy in Iraq, but I feel strongly that requiring an arbitrary date for troop withdrawal would endanger our soldiers and undermine efforts to maintain stability in the Middle East.

Our men and women serving in the military are doing extraordinary work under very difficult circumstances and we owe them a tremendous debt of gratitude. Now is the time to for Democrats and Republicans to unite around a strategy that funds our troops and supports an effective way forward in Iraq. We can not afford to waste precious moments arguing over political objectives and pork barrel spending projects, such as those included in this conference report.

Mr. Chairman, I intend to vote against this bill and I call upon my colleagues to dispense with the political rhetoric and get to work immediately on passing a bipartisan emergency supplemental spending bill.

###