

House passes Iraq funding bill

by UPI

WASHINGTON - The U.S. House of Representatives passed a \$124 billion Iraq war-funding bill that would start to withdraw U.S. troops from Iraq Oct. 1.

U.S. President George Bush has promised to veto legislation that includes a troop withdrawal timetable. Democrats have acknowledged they don't have the votes to withstand a veto.

The bill approved by the House of Representatives 218-208 Wednesday was expected to be approved by the U.S. Senate on Thursday. Two House Republicans voted for the measure while 13 Democrats voted against it.

"How many more suicide bombs must kill American soldiers before this president offers a timeline for our troops to come home?" U.S. Rep. Patrick J. Murphy, D-Pa., and an Iraq war veteran, said. "How many more military leaders must declare the war will not be won militarily before this president demands that the Iraqis stand up and fight for their country? ... This bill says enough is enough."

Congressional leaders planned to send the bill to Bush next week, the fourth anniversary of the president's speech in which he declared the end of major combat operations in Iraq, The New York Times reported.

A White House statement called the bill "disappointing legislation that insists on a surrender date, handcuffs our generals, and contains billions of dollars in spending unrelated to the war."

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