

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Rep. Harry Mitchell today voted to establish benchmarks for U.S. involvement in the Iraq War as the House of Representatives passed an amendment to the Iraq emergency supplemental by a bipartisan vote of 280 to 142.

The U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Care, Katrina Recovery, and Iraq Accountability Appropriations Act 2007 also provides \$1.8 billion for improving veterans' health care, including \$100 million for mental health services for veterans and \$595 million to build and upgrade VA facilities.

President Bush is expected to sign the legislation into law.

Mitchell made the following statement:

“This is the first step in a long process to demand accountability in Iraq.

“The Iraqi government must begin to take responsibility for its own security and stability. In January, Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki publicly committed to meeting a set of benchmarks, including quelling sectarian violence, disarming sectarian militias and developing a plan to share oil revenues equitably among all Iraqis.

“Yet, five months later, his government has failed to meet those benchmarks. And now, while American troops are still in harm's way, the Iraqi government is planning to take a two-month vacation. That's unacceptable.”