

Larsen must vote against continued Iraq War funding

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I believe in Rick Larsen. I believe in his capacity to become a moral leader. As my representative in congress, he is my closest link to the epicenter of political decision-making and my best chance at having my viewpoints on foreign policy considered at the legislative level. We live in a representative Democracy and I expect him to take the message of the people to Washington, DC. This is the reason I voted for him.

My primary political and moral concern is with ending the US occupation of Iraq. The fact that Mr. Larsen sits on the House Armed Services Committee makes his actions and votes pointedly critical for his constituents who are fed up with this war and its legacies of violence and hate.

Disappointedly, I have heard Mr. Larsen, in public, excuse himself as 273rd in seniority in the US House of Representatives even though his committee has a significant role in developing our nation's overall strategic posture in regard to nuclear weapons and military fortitude.

During this charged time in history, no one has the right, or luxury, to exempt themselves from taking action and speaking out for what is right and just. The citizenry of a democracy has the duty to recognize, cultivate, and use its power for good. We do not have to be members of congress to affect change; though, we do need champions in political office. This is why I cannot give up on Rick Larsen.

The congressman appears to have made some progress in his votes regarding the war such as his vote for the McGovern Amendment that would have brought most of our troops home by February 2008. However, his final vote in May authorizing an additional \$120 billion for the Iraq War was unacceptable. Since the invasion of Iraq, this occupation has cost us \$470 billion. Now, the White House has announced plans to add an additional \$50 billion to the proposed 2008 Defense Budget of \$460 billion and the \$147 billion already earmarked for the US wars. The budget and supplemental are set to be voted on in mid-September.

Iraq is in chaos. We have lost 3,801 (as of 9/28/07) soldiers. One million Iraqi civilians have been killed and 4,000,000 displaced. We were the factor which sparked the chaos and our continued presence is a firebrand.

Along with thousands of his constituents, I am asking Mr. Larsen to vote against continued funding for the Iraq War. In July, seventy of his colleagues signed a letter to George Bush stating they will support appropriating additional funds for the 2008 Defense Budget solely for the protection and safe redeployment of all US troops out of Iraq. It is possible to defy this executive.

Congress will eventually halt funding; it's inevitable. When they have finally had enough they will stop the flow of money, whether it be a year from now or in January 2011. If

Mr. Larsen votes down funding now, his leadership will be vindicated later. Most importantly, his vote could expedite the process of withdrawal and save the lives of US service members and innocent Iraqi families.

We must remember that it is not a one-time deal. One vote is just the beginning of becoming a leader of the people. This is the critical moment, and this is the vote with which to begin. The people and politicians, together, must end this unjust war. We must stop the funding, bring the troops home, and let Iraq begin to heal from the carnage of our lies.

I believe in transformation based on moral imperative. I am counting on Rick Larsen to use his power and become a moral decider. If not now, when?

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