

Washington, DC -- The U.S. House of Representatives voted today to end funding for the war in Iraq by December 2009. U.S. Representative Michael A. Arcuri (D-Utica) voted once again for a responsible and timely redeployment of troops from Iraq and strongly supported a new GI Bill to increase educational opportunities for returning service members.

“It is evident from this vote that the U.S. House – Republicans and Democrats alike – have completely lost confidence in this Administration’s endless demands for more lives, more resources, more sacrifices, and more time,” **Arcuri said**. “The message from the American people has never been clearer – bring our troops home, and that message is beginning to transcend across partisan lines in Washington. Since taking office, I have consistently voted to bring our brave men and women home and give them the support they need.”

Today, the House of Representatives voted down the Administration’s request for an additional \$100 billion in supplemental, federal taxpayer funds for the war in Iraq. Over 130 House Republicans voted “present” during the vote to deny the Administration’s request for funds.

Arcuri has traveled to Iraq twice since taking office last year, and has consistently voted for a responsible and timely redeployment of U.S. troops out of Iraq. Following the House vote today to suspend U.S. military activities in Iraq, the House passed legislation providing for the responsible redeployment of U.S. troops from Iraq over the next 18 months.

The legislation supported by Arcuri also mandates that U.S. reconstruction aid for Iraq be matched dollar-for-dollar by the Iraqi Government. Over the last 5 years, American taxpayers have paid roughly \$48 billion for Iraqi reconstruction. Iraqi oil revenues are expected to total \$70 billion this year, according to the U.S. inspector general for Iraq reconstruction.

“With over a trillion dollars spent building roads and bridges in Iraq, it is long past time to invest in our resources in domestic priorities such as health care, education, and building our economy,” **Arcuri said**. “The American people know what is best for America: bring our troops home, provide for our veterans, and invest in our local communities.”

The House also passed legislation, strongly supported by Arcuri, to create a new GI Bill, which

fully restores GI education benefits for Iraq and Afghanistan veterans to the level available after World War II. This new GI bill would restore full, four-year college scholarships to veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars to help make them part of an economic recovery.

Under the new GI bill, service members returning from Iraq or Afghanistan, who have served 3 years on active duty, would receive benefits to cover the costs of a four-year education up to the level of the most expensive in-state public school.

To assist workers affected by the recent economic downturn, the House of Representatives also voted today to extended unemployment benefits for those who have exhausted the 26 weeks of regular benefits.

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