

House OKs new Iraq funding bill

by UPI

WASHINGTON - The U.S. House of Representatives, despite a threatened presidential veto, passed a \$96 billion war spending measure Thursday.

The bill, approved on a 221-to-205 vote, would fund U.S. combat operations into July, CNN reported.

Bush said Thursday he would veto any bill containing "haphazard, piecemeal funding."

Under the bill's provisions, additional funding would require a report on how well the Iraqi government is meeting a series of benchmarks. It does not include any timetables.

The measure goes to the Senate, where Republican and Democratic leaders have been trying to work out a compromise with the White House.

The administration earlier said it wanted a bill that funded the war through September, the end of the budget year.

Bush said troops sought by Gen. David Petraeus, commander of U.S. troops in Iraq, wouldn't be in place until mid-June.

"My message to the members of Congress is, 'Whatever your beliefs may be, let's make sure our troops get funded. And let's make sure politicians don't tell our commanders how to conduct operations. Let's don't hamstring our people in the field.' That's my message," the president said.

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