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Representative Henry A. Waxman
Statement on H.R. 1591, Emergency Supplemental Appropriations
March 23, 2007

Madam Speaker, today we have an opportunity to begin the end of American military involvement in Iraq.

I am so troubled by the war that I'm tempted to vote no on the supplemental spending bill (H.R. 1591) and claim a moral victory.

But our actions have consequences. If the war's opponents side with its proponents to defeat this bill, we will have won a moral victory at an unacceptable cost. It will give the President and our Republican colleagues the result they're hoping for. They know if the bill fails, the House will pass legislation to give the President a blank check to do whatever he wants in Iraq.

H.R. 1591 contains legally binding language that will force the President to begin redeploying troops by March 2008 and to completely withdraw them by September 2008. It is the only legislation with a realistic chance of passing that will extract us from the war.

H.R. 1591 makes sure that we give our troops and veterans support they desperately need. It includes significant increases in funding for healthcare services, troop readiness and protection, and military housing. It will fix the scandalous situation at Walter Reed Hospital. And, it requires overdue reforms in Iraq contracting.

The Bush Administration is pursuing a failed, delusional policy. We cannot stabilize Iraq alone and we cannot do so militarily. We must find a diplomatic solution with Iraq's neighbors and the international community. H.R. 1591 puts us on that path, and I urge Members to vote for it.