

Statement on H.R. 2206, Emergency War Supplemental -- May 10, 2007

Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the short-term legislation before us today.

After three months of debating the Emergency War Supplemental bill in Congress, the Democratic leadership has now put forward legislation that would only provide our soldiers with about half of what they requested and would restrict the military from accessing the remaining funds unless Congress passes another measure later this summer. Clearly, honest minds will disagree over the direction of our strategy in Iraq, but it should go without saying that providing our soldiers with the tools and resources they need is absolutely vital. The proposal before us would restrict funding for our soldiers and it would serve as a major impediment to the mission of our men and women in Iraq.

Once again, the Democratic leadership has insisted upon holding this critical emergency funding in limbo in order to move a partisan agenda. Even many Democrats in the U.S. Senate, including influential conferees like Senators Carl Levin and Ben Nelson, have called the House bill "not workable" and "dead on arrival." It is obvious that this bill is intended to force a political vote, rather than address the funding needs of our military in a serious manner.

As debate continues over our military's presence in Iraq, our constituents are demanding that Congress put aside politics and work together. I am pleased that the Democratic leadership removed language mandating an arbitrary withdrawal timeline from the bill and I hope that we can dispense with the political rhetoric and begin addressing the problems we are facing in a practical, bipartisan way. This should begin by embracing the recommendations of the Iraq Study Group to increase diplomacy and improve stability in the region so that our troops may return home.

Mr. Speaker, I intend to oppose the legislation before us and I call on this body to unite behind a bipartisan approach to achieve stability in Iraq.