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LARSON: GOP IRAQ RESOLUTION ATTEMPTS TO POLITICIZE SUPPORT FOR THE TROOPS

WASHINGTON, D.C.- U.S. Congressman John B. Larson (CT-1) today released the following statement regarding H. Res. 557. The resolution, put forward by House Republican Leadership, praises U.S. troops and the Iraqi people, but also contains language that would force members that vote in favor of the measure to also support the war with Iraq, which began one year ago. The Rules Committee also refused to allow Democrats to put forward any amendment to the resolution.

◆ There is no doubt that every member of Congress supports our troops. This resolution is really a shameful attempt by Republican Leadership to force Members to support the foreign policy of the Bush Administration and their discredited reasons for going to war with Iraq, under the guise of praising the troops and the Iraqi people. At a time when the nation needs to pull together, this resolution is an effort to divide and polarize it.

◆ One year after the war began, the CIA Director has admitted that intelligence agencies never told the White House that Iraq was a threat, as so many claimed it was before the war. The President and members of his administration claimed Iraq posed a ◆ unique, ◆ ◆ immediate, ◆ and ◆ mortal ◆ threat to the United States. Now, David Kay, the chief UN weapons inspector has made clear that Iraq posed no such threat and that Saddam Hussein, while a brutal dictator, did not have weapons of mass destruction. Our troops were sent into battle without the proper equipment, including armored Humvees and up-to-date body armor. U.S. taxpayers have had to bear the \$120 billion cost of the war alone, with little international support. It is now clear that the Bush Administration in its rush to go to war misled Congress and the American people.

◆ This resolution is an attempt by the Republican Leadership to paper over the mistakes, miscalculations and failures of the Bush Administration in its justification for war and its conduct of operations in Iraq.

◆ Every Member of Congress believes our courageous troops have performed remarkably and that Saddam Hussein was a brutal dictator. However, the claims of the administration that he was a threat to the U.S. and the world were clearly incorrect and post-war planning was botched from the beginning. Yet this resolution attempts to force members into voting in favor of the war, alongside supporting the troops and the sacrifices made by the people of Iraq. The politicization of this issue is an insult to our troops and the Iraqi people.

◆ The Rules Committee also blocked any amendments from being offered in order to ensure that House Democrats could not offer a resolution that supports the troops and the Iraqi people, but does not endorse the flawed reasons that the Bush Administration used to go to war. It is ironic that as we debate a resolution praising our troops as they help build a democracy in Iraq, the Republican Leadership is subverting the democratic process here in the House by refusing to allow any dissenting amendments.◆

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