

August 3, 2007

**TO:** Interested Parties  
**FROM:** Matt Bennett, VP for Public Affairs and Jeremy Ershow, National Security Policy Fellow  
**RE:** Supporting the Military Readiness Bill

Yesterday the House passed H.R. 3159, the Ensuring Military Readiness Through Stability and Predictability Act. This bill, which was sponsored by Rep. Ellen Tauscher (D-CA), mandates that active duty troops get the same amount of time at home as the time they are deployed and that reservists get a three-to-one dwell-deployment ratio. This measure stalled in the Senate due to a Republican filibuster of a bill sponsored by Senator Jim Webb (D-VA), and President Bush has threatened to veto the legislation if it passes.

This obstructionism is unconscionable. The Bush Administration has taken the world's greatest fighting force to the brink of disaster, and they and their congressional allies are now resisting sensible, good faith efforts to begin to repair the breach. ***The Tauscher Bill is not just about keeping faith with our troops, as important as that is—it's about American national security.*** If we do not provide more time for rest, training and preparation, American troops simply cannot fight effectively in Iraq and Afghanistan or be prepared to face our foes elsewhere in the world.

***We recommend that Members take this issue head-on during the August recess, emphasizing that a veto promise from President Bush is a threat to our national security. Just as a car cannot continually run without motor oil, no war can be fought by troops without sufficient rest, training and preparation. And a global counterinsurgency of the type we must fight today especially requires troops to be properly prepared.***

## The Problem

As the Army itself has acknowledged, a sustainable cycle of deployment in wartime requires that troops spend at least 2 years away from combat for every year in combat. Troops returning from combat need time to rest and decompress, refresh their basic skills and prepare for the ever-changing battlefield of their next mission.

By contrast, today the ratio is upside-down: Soldiers and Marines deploying to Iraq and Afghanistan routinely spend only one year away from combat for every 15 months in combat. As a result:

### **Our Army and Marine Corps are less effective than they should be.**

- Because training and preparation times have been slashed, there is little or no time to train on key counterinsurgency skills like language, culture, or intelligence, and new troops often don't get to practice with their unit before deployment.
- Because rest time has been cut, troops today are under greater combat strain than any others in modern American history, including World War II. If the troops are mentally unprepared for war, they cannot be successful in the 'hearts and minds' battle of counterinsurgency.
- 30% of Soldiers and Marines in Iraq combat units have anxiety, acute stress, or depression.
- Research in Iraq has shown that troops with high levels of combat stress are more likely to hit civilians, violate the military's ethical standards, or say that civilians should not be treated with dignity and respect. This has serious repercussions in a counterinsurgency.

### **We are less able to manage other conflicts.**

- No Army brigade has enough equipment to be sent quickly into combat, except the one unit defending South Korea. That means that the Army's "ready brigade" is no longer ready—we have no Army forces prepared for immediate deployment to hot-spots elsewhere in the world.

### **The Army is losing quality personnel.**

- Deployments are long, frequent, and stressful, which has caused experienced soldiers to leave and recruit quality to drop.
- Junior officers and NCO's are leaving the service at the highest rates in 30 years.
- Recruiting woes have required the Army to cut training, medical and moral fitness standards. In 2007, 12% of recruits had criminal records.

## **The Message**

America's military is at stake. After 4 years of unsustainably long and frequent deployments, our ground forces are suffering in effectiveness, and this has put America at risk. President Bush has stubbornly refused to accept this reality, just as he has stubbornly refused to change course in Iraq. H.R. 3159 will make Americans safer by restoring balance to the cycle of deployments and giving our troops adequate time to rest, train and prepare for war.