

(Washington, DC) - Congressman Herger today voted against H.R. 2956, legislation that would require most U.S. troops to withdraw from Iraq by April 1, 2008. Herger issued the following statement regarding his opposition to the measure:

"Leaders in Washington have regrettably once again pushed legislation that would mandate a precipitous withdrawal from Iraq, just as developments on the ground are starting to indicate that General Petraeus' security plan is working," Herger stated. "Although the troop surge has been fully in place for just three weeks, General Petraeus recently indicated that sectarian violence is down considerably, that Iraqis are increasingly fighting al Qaeda jihadists, and that there have been 'some encouraging signs' that Iraqi leaders are taking steps toward political reconciliation. I strongly believe we should give General Petraeus and his troops on the ground the 'more time' they want and need to fully implement the comprehensive security plan.

"War is never easy," continued Herger. "Like all Americans, I want our troops to come home as soon as possible and my heart aches when Americans lose their lives fighting for our nation. Further, I believe the Iraqi government must immediately take additional meaningful steps to foster reconciliation and unity among the Iraqi people. Still, I believe Congress should wait until General Petraeus provides his September assessment before reexamining our policy in Iraq. General Petraeus is correct -- our mission in Iraq is a 'test of wills.' I believe it would be deeply irresponsible for Congress to lose its resolve to succeed in Iraq, particularly just as we are beginning to see positive signs."

Herger concluded, "We know that al Qaeda has responded to our security plan with a surge in indiscriminate suicide bombings. Recognizing that they have fewer and fewer friends in Iraq, they are desperately seeking to foment sectarian violence, just as they did early last year by bombing a sacred Shiite shrine. Their stated goal is to 'expel Americans from Iraq' so that they can move forward with establishing a safe haven for terrorists in Iraq. It is no wonder that General Petraeus has called al Qaeda 'probably public enemy number one' in Iraq. I strongly believe we must continue to stay on the offensive and relentlessly pursue al Qaeda and other extremists in Iraq."