



Office of Representative Heath Shuler

Representing North Carolina's Eleventh Congressional District

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Rep. Shuler Votes to Change Direction in Iraq *House Passes Measure to Redeploy U.S. Forces by April 1, 2008*

Washington, D.C. – Representative Heath Shuler joined with a majority of the House of Representatives this evening to change the direction of the war in Iraq and responsibly redeploy American forces. The Responsible Redeployment from Iraq Act, H.R. 2956, was passed the House and requires American forces to begin redeploying within 120 days and to complete the transition to a limited presence in Iraq by April 1, 2008.

The vote to change direction in Iraq came on the same day the Initial Benchmark Assessment Report required by the U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Care, Katrina Recovery, and Iraq Accountability Appropriations Act of 2007 was released. The Initial Benchmark Assessment Report states that the Iraqi government has made unsatisfactory progress on many of the major benchmarks including eliminating militia control of local security, increasing the number of Iraqi Security Forces units capable of operating independently, and establishing a date for provincial elections. Additionally, the report states that the "prerequisites" for disarming the militias in Iraq are not even present.

In addition to requiring the redeployment of American forces The Responsible Redeployment from Iraq Act requires the development of a comprehensive strategy for U.S. policy in Iraq and limits missions any remaining forces in Iraq may undertake to duties such as counter-terrorism, and protecting American personnel at the embassy in Iraq.

"Our men and women in uniform have performed bravely in Iraq. They have carried out every military mission put before them with unsurpassed professionalism, courage, and success. Now, after spending four years in the middle of an ever-deteriorating sectarian conflict, we must allow our Armed Forces to focus on the military missions for which they are trained," said Rep. Shuler. "We can and will continue the fighting terrorists that threaten America wherever they exist. I will always vote to provide our troops with the funding they need to protect themselves and carry out their missions, but I cannot and will not allow America's men and women to police the civil war that is being waged in Iraq."

"Every American hopes and prays that our troops return home quickly and safely. However, those of us in elected office must not only fervently hope and pray -- we must act. Today we did."

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