



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 30, 2008

CONTACT: SCOT ROSS
PHONE: 414-220-9250

Wisconsinites Say ‘Mission Accomplished’ When Troops Come Home

Five Years Since Declaration, 90 Wisconsin Troops Have Perished in Iraq

Madison – With tomorrow’s fifth year anniversary of George Bush’s declaration from the deck of the U.S.S. Abraham Lincoln that “major combat operations in Iraq have ended,” a group representing veterans, military families and state progressives joined at the State Capitol to criticize the endless war, citing the devastating loss of life and heavy toll on the American economy.

“If we don’t end this war and punish those responsible, it will destroy everything wonderful about this country the generations before us sacrificed to keep alive,” said Ryan Nofsinger, who served two tours of duty in Iraq for the Army. “I am not ready to be the generation which allowed our leaders to cause the death of America.”

Nofsinger was deployed as a medic to Iraq in April 2003. After having his tour extended by several months, he returned to stateside only to be stop-lossed to serve an additional tour, nearly a year and a half longer than his contract agreement. Extended tours are just one part of the sacrifice troops are being required to make under the failed Bush war strategy.

“For military families across Wisconsin, ‘mission accomplished’ means our troops are home and given the medical care and support our leaders like George Bush and John McCain promised them when they sent them to war over five years ago,” said Jane Jensen, founder of Military Families for Peace and Military Family Compassion Groups. “As it stands, that promise has been broken. Military families have loved ones return with injuries, PTSD, suicidal thoughts, but these veterans are having to scratch and claw just to get the benefits they have earned.”

Prior to Bush’s “Mission Accomplished” speech, Wisconsin had no casualties in the war. Since then, 90 Wisconsin troops have been killed. Nationally, 97 percent of the more than 4,050 Americans killed in Iraq also perished after “Mission Accomplished.”

“If a leader says we need to ‘stay the course,’ in Iraq, ask ‘why if it’s not working,’” said retired Sergeant First Class Shane Sanderson, a 22-year Army veteran who served in Iraq. “If a leader talks about staying in Iraq for as long as 100 years, ask ‘how can we do that if Americans want us out now.’ We owe that to our soldiers and we owe that to ourselves.”

The war, which is in its sixth year, has cost taxpayers more than \$500 billion, and according to Nobel Prize winning economist Joseph Stiglitz, the true cost of the war is \$3 trillion. A recent *CBS/New York Times* poll showed nine out of ten Americans blame the war for the country’s current economic crisis.

(more)

One Wisconsin Now Release, Page 2

“On top of the foreign policy calamity of this endless of war, there are tremendous opportunity costs here at home,” said Robert Kraig, Director of Program for Citizen Action of Wisconsin. “Foremost among these is billions of dollars that could be used to invest in guaranteeing quality affordable health care for every American.”

More Americans are opposed to the war than at any another point since combat began. Those who are insisting for no change in the current failed strategy need to explain how long American troops will suffer due to the Bush administration stubbornness.

“George Bush lied us into Iraq and there is no reason to trust him, his administration or his failed leadership,” said Scot Ross, executive director of One Wisconsin Now. “John McCain has been the country’s biggest cheerleader for the Bush strategy and this shows just how out of touch he is.”

#

One Wisconsin Now is a statewide communications network specializing in effective earned media and online organizing to advance progressive leadership and values.

One Wisconsin Now is a statewide communications network specializing in effective earned media and online organizing to advance progressive leadership and values.

#