

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4908

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**CONGRESSMAN KAGEN SUPPORTS OUR TROOPS
AND OPPOSES PRESIDENT BUSH'S FLAWED IRAQ WAR POLICY**

"Enough is Enough"

The vote today was not about ending the Iraq war. It was about giving our troops the equipment necessary to survive, and protecting them from a President who cannot understand reality.

Yes, today I voted to support our troops, but not this failed policy. I voted to bring our troops home alive, in one piece, and mentally healthy. I did what was best for your children, your friends, your neighbors and my patients. And like nearly everyone I have the honor of representing, I remain steadfastly against our endless involvement in the Iraqi civil war.

Once again, I call upon President Bush and his top staff to change their flawed policy, or resign immediately so our country can get back on the right track.

Our nation faces an impossible reality in Iraq. The truth is things are bad in Iraq and getting worse — with no end in sight.

After four years of conflict, with nearly 3,500 courageous American soldiers dead (and counting) and more than 650,000 Iraqi civilians killed, and after spending billions of your hard-earned tax dollars on private no-bid contractors, the Iraqi government is still unwilling or unable to stand up and help itself.

I was shocked to learn that one-third of the elected Iraqi government does not even live in Iraq — they live in London — even as our own sons and daughters are being killed in their centuries-old civil war.

And what about the Iraqi Parliament? Well, in the middle of a civil war, they are talking about taking a two-month vacation — as our troops continue to make the ultimate sacrifice.

Unfortunately, today's vote cannot and will not end this war. The fact is there are too many Republicans in the House and Senate, and there are simply not enough votes to overcome a Bush veto. And make no mistake — Iraq is President Bush's War. He is the only one, today, who can stop it.

The commander of our forces in Iraq told the President and Congress that the war in Iraq cannot be won militarily. It can only end with a political solution, not a military one.

As your Congressman, I have been working hard to find a way home for our brave troops, and I have supported every measure to end the war. I have also voted for every measure to improve the safety and readiness of our soldiers, to guarantee they receive the expert medical care they have earned when they come home, to increase their pay, and to deploy our forces away from Iraq and toward Al-Qaeda.

But the President vetoed, or threatened to veto, every one of these measures. He has failed to listen to his advisors, to our most experienced military generals, and to the will of the people. Simply put, President Bush has repeatedly failed to support our troops.

I have listened to countless Wisconsin veterans who served with honor, courage and incredible skill, and to the parents and grandparents of fallen soldiers. From Appleton, Green Bay, Ashwaubenon, Pulaski, Waupaca, Clintonville, Shawano, Sturgeon Bay and Marinette, those who fought for our values have shared their feelings with me.

Please, just for a moment, listen to their heartfelt thoughts:

"We need to get our boys home." "We went in with not enough troops." "It is just like Vietnam." "This war can never be won — we don't belong there." "We all back our troops, but not this dumb policy." "Our President has a complete disregard for humanity." "We need a President who believes in diplomacy." "The President will not listen to ordinary people, and he does not understand when he is wrong." "The higher-ups should send their kids over there." One veteran commented, "I support what we are doing over there."

Today, I voted to provide our troops with equipment they need to survive. Someone has to protect our soldiers from President Bush's poor judgment. Only the President can redeploy our troops, and I do not want our soldiers in Iraq to suffer because of political games in Washington. To many, it appears that President Bush has been using our troops as hostages in a political game of chicken.

Finally, let me share with you the pain of a grandmother whose grandson perished in Iraq several weeks ago: *"Oh, it is so hard to talk about... He was such a bright young man. He wanted a college education and was going to use the money he was being paid to go to school. He played guitar... Both his arms and a leg were blown off... Where is this war getting us? We got Saddam. Let's bring our military home. I have another grandson ready to go over to Iraq. I don't want to see it happen to anyone else. Enough is enough."*

I agree.

Too many lives have been lost, and too many more remain at risk. When President Bush is unable to see and hear the realities on the ground in Iraq, and here at home, *enough is enough*. Both he and his administration seem determined to sign the death warrants of untold numbers of American soldiers and Iraqi civilians. If so, they should all resign immediately due to incompetence.

Enough is enough.

Remember: the vote today was not about ending the Iraqi civil war. It was about giving our troops equipment they need to survive, and protecting them from an incompetent President. Please join me in my efforts to support our troops, as we begin to end our involvement in their endless civil war, for we are unable to solve every other problem we face here at home until we stop bleeding ourselves in Iraq.

In my heart and in my mind, I know there is a better way of solving our country's problems. By working together, we will find it and build a better nation for all of us.

Thank you for your time, and God bless America.

Steve Kagen
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