

Madame Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to H.R. 1591, a pork-laden \$124.3 billion war supplemental that would force U.S. troops to withdraw from Iraq.

I strongly support benchmarks and high accountability for military and political progress in Iraq, but not in a manner that hurts our chances of accomplishing those goals. Under this legislation, U.S. troops would be withdrawn from Iraq unless the President's benchmarks for progress are met by July. This unreasonable requirement would not give General Petraeus enough time to show if the new "troop surge" is effective.

In addition, this bill would force U.S. troops to withdraw by August 2008 regardless of whether the benchmarks are met. Members of Congress should not be dictating strategy to our generals in the field.

The authors of this bill are talking out of both sides of their mouths. In attempting to reach a compromise, they would fund the troop surge while dooming it to failure by not allowing enough time to see if it works. It is clear that a forthright and honest vote on withdrawing U.S. troops would fail. The Majority Party's Leadership has instead chosen to entice Members of Congress with pork-barrel spending in exchange for their vote on this bill.

The Washington Post reported: "*House Democratic leaders are offering billions in federal funds for lawmakers' pet projects large and small to secure enough votes this week to pass an Iraq funding bill that would end the war next year.*"

This so-called "emergency" war supplemental includes non-defense spending such as \$283 million in milk subsidies, \$474 million in peanut subsidies, and \$25

million in spinach subsidies.

This legislation abandons the Majority Party's supposed leadership on fiscal discipline. It is a hypocritical and blatant attempt to gain votes from Members of Congress through special interest spending. *The bill includes non-military items such as an increase in the minimum wage, tax relief for small businesses, drought aid, hurricane relief, agricultural subsidies and funds for child health insurance. Each of these items should be debated under regular order in the House.*

I strongly support the defense-related spending items in this legislation, including critical equipment for our troops and health care improvements for our veterans such as funding for Walter Reed Army Medical Center. I was also proud to sign the discharge petition to vote on Congressman Sam Johnson's legislation to ensure full funding of our troops.

We must demand meaningful progress in Iraq to curb sectarian violence, disarm militias, train security forces and strengthen the arm of the new Iraqi government until Iraq can govern itself. However, H.R. 1591 is clearly not the answer. Immediately withdrawing U.S. troops would be an irresponsible display of politics that would endanger future generations of Americans.

I urge all of my colleagues to join me in voting against this legislation, and to demand a "clean" war supplemental that meets the needs of our troops without pork-barrel politics. Thank you, Madame Speaker.

Congressman Sam Johnson, a 29-year Air Force veteran, served in both the Korean and Vietnam Wars. A video of his remarks on H.R. 1591 is located [here](#).

