

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515
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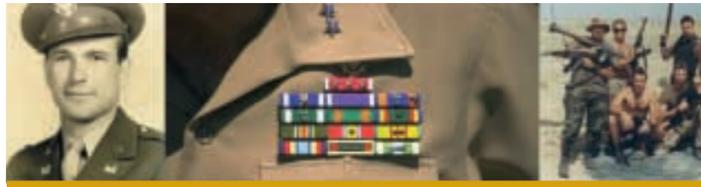


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Bart Stupak
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SPECIAL REPORT

Iraq, Afghanistan, Foreign and Veterans Affairs



Bart Stupak
MI - 1st District

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, DC 20515

Dear friend:

On October 9, 2002, I took the floor of the House of Representatives to express my views...and my serious reservations about committing our young men and women in the armed forces to the war in Iraq. I said, "The United States has never invoked a first strike invasion of another nation based on fear of what might happen tomorrow!" and that "...If we allow the U.S. military to invade a nation or change a regime because of fear, then the goals of terrorism have been accomplished."

A little more than a year later, where do we stand? Saddam Hussein has been driven from power, though not eliminated from the scene. The much discussed "weapons of mass destruction" have not been found, casting further doubt on the urgency of our military action. Because the Administration insisted on prosecuting the war almost unilaterally and on its own schedule, the United States is bearing nearly the entire burden for the reconstruction of Iraq. The President's \$87 billion supplemental appropriation is not likely to be the final request for American funds. Violence continues to expand in Bagdad and throughout the Middle East.

On the positive side, the young women and men of our armed forces performed with the courage, valor and distinction that has consistently made our nation proud. Their sacrifices and those of their families are in keeping with those made by past generations of Americans. As a member of Congress, I am committed to making good on Americas promises to our service men and women, our veterans and their families.

In this newsletter, I want inform you on how the Congress is attempting to deal with these challenges. As always, I encourage you to share your views with me on these critical issues. Whether we agree or disagree, it is important that I receive your input.

Sincerely,

Bart Stupak
Bart Stupak
Member of Congress



Members Call for Independent Commission on Intelligence about Iraq

Now that the President has declared major hostilities over in Iraq, this country should examine the quality and accuracy of the intelligence information received by the President and Members of Congress prior to the legislative approval to go to war in Iraq. Rep. Bart Stupak joined 65 co-sponsors in proposing legislation (H.R. 2625) to create an independent commission modeled after the 9-11 Commission. Cosponsors include more than two dozen Members who voted for authorizing troops in Iraq.

The commission would examine the Executive

Branch's effort to collect, assess and interpret intelligence regarding the various threats posed by Iraq, as well as public representations by Executive officials. It would study the effectiveness of international collaborative intelligence efforts and review the findings and conclusions of other Congressional and Executive investigations.

The commission would report to Congress within 18 months on its findings and conclusions, as well as make recommendations on measures to enhance the accuracy of intelligence

and public representations regarding that intelligence in the future.

"I think enough time has passed since the official end of the Iraq war (May 1) to hold the Administration accountable for its pre-invasion claims of imminent danger from weapons of mass destruction," Stupak said. "The American people have a right to know that they can rely on our intelligence apparatus to provide the kind of accurate information required to make well-reasoned foreign policy."



Rep. Bart Stupak at West Point with Cadets he appointed to the Academy.

STUPAK BILL TO PROVIDE A ONE-TIME \$1,500 BONUS FOR U.S. COMBAT ZONE TROOPS

Stupak's proposed legislation (H.R. 3051) directs the Secretary of Defense to pay a one-time bonus of \$1,500 to each member of the Army, Navy, Air Force, or Marine Corps, including reserve and National Guard components, who served for any period of time in a combat zone designated in connection with Operation Iraqi Freedom or Operation Enduring Freedom. The same legislation calls for the Secretary of Homeland Security to pay the same bonus to members of the Coast Guard and Coast Guard Reserve serving under the same conditions.

Although Members of Congress may have different ideas about U.S. policy in Iraq, all agree that our servicemen and women deserve our sincere recognition of their courageous efforts. \$1,500 will not only help to boost morale, but it will send a strong, bipartisan message to our troops that Congress is unified behind them. Regrettably, this bill, as an amendment to the \$87 billion Iraq supplemental appropriation, was defeated on a largely partisan vote.

A Few Items in the Administration's \$20 Billion Request for Iraqi Reconstruction

- \$900 million to import petroleum products such as kerosene and diesel to a country with the world's second largest oil reserves,
- \$164 million to 'refine the curriculum' for training the Iraqi military,
- \$54 million for "comprehensive technical and business process studies" into a computer network for the Iraqi postal system,
- \$20 million for 2,000 four-week business courses, at \$10,000 per student, and
- \$10 million to finance 100 prison-building experts at \$100,000 a piece for six months.

A Few Items Not Found in the Administration's Request

- a \$1,500 bonus for U.S. troops serving in Iraq and Afghanistan,
- clean and safe drinking water for our troops,
- travel expenses to their hometowns for troops on Rest and Relaxation (R & R) leave,
- full funding for bullet proof vest to outfit all service member serving in combat, and
- full funding for repair and replacement of equipment that our troops are using in Iraq including Humvees, M-1 tanks and Bradley fighting vehicles.

\$87 Billion Funding Plan for Iraq Seriously Flawed

Expressing his strong support for the \$68.3 billion sought to make sure our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan are safe and well-equipped to do their jobs, Congressman Bart Stupak's serious concerns about the \$18.6 billion for rebuilding Iraq caused him to vote against the passage of the Supplemental Appropriation.

Action to separate the military portion from the reconstruction portion of the bill failed when the Majority Leadership prevented it from even coming to a vote of the House.

Stupak's amendment would make all or part of the money for rebuilding Iraq a loan, secured by Iraq's massive oil reserves – the second largest in the world – also failed to pass in the House. This was in spite of repeated assurances made to the American

people before the war by officials in the White House and the Defense Department that Iraq's frozen assets and oil reserves could and should be used to repay for its own reconstruction.

Majority Leadership also stopped Stupak's amendments that would require matching funds from Iraq or the international community for reconstruction projects; or that all steel used in reconstruction be steel "melted and poured" in the United States.

Another Stupak amendment which would have provided a \$1,500 bonus for our service men and women including the National Guard and Reserves did not pass on 213-213 tie vote on a partisan vote.

"I question the logic of sending \$18.6 billion in taxpayer dollars to

rebuild Iraq when we have pressing needs here at home," Stupak said. "America needs jobs, affordable health care, quality education and lower prescription drug prices."

"I also don't understand how the Congress can give big tax breaks to millionaires, vote themselves a \$4,000 cost-of-living-allowance, and yet deny our brave servicemen and women a modest \$1,500 bonus."

On Friday, October 17, 2003, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the Administration's request on a vote of 303-125. Later that day, the U.S. Senate passed an amended version of the Request which called for grants and loans for rebuilding. Both Bills were referred to a Conference Committee for resolution.

Stupak Works to Honor and Protect American Veterans

Recognizing the sacred obligation owed to those Americans who served their country as member of the armed services, Congressman Bart Stupak has joined with other Members in co-sponsoring legislation to salute and assist military veterans.

H.R. 303 Would End Tax on Disabled Vets (Known as Concurrent Receipt). The Retired Pay Restoration Act would assist more than 700,000 disabled veterans who are military retirees to receive both the disability pay and retirement pay they have earned and deserve. It is critical to stop penalizing our disabled veterans. Despite 370 cosponsors and Senate passage, House leadership has refused to let the bill come to the floor for a vote. Currently 203 Members have signed a discharge petition to let the "Disabled Veterans Tax" be put to a vote of the House. Only 15 more signatures are needed.

TRICARE Bills Would Improve Military Retiree Health Care. A strong supporter of TRICARE program, Rep. Stupak co-sponsored H.R. 1231, a bill to allow federal civilian and military retirees to pay health insurance premiums on a pre-tax basis and to allow a tax deduction for TRICARE supplemental premiums.

Military Survivor Benefits Improvement Act Aids Military Spouses. H.R. 548 adjusts the basic survivor benefit for spouses, age 62 or over, of former military personnel, and incrementally increases from 35% to 55% survivor benefits of the deceased military members retired pay.

H.R. 1466 Assists National Guard and Reservist Families. The Mobilized Reserve Family Health Care Act of 2003 will provide families of reservists and guard personnel with the option of continuing their private health insurance coverage while their family members are called to lengthy active duty deployments. While the family would assume the cost, the legislation would provide tax credits to offset the cost of the coverage. This bill recognizes the increased reliance on the men and women of the Reserves and National Guard in the defense of the nation and their great sacrifices in that regard.

