

## Castle Group Demands Bipartisan Iraq Debate -- September 25, 2007

WASHINGTON, D.C.

- Twenty-eight U.S. House Members, led by Reps. Mike Castle (R-DE) and John Tanner (D-TN) today unveiled a "Bipartisan Compact on Iraq Debate," which consists of eight principles to help guide the House of Representatives away from the political infighting and toward a bipartisan solution on Iraq.

Late last week, Castle and Tanner met privately with House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-MD) and House Minority Leader John Boehner (R-OH) to share a draft of the Compact and ask that they end the political rhetoric and focus on substantive approaches to improving stability in Iraq. As part of this discussion, Castle asked the leaders to hold a vote on H.R. 3087, legislation requiring the Administration to give Congress regular reports on the status of post-surge efforts in Iraq.

"Following months of gridlock, this is the first true bipartisan agreement reached on the issue of Iraq in the House of Representatives," said Castle.

"The fact that twenty-eight Members of Congress have agreed on eight key principles should be the basis for a real substantive debate on this issue. I took this message to the House leadership last week, and I am hopeful this group can carve out the crucial middle ground that is vital to achieving stability in the region and bringing our soldiers home from Iraq."

The Compact, which has been endorsed by 14 Republicans and 14 Democrats, highlights agreement on key issues including opposition to efforts to eliminate military funding, support for a safe and responsible redeployment of U.S. troops, and increased attention to diplomacy with Iraq's neighbors in the Middle East. Many of these principles were key recommendations of the Bipartisan Iraq Study Group.

Signing Members agree to:

- Bipartisan dialogue on Iraq;
- Oppose efforts to eliminate troop funding;
- Defined and measurable mission;
- Shifting responsibility to Iraq government;
- Adequate rest time for U.S. troops between deployments;
- Safe

and responsible redeployment based recommendations from military leaders;

- Transition

U.S. mission to counterterrorism, supporting Iraqi forces; and

- Robust

diplomacy in the Middle East.

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