

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Rep. Harry Mitchell today called on the House of Representatives to investigate media reports that the Army is redeploying "troops with serious injuries and other medical problems" to Iraq, "including GIs who doctors have said are medically unfit for battle." [Source: Salon, March 11, 2007]

"If these reports are accurate, they represent a moral outrage of the highest order," said Mitchell. "We have a responsibility to get to the bottom of this. Sadly, moldy walls at Walter Reed were just the tip of iceberg in what has become an increasingly disturbing pattern of how many of our troops and veterans are being treated."

Mitchell is the sponsor of the Dignity for Wounded Warriors Act of 2007, which will help returning troops and eliminate the red tape so many encounter when they return home.

Mitchell and many of his House colleagues sent a letter to U.S. Rep. Ike Skelton, chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, to investigate the matter.

Text of the letter from Mitchell and House colleagues:

March 15, 2007

The Honorable Ike Skelton
Chairman, House Armed Services Committee
2120 Rayburn House Office Building

Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Skelton:

We are writing to express our deepest concern regarding recent press accounts of the redeployment of servicemen and women to Iraq before they have recovered from serious injuries. This shocking revelation urgently requires the attention of Congress, and therefore we respectfully request that the House Armed Services Committee conduct thorough hearings to investigate the matter.

The news stories focus on the Army's 3rd Infantry Division at Fort Benning, Georgia. However, recent revelations about the treatment of soldiers at Walter Reed Army Medical Center force us to consider whether this is part of a larger pattern of abuse.

The conflict in Iraq is placing incredible strain on our soldiers and their families. When our men and women volunteer to put their lives on the line, they deserve to know that they will receive the finest care and that they will not be returned to battle before they are ready.

Further investigation is imperative to ensure that our servicemen and women are not placed in situations where they find that, due to their serious physical injuries, they are unable to effectively defend themselves, let alone our great nation.

Mitchell Calls for Investigation Amid Reports of Wounded Soldiers Sent to Battle

Wednesday, 14 March 2007

We are deeply grateful for your leadership on the House Armed Services Committee, and we would appreciate your attention to this matter.