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Washington, DC -- As the Iraq war enters its fifth year today, Rep. Peter Welch issued the following statement, stating it is long overdue that Congress challenge the President's failed policy and provide a new direction in Iraq:

"The Iraq war is already longer than U.S. participation in World War II, World War I, the Korean War, or the Civil War, yet the President continues to disregard sensible advice even from top generals and clings to a failed policy. The need for a change of direction has never been clearer. The Pentagon now acknowledges that Iraq is in a civil war. The war has strained our military, challenging our ability to respond to new threats. The human cost of the war has been high, with more than 3,100 U.S. casualties and tens of thousands more wounded. And the cost to the American taxpayer is over \$600 billion.

"While the troops have performed their job - doing everything asked of them - the Administration's policy on Iraq has been a failure. It must be challenged and it must be changed. Congress must continue to demand accountability from this President and provide oversight of his policies.

"The President has stubbornly said he will veto any measure that calls for a timetable for ending the war. I will not support any legislation without a timetable to end the war.

"Congress must require accountability from the President and Iraq's leaders and provide the leadership necessary to end this war. Four years into this war, it's time for Congress to challenge the President's open-ended commitment of U.S. troops to referee a civil war and provide a new course in Iraq. We must end this war."