Washington, DC -- Rep. Peter Welch issued the following statement in response to President Bush's proposal to escalate the American troop presence in Iraq:

"I strongly oppose President Bush's proposed escalation of 20,000 more troops for the war in Iraq. I believe the war's escalation is the wrong decision for America and it is the wrong decision for Iraq.

"It is not the job of the American military or the responsibility of the American taxpayer to referee a civil war. The President should heed the recommendation of the bipartisan Iraq Study Committee to redeploy our troops by March 2008, or sooner, and pursue a new course.

"We must meet our obligation to our troops currently in the field, but I will vigorously oppose funding to support the escalation of a failed policy."