

greatest drivers. He was the 1973 NASCAR champion and won 21 races, including the race in 1957 at Daytona. In addition to those accomplishments, Benny was the first driver to be a Cup competitor, to qualify for a race over 200 miles per hour, driving 200.176 miles per hour at the Winston 500 at Talladega Superspeedway in 1982.

Benny Parsons made 526 starts from 1964 until his retirement in 1988. With such an outstanding record, Benny was inducted into the International Motorsports Hall of Fame in 1994 and continued his passion by broadcasting from the pit and won a Cable Ace Award for best sports analyst on his first season in the booth.

I think that NBC sports champion Dick Ebersol said it best about Benny, commenting, "Benny was a beloved and widely respected member of the NASCAR community. He was a great driver and a terrific broadcaster, but above anything else, he was a kind and generous human being. His character and spirit will define how he is remembered by all of us."

Benny fought cancer to the end with optimism and grace, inspiring countless people. His compassion, generosity and charming personality will be missed. Benny had made North Carolina and NASCAR proud, and his memory will be a lasting one of inspiration and dedication.

CONCLUDING OUR INVOLVEMENT IN IRAQ AND BRINGING OUR TROOPS HOME

THE SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. WATERS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, today Representative WOOLSEY, Representative LEE and I introduced a bill that would conclude our involvement in Iraq and bring our troops home. The bill, H.R. 508, is entitled, Bring Our Troops Home and Sovereignty of Iraq Restoration Act of 2007. The bill has 16 original cosponsors. Representative WOOLSEY was on the floor a moment ago, and she shared with you some of the provisions of that bill.

I will reiterate, I will repeat, if enacted, the bill would repeal the use-of-force authorization passed by Congress in 2002 and requires a complete withdrawal of U.S. troops and contractors hired by the U.S. Government within 6 months of the enactment of this bill.

The bill authorizes the President to support an international stabilization force in Iraq, if the Iraqi government requests such a force, but U.S. troops would not be permitted to participate in the international force.

It would turn security activities and military operations in Iraq over to the elected Iraqi government within 6 months of the date of enactment.

It would prohibit the U.S. from establishing permanent bases in Iraq.

It would cap the number of officers and employees of the United States as-

signed to the U.S. embassy in Iraq at 500.

It would accelerate the training and equipping of Iraq military and security forces, and pursue security and stability in Iraq through diplomacy.

It would provide assistance to the Iraqi government in recovering cultural and historical artifacts that have disappeared since the U.S. invaded in 2003.

It will do a number of other things, but let me wrap this up by saying it would fully fund veterans' health care, including mental health care, for our returning veterans.

Mr. Speaker, I am spending an inordinate amount of time on this issue, along with many of my other colleagues, and I have chosen to be a major cosponsor on this bill because I feel it is absolutely my responsibility to not only articulate what is wrong with this war, but to do everything that I can to encourage the President of the United States, the commander in chief, to bring our troops home.

I think it is important to do this because we have lost over 3,000 American soldiers. As a matter of fact, I think it is about 3,034.

I look at the continuing devastation in Iraq, and I see that just day before yesterday I believe over 100 Iraqis were killed and maybe twice as many was injured and we lost four more American soldiers.

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This has got to stop. We are in control. We can stop this. I am encouraging our Commander-in-Chief to bring our troops home, and to pursue diplomacy, save lives. Because I believe if they continue down the path that they are going, we are going to have a real blood bath in a short period of time.

This surge, this expansion of the war that has been advocated and pursued and pushed by this President is absolutely the wrong thing to do. I know that he has been advised and he has accepted the advice that he is to go into Sadr City and he is to confront al-Sadr, who is the head of a tremendous militia. They have over 50,000 signed up in that militia and more coming each day. I don't want our American soldiers to confront that militia. I don't want our American soldiers in the middle of this civil war. I don't want these young boys who come from our cities and our towns and these young girls who come from our villages and our hamlets of America to be caught in between Sunnis and Shiites and Kurds. They don't know a Sunni from a Shiite. We don't speak the language. We haven't trained people. Even the soldiers that are supposed to be embedded doing the training can't speak the language. They are depending on interpreters. And let me tell you, even some of the soldiers that we are training in Iraq are turning their backs on us. They desert our soldiers in the middle of a conflict, in a confrontation. These are the ones that we are training, that

we are depending on to take over the security of Iraq somehow. It is not going to happen.

We have to leave, and we should not be deterred from the mission of leaving because someone is going to accuse us of cutting and running. We know how these sound bites take place. We know what people do when they want to promote their position. They will mischaracterize what is being done. We have got to have the courage to stand up and stand up for our American soldiers.

I support and cosponsor this new bill. I would ask my colleagues to support it.

Today, Representative WOOLSEY, Representative LEE and I introduced a bill today that would conclude our involvement in Iraq and bring our troops home.

The bill, H.R. 508 is titled "Bring the Troops Home and Iraq Sovereignty Restoration Act of 2007."

The bill has 16 original cosponsors.

If enacted, the bill would:

Repeals the use of force authorization passed by Congress in 2002.

Requires the complete withdrawal of U.S. troops and contractors hired by the U.S. government within 6 months of the enactment of this bill. The bill authorizes the President to support an international stabilization force in Iraq, if the Iraqi government requests such a force, but U.S. troops would not be permitted to participate in the international force;

Turn security activities and military operations in Iraq over to the elected Iraqi government within 6 months of the date of enactment.

Prohibit the U.S. from establishing permanent bases in Iraq;

Cap the number of officers and employees of the United States assigned to the U.S. embassy in Iraq at 500;

Accelerate the training and equipping of Iraqi military and security forces;

Pursue security and stability in Iraq through diplomacy;

Provide Iraqi government assistance in destroying/cleaning up land mines, unexploded ordnance and depleted uranium shells;

Provide assistance to the Iraqi government in recovering cultural and historic artifacts that have disappeared since the U.S. invaded in 2003;

Provide compensation for Iraqi noncombatant civilian casualties—except for those individuals that participated in the armed insurgency after May 1, 2003; and

Fully fund veterans healthcare, including mental health care, for our returning veterans.

This bill stands in stark contrast to President Bush's proposal to send more than 20,000 additional troops to Iraq.

The President proposes more of the same, while we provide a way to remove our troops from the sectarian civil war in Iraq, return our troops to their loved ones and begin the process of restoring our credibility throughout the world.

EVEN THE SOLDIERS WILL TELL YOU: "NOTHING'S GOING TO HELP"

THE SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CARDOZA). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.