

Statement on HR 3159, the Ensuring Military Readiness through Stability and Predictability
Deployment Policy Act

2 August 2007

Madame Speaker: I rise in support of this legislation to provide some Congressional oversight over the deployment and maintenance of our troops stationed overseas. As the Constitution states in Article I Section 8., Congress has the power "to make rules for the government and regulation of the land and naval forces," and therefore Congress has an obligation to speak on such matters. I have been and remain extremely concerned about the deployment extensions and stop-loss programs that have kept our troops deployed and engaged for increasingly extended periods of time. My constituents who are affected by this policy have contacted me with their concerns as well.

The legislation at least seeks to provide some guidance and relief to our troops who have been stretched to the limit by the increasing duration of deployment overseas and the decreasing duration of time back home between deployments. Several military experts, including General Barry McCaffrey, have commented on this problem and the challenges it poses to the health and safety of our troops.

Although I am voting for this bill, I am increasingly concerned about Congress's approach to the issue of our continued involvement in Iraq . Rather than a substantive move to end the US military presence in Iraq , this bill and others that have passed recently seem to be merely symbolic moves to further politicize the war in Iraq . Clearly the American public is overwhelmingly in favor of a withdrawal from Iraq , but Congress is not listening. At best, the House seems willing to consider only such half-measures as so-called re-deployment. We need a real solution that puts the safety of our troops above politics. We need to simply bring them home. As I said recently on the Floor of the House, we just marched in so we can just march out.