



PDA CITIZENS LOBBY KIT

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I. Introduction and Lobbying Overview

As you read through this Lobby Kit it is important to keep in mind two points. First, that the act of lobbying [influencing] your congressperson is a dynamic process; it will become easier to master the more it is practiced. Second, lobbying begins with a small number of committed and focused individuals. As time progresses, others in your community will be drawn to this crucial work

Lobbying is an attempt to influence elected officials on specific legislation. Legislation can either be an introduced or a draft bill that may be introduced in the future to any legislative body such as a city council, state legislature or Congress. Writing letters is one of the most fundamental grassroots tools for showing support or opposition towards an issue. A handwritten letter shows the congressperson that the constituent has thought about the issue and has serious opinions about it.

It only takes a constituent 5-7 minutes to write a letter, when a sample letter is provided. Receiving letters demonstrates to the congressperson that your group is organized and can influence voters in her/his district. The goal is to mail a number of letters weekly while keeping count of them, since the number of letters received directly impacts the congressperson's position on the issue.

By generating hundreds of letters on a bill, you can lobby from a position of strength when visiting a legislator. It's important to show the congressperson that the bill is strongly supported by average people of her/his district. In addition to generating letters, you'll want to target mainstream media, and organize a deluge of letters-to-the-editor and numerous op-ed pieces in the local print media. In summary, it's vital to show the congressperson that the piece of legislation has strong support among her/his constituents and make it visible in the press.

It takes one member of the House of Representatives to introduce/sponsor a piece of legislation in Congress. The strength of a bill is directly related to the number of congressional members who co-sponsor it. Lobbying, like most endeavors, requires preparation and lots of practice. By lobbying in an organized and consistent manner, you can demonstrate power and influence. If you have any questions, please contact lobbykit@yahoo.com. Don't give up! You're not alone.

II. How to Lobby the Public

For exact details please refer to Section III, "How to Conduct a Letter-Writing Campaign"

What You Need

Stationary	Clipboards / cardboard "boards"
Pens	Flyers w/ e-mail address for tracking
2+ people per location	Volunteer Sign-up Sheet
Ironing Board	Envelopes
Tape (painters or masking)	Jar to collect Donations
One mounted sign – 24" by 30" signs of the bill you are promoting. With a sample Letter somewhere high on the sign so that people can use it as a reference when they write their letter.	Sample "Letter to Congressperson" from the Lobbying kit (several copies)
Use blue or black marker pens for the sign	

Where to Set Up

In selecting a location you need to keep in mind the following. Ideally spend 2-3 hours at a time. Look for areas with heavy pedestrian traffic. Time of day is important. (Is there a major event going on?) Think about choosing a weekday or weekend. (Weekends are twice as busy.) Look for a place where there are few distractions. Find a reasonable store manager (if on private property). Busy supermarket storefronts, busy public streets, public events, and college campuses are all good places, where appropriate.

EXPERT TIP

Door-to-door is too slow and tourist areas don't have as many constituents. Try to think of places that large numbers of local residents frequent!

Tactics

- Please refer to Section VI. Your Rights to Demonstrate and Protest.
- Please target someone approachable; don't run after people.
- Make eye contact and hand-over the clip board so that a constituent can write her/his letter.
- Afterwards, bring the constituent to the ironing board so that he/she can obtain any supporting materials you've provided.
- Folding chairs, where appropriate, allow the letter-writer a place to gather her/his thoughts.

Pitfalls

Avoid talking too much, arguing, preaching to the converted, chatting about other issues, going into too much detail, or 'allowing people to tell you what you should really be working on' are points to consider. Also, sitting at a table, allowing disruptive people to bother you, or standing with someone while she/he holds your board is counter-productive. So how do you break out of conversations? If this happens just agree and let go. Explain you have a lot of letters to collect; move on.

Points to Remember

- Use busy locations
- Stay mobile
- Always make eye contact
- Keep it short and simple
- Don't let people waste YOUR time
- Reserve spots ahead of time
- Always have one person covering the ironing board
- Give out flyers
- Always have a volunteer sign-up sheet
- Make contacts with individuals who are members of local organizations

III. How to Conduct a Letter Writing Campaign

What You Need

Blank white computer paper	Clipboards
Pens	Flyers w/ e-mail address for tracking
Maximum 2-3 people per location	Volunteer Sign-up Sheet
Ironing Board OR Folding Table w/ Chairs	Sample "Letter to Congressperson" from the Lobbying kit (several copies)
Enlarged, laminated version of "Sample Letter to Congressperson" to attract public attention	

What to Say (sample)

"Hi, would you like to help _____? We have a national grassroots campaign to put pressure on our representatives to co-sponsor (name of bill). It will only take you five minutes to write a letter, and each hand-written letter is worth several hundred letters that aren't written." (This is a fact based on lobbying research.)

The Collection Process

Each clipboard should have white paper and a sample letter to the congressperson placed on top for reference viewing. Make certain that a diagonal line is slashed down the center of the letter and the words: "Do not date" are written on top. (This is to ensure that the constituents don't write on the sample letter and don't date it either. See below for reason.)

Say, "We'd really prefer that you write this in your own handwriting; the district office will be more likely to read it. It can be 1 or 2 lines or as long as you want." If they don't feel they can compose something, tell them that they can copy the sample letter verbatim

Least effective, but acceptable, is filling in a sample letter that you keep out of sight except for these instances.

After they've finished their letter, make sure that they've signed their legal name and printed it with their full mailing address. If they're not absolutely certain who their representative is, tell them to leave the "Dear Representative _____" space blank. With their address you can find the correct name later.

VERY IMPORTANT: THEY NEED TO LEAVE THE LETTER WITH YOU! This is so that each week you can date the letters, either hand-carrying them or mailing them to congressional district offices to which they're addressed. (Mail them in groups of 12 to 20 each week.) Optional: Make a copy of each letter to save for P.R. purposes later on. Someone can do the copying/mail-outs.

Miscellaneous Information

There are many good places to conduct the letter-writing campaign. Two hours a week (Saturdays are great) is all it takes to get the job done. Using the above method, you can collect as many as fifty letters in a two hour period of time.

Farmers markets, shopping districts and events, or any place with a high volume of foot traffic, is all it takes. Especially in “good” weather (allowing more people to be outdoors) your task is made easier.

The first time you go out you may feel a little uncomfortable. But later when people come up to you, and thank you for giving them an opportunity to say what’s in their hearts, you will feel more at ease.

EXPERT TIP

With practice this can prove to be one of the most effective forms of lobbying – the strength is in numbers!

IV. Lobbying the Media

Letters to the Editor

Letters to the editor (LTE) are a great way to get your message out to others in your community. Editors and reporters may also look to letters to the editor for ideas and issues that they have not previously covered. The LTE should be clear, brief, and focused. Limit the letter to one page. Remember that shorter letters have a better chance of being published.

LTE campaigns are effective in generating many letters that deal with the same issue. They also serve to address particular news items or editorials that have appeared in the publication. To start a LTE campaign, you should form a LTE committee in your group. Stagger the mailings, a few days apart to address a particular issue.

LTE can be useful in several ways: To respond to an editorial or another letter to the editor, to comment on a recent event, or even to build support for your issue. It is a fantastic way to reach tens of thousands of readers while investing limited time.

Op-Eds

In addition to letters to the editor, newspapers run opinion columns on either the editorial or Op-Ed pages, or frequently both. The term "Op-Ed" is shorthand for "Opposite Editorial." Op-Eds are also referred to as "opinion pieces." Op-Eds are written by guest writers (most of whom, unfortunately, are syndicated columnists and not local citizens.)

An Op-Ed should not be confused with an editorial. The editor, or the editorial board, of a newspaper writes editorials. You will notice that editorials are rarely signed, as they represent the point of view of the newspaper as a whole.

EXPERT TIP

The media is a tough nut to crack, perseverance will pay off though – just because you don't get printed the first time or two, **DO NOT GIVE UP!**

Key Points for Discussion (Op-Eds)

- A) Limit your piece to 500-800 words total. Shorter pieces are more likely to be published and read by the general public
- B) Research news articles on the subject before writing. The research has to come first!
- C) Mix the human-interest perspective with hard facts and statistics. Give your story a human face backed by solid research
- D) Indignation is good. Readers like to see passion in a piece. Indignation accomplishes two key goals. First, people are rarely moved to action without the push of one of the emotional buttons (anger and hope). Second, indignation in a piece suggests to the reader that the writer is sincere and independent, not likely beholden to the special interests who value the word "moderate" above all else. A word of caution! Indignation should not be confused with ranting or lack of civility. Always think of yourself as a professional.
- E) The first paragraph, and especially the first sentence, should be directly tied to recent news
- F) The second paragraph should focus on a recommendation. If writing about a bill, the second paragraph might start, "Congress should take this historic opportunity to address..."
- G) The rest of the piece should contain further explanation of the problem that you are addressing, your proposed solutions and the players involved. Make sure to follow the recommendations in section "C" above.
- H) The conclusion should be pithy and memorable. It should cause the reader to ponder all that you have written and it should drive home your central point.
- I) Lastly. Rewrite, rewrite, rewrite. Rewrite until you feel that the piece is both punchy and flowing. Ask family and friends for editorial help
- J) Call the Op-Ed editor before you submit your piece. Tell the editor what you are thinking about writing and solicit her/his comments. Ask if they are open to running it. A couple of good things can happen from these pre-submission phone calls. First, the editor might steer you in a better direction than you had first thought of, ["Well, if you're writing about X, why don't you try starting it with."] Second, if you get the editor's ear and they do offer comments, they are more likely to embrace [then publish] the piece as their own creation when they receive it.

V. Visiting Your Congressperson

EXPERT TIP

Elected Officials and their staff are busy people! You should spend more time preparing for the visit than you do in the actual visit. Your face time will be limited, plan ahead and maximize it's benefit!

Before the Visit

1. Research the member's voting record.

Find out which constituencies and/or industries are important in the member's district. What committees and/or subcommittees does the member sit on? How do they relate to your issue? What power does the member have to give you what you want?

2, Assemble a Delegation

A delegation lets the member of Congress know that the issue resonates with the community. A good delegation is between five and eight people. Large delegations should be avoided because you don't want to overwhelm your member of Congress. You will want to begin building a relationship with your congressional representative and her/his staff so that a trust is formed.

3. Request a Visit

Visit requests should be submitted to the member's scheduler in letter form, usually via fax. The letter should identify the persons requesting the visit and the constituencies, if any, such people represent. The letter should also specify that you wish to discuss civil liberties in general and a Resolution of Inquiry specifically. Most likely you will have to follow up several times with the scheduler in order to set a visit. Frequently you will be offered a meeting with an aide. Don't be concerned or feel snubbed: often aides have a lot of influence in the area of policy they cover. Developing good relationships with them can be instrumental to having a long-term effect on policy.

4. Planning and Practice

Discuss with the members of the delegation precisely what issues you wish to bring up. Keep in mind that most visits last only up to thirty minutes.

Determine what, if any, questions you intend to ask and when you intend to ask them. Appendix C "Congressional Questionnaire" includes a list of questions that United for

Peace and Justice is urging grassroots lobbyists to use when talking to Congresspeople about the Iraq War.

Keep in mind that once a question is asked you cede control of the meeting to a member or aide, who may spend the rest of your thirty minutes talking about an unrelated issue. Sometimes, not always, it is best to leave questions for after you have spoken what you wished to convey.

Based on your research, determine which arguments you think will best sway the member to your position. Bring printed materials from credible sources, the briefer the better, to support each of your positions or to offer information the member is not likely to have. Always ask for something concrete, i.e. to co-sponsor a Resolution of Inquiry, or to promise to vote for it. Appendices D "House asks" and E "Senate asks" include some specific pieces of legislation that United for Peace and Justice has put together to ask of Congressperson in respect to the Iraq War.

It is often a good idea to go into the meeting with a back-up query; ask for something that the member would more readily agree to, especially if you think it is unlikely they will agree to your primary request.

Decide beforehand who is going to say what in the meeting. Practice! It may seem obvious, but it is better to go in prepared. Take turns playing the member or aide and acting out various scenarios.

During the Visit

1. Take Notes

You will get valuable information regarding the member's position that should help you in future lobbying efforts. If the member or aide asks you for information you don't have, make a note of it and say that you will get back to them. Be sure to do it.

2. Record any commitments

Whether it was made by the member or their aide, you may well have to remind them of these. If you meet with an aide in the district office, be sure to find out which aide is in charge of your issue in Washington, and indicate that you plan to follow up with that person.

After the Visit

1. Debrief

After the meeting, find a place where you can relax with your delegation and compare notes on the meeting. This is important, as different people might have different interpretations of the member's position. Agree as a group on who will do what follow up tasks, i.e. gathering information, writing the thank you letter, etc.

2. Send a Thank You / Follow-up

Even if the visit didn't go as well as you had liked, it is customary to write a thank you letter to the person that you met with. One thank you letter per delegation is sufficient. This is a good opportunity to review commitments made, to provide promised information or other materials that support your position.

3. Keep us Informed!

Let us know how it went. Let your experience strengthen the overall effort. We can better coordinate our national lobbying effort when you share your experience with us.

VI. Know Your Rights to Demonstrate and Protest

A guide for demonstrators, marchers, speakers and others who seek to exercise their First Amendment rights.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

Q. Can my free speech rights be restricted because of what I want to say - even if it's controversial?

A. No. The First Amendment prohibits restrictions based on the content of speech. However, this does not mean that the Constitution completely protects all types of free speech activity in every circumstance. Police and government officials are allowed to place certain non-discriminatory and narrowly drawn "time, place and manner" restrictions on the exercise of First Amendment rights.

Q. Where can I engage in free speech activity?

A. Generally, all types of _expression are constitutionally protected in traditional "public forums" such as streets, sidewalks and parks. In addition, your speech activity may be permitted to take place at other public locations which the government has opened up to similar speech activities, such as the plazas in front of government buildings.

Q. What about free speech activity on private property?

A. The general rule is that free speech activity cannot take place on private property absent the consent of the property owner.[However, in California, the courts have recognized an exception for large shopping centers, and have permitted leafleting and petitioning to take place in the public areas of large shopping centers. The shopping center owners, however, are entitled to impose regulations that, for example, limit the number of activists on the property and restrict their activities to designated "free speech areas."] Most large shopping centers have enacted detailed free speech regulations that require obtaining a permit in advance. It is unclear whether the courts will extend this "shopping center exception" to other types of private property, such as the walkways in front of large free-standing stores, such as a Safeway or a Costco.

Q. Do I need a permit before I engage in free speech activity?

A. Not usually. However, certain types of events require permits. Generally, these events are: 1) a march or parade that does not stay on the sidewalk and other events that require blocking traffic or street closures; 2) a large rally requiring the use of sound amplifying devices; or 3) a rally at certain designated parks or plazas, such as federal property managed by the General Services Administration. Many permit procedures require that the application be filed several weeks in advance of the event. However, the First Amendment prohibits such an advance notice requirement from being used to prevent rallies or demonstrations that are rapid responses to unforeseeable and recent events. Also, many permit ordinances give a lot of discretion to the police or city officials

to impose conditions on the event, such as the route of a march or the sound levels of amplification equipment. Such restrictions may violate the First Amendment if they are unnecessary for traffic control or public safety, or if they interfere significantly with effective communication with the intended audience.

A permit cannot be denied because the event is controversial or will express unpopular views. Citizens have a right to gather in any location, which is considered public access.

SPECIFIC PROBLEMS

Q. If organizers have not obtained a permit, where can a march take place?

A. If marchers stay on the sidewalks and obey traffic and pedestrian signals, their activity is constitutionally protected even without a permit. Marchers may be required to allow enough space on the sidewalk for normal pedestrian traffic and may not maliciously obstruct or detain passers-by.

Q. May I distribute leaflets and other literature on public sidewalks?

A. Yes. Pedestrians on public sidewalks may be approached with leaflets, newspapers, petitions and solicitations for donations. Tables may also be set up on sidewalks for these purposes if sufficient room is left for pedestrians to pass. These types of free speech activities are legal as long as entrances to buildings are not blocked and passers-by are not physically and maliciously detained. No permits should be required.

Q. Do I have a right to picket on public sidewalks?

A. Yes and this is also an activity for which a permit is not required. However, picketing must be done in an orderly, non-disruptive fashion so that pedestrians can pass by and entrances to buildings are not blocked. Contrary to the belief of some law enforcement officials, pickets are not required to keep moving but may remain in one place as long as they leave room on the sidewalk for others to pass.

Q. Can the government impose a financial charge on exercising free speech rights?

A. Increasingly, local governments are imposing financial costs as a condition of exercising free speech rights, such as application fees, security deposits for clean-up, or charges to cover overtime police costs. Unfortunately, such charges that cover actual administrative costs or the actual costs of re-routing traffic have been permitted by some courts. However, if the costs are greater because an event is controversial (or a hostile crowd is expected) - such as requiring a large insurance policy - then the courts will not permit it. Also, regulations with financial requirements should include a waiver for groups that cannot afford the charge, so that even grassroots organizations can exercise their free speech rights. Therefore, a group without significant financial resources should not be prevented from engaging in a march simply because it cannot afford the charges the City would like to impose.

Q. Can a speaker be silenced for provoking a crowd?

A. Generally, no. Even the most inflammatory speaker cannot be punished for merely arousing the audience. A speaker can be arrested and convicted for incitement only if he or she specifically advocates violence or illegal actions and only if those illegalities are imminently likely to occur.

Q. Do counter-demonstrators have free speech rights?

A. Yes. Although counter-demonstrators should not be allowed to physically disrupt the event they are protesting, they do have the right to be present and to voice their displeasure. Police are permitted to keep two antagonistic groups separated but should allow them to be within the general vicinity of one another.

Q. Is heckling protected by the First Amendment?

A. Although the law is not settled, heckling should be protected, unless hecklers are attempting to physically disrupt an event, or unless they are drowning out the other speakers.

Q. Does it matter if other speech activities have taken place at the same location in the past?

A. Yes. The government cannot discriminate against activists because of the controversial content of their message. Thus, if you can show that similar events to yours have been permitted in the past (such as a Veterans or Memorial Day parade), then that is an indication that the government is involved in selective enforcement if they are not granting you your permit.

Q. What other types of free speech activity are constitutionally protected?

A. The First Amendment covers all forms of communication including music, theaters, film and dance. The Constitution also protects actions that symbolically express a viewpoint. Examples of these symbolic forms of speech include wearing masks and costumes or holding a candlelight vigil. However, symbolic acts and civil disobedience that involve illegal conduct may be outside the realm of constitutional protections and can sometimes lead to arrest and conviction. Therefore, while sitting in a road may be expressing a political opinion, the act of blocking traffic may lead to criminal punishment.

Q. What should I do if my rights are being violated by a police officer?

A. It rarely does any good to argue with a street patrol officer. Ask to talk to a superior and explain your position to her or him. Point out that you are not disrupting anyone else's activity and that your actions are protected by the First Amendment. If you do not

obey an officer, you might be arrested and taken from the scene. You should not be convicted if a court concludes that your First Amendment rights have been violated.

If you have a question about your civil liberties or rights

Call the ACLU-NC hotline at: 415/621-2493 (x322)

If you are arrested while engaging in free speech activities

Call the National Lawyers Guild Legal Hotline: 415/285-1011

Appendix A: Sample Letter to a Congressperson

<<Congressperson's name>>
<<Congressperson's Office Address>>
<<City>>, <<State>> <<Zip>>

Dear <<Congressperson's name>>

[Insert introductory paragraph, discussing the issue]

[Insert specific request(s) you're asking them to do.]

[Thank them for taking the time to read your letter, and invite dialogue]

Sincerely,

Signature

Print Name

Address

Appendix B: Legislative Priorities

United for Peace and Justice

Congressional Education Day/ Lobby Day

Legislative Priorities

We call upon members of congress to initiate and or support legislation that will:

- Bring the troops home now, on the shortest possible timeline in logistical terms
- Cut off, cut down, condition and otherwise limit the ability of the Administration to fund the occupation of Iraq
- Prohibit the construction of permanent U.S. military bases in Iraq
- Provide funding to Iraq as compensation for the damage caused by the war
- Require parents to “opt-in” to put their children’s names and information on lists made available to the military for recruitment purposes.

In addition:

- UFPJ opposes all authorizations, allocations, and appropriations by Congress for the war (except direct benefits to returned troops or veterans).
- UFPJ will support Congressional and other investigations which highlight the illegal actions of the Bush Administration (and previous administrations) in taking the country to war, such as the inquiries into the Downing Street memoranda, and in its conduct of the occupation, including mistreatment of detainees, exploitative corporate contracts, unfair labor practices, misuse of American troops, and manipulation of intelligence. We will also support investigations into the illegality of the doctrine of preventive war.

Appendix C: Questions for Congress (checklist)

United for Peace and Justice

Congressional Education Day/ Lobby Day

Questions for Congress

Will you initiate and or support legislation that will:

1. Bring the troops home now, on the shortest possible timeline in logistical terms?
 yes no
2. Cut off, cut down, condition and otherwise limit the ability of the Administration to fund the occupation of Iraq?
 yes no
3. Prohibit the construction of permanent U.S. military bases in Iraq?
 yes no
4. Provide funding to Iraq as compensation for the damage caused by the war?
 yes no
5. Require parents to “opt-in” to put their children’s names and information on lists made available to the military for recruitment purposes?
 yes no

In addition will you:

1. Oppose all authorizations, allocations, and appropriations by Congress for the war (except direct benefits to returned troops or veterans)?
 yes no
2. Support Congressional and other investigations which highlight the illegal actions of the Bush Administration (and previous administrations) in taking the country to war, such as the inquiries into the Downing Street memoranda, and in its conduct of the occupation, including mistreatment of detainees, exploitative corporate contracts, unfair labor practices, misuse of American troops, and manipulation of intelligence?
 yes no
3. Support investigations into the illegality of the doctrine of preventive war?
 yes no

Appendix D: House Asks

United for Peace and Justice

Congressional Education Day/ Lobby Day

UFPJ calls for an **immediate** withdrawal of U.S. Troops from Iraq.

We recognize that there is currently no legislation that will accomplish our goal, and we urge our legislators to take every opportunity to do more to end the Iraq War.

In addition, we call upon our legislators to:

- **Co-sponsor H.J.RES.55 – Withdrawal of United States Armed Forces From Iraq**

Introduced by Reps. Neil Abercrombie (D-HI) and Walter Jones (R-NC)

Also known as the “Homeward Bound” bill, calls for the President to announce a plan for the withdrawal of all United States Armed Forces from Iraq by December 31, 2005, and to begin withdrawal by October 1, 2006.

- **Co-sponsor H.Con.Res. 197 – No Permanent Bases in Iraq**

Introduced by Rep. Barbara Lee (D-CA)

Prohibits the U.S. from entering into any military base agreement with Iraq that would lead to a permanent U.S. military presence in Iraq.

- **Co-sponsor H.R.551 – Student Privacy Protection Act of 2005**

Rep. Honda (D- CA)

HR551 makes a simple change to the *No Child Left Behind Act*, forbidding schools from sharing student contact information with military recruiters unless parents request that information be shared. Currently, the military has access to student information unless families sign a form requesting that information not be released.

- **Join the Out of Iraq Congressional Working Group**

The Out of Iraq Congressional Working Group has been organized to increase pressure on the Bush administration and Congress to end the Iraq conflict and bring American forces home.

- **Vote against any additional funding for combat action in Iraq**

Any supplemental spending on Iraq should target funds solely to the reconstruction of Iraq.

Appendix E: Senate Asks

United for Peace and Justice

Congressional Education Day/ Lobby Day

UFPJ calls for an immediate withdrawal of U.S. Troops from Iraq.

We recognize that there is currently no legislation that will accomplish our goal, and we urge our Senators to take every opportunity to do more to end the Iraq War.

In addition, we call upon our Senators to:

- **Co-sponsor and work to pass S.Res.171** *Sponsor: Russell Fiengold (D-WI)*
S.Res.171 calls on the President to submit a report to Congress within 30 days describing the remaining mission of the Armed Forces in Iraq, a current estimate of the time frame required to accomplish that mission, and a time frame for the subsequent withdrawal of troops from Iraq.
- **Oppose any additional funding for combat action in Iraq.**
The FY 06 Defense Authorization bill passed by the House and currently pending in the Senate includes \$45.3 billion as a “bridge fund” to cover military operations until another supplemental spending package can be approved, most likely slated for Spring 2006. This funding should be opposed.
- **Support amendments aiding veterans, condemning torture and war profiteering**
Amendments to FY 06 Defense Authorization under discussion include increasing veterans benefits, condemning torture and war profiteering, but it is unclear which amendments will be debated. UFPJ calls on Senators to support these types of amendments.
- **Take a courageous stand and play a leadership role in developing effective legislation in the Senate that will:**
 1. Bring the troops home on the shortest possible timeline in logistical terms;
 2. Cut off, cut down, condition and otherwise limit the ability of the Administration to fund the occupation of Iraq;
 3. Prohibit the construction of permanent U.S. military bases in Iraq;
 4. Provide funding to Iraq as compensation for the damage caused by the war.
- **Introduce or co-sponsor companion legislation to these House measures:**
 - H.Con.Res.197 – No permanent Bases in Iraq
 - H.R.551 – Student Privacy Protection Act
 - H.J.Res55 – Withdrawal of U.S. Armed Forces from Iraq

Appendix F: Talking Points out of Iraq

United for Peace and Justice

Congressional Education Day/ Lobby Day

Talking Points: “Stay the Course” or Get Out Now?

The death and destruction strewn by hurricane Katrina may equal or even exceed the death toll of U.S. soldiers in the Iraq War. But while 6,000 miles separates the two, the links between war overseas and the fate of those in Katrina’s wake are closely interwoven.

The cost of having over 6,000 National Guardsmen stationed from Mississippi and Louisiana far overseas in Iraq hampered a quick response to the horrific aftermath of hurricane Katrina.

While the President was quick to note that 60 percent of the Guard remain in the States, he failed to note that many who have been drawn to the frontlines in New Orleans are just home from serving in Iraq where the average tour for a Guardsman is 420 days. These brave men and women have returned from the battlefield and are now being called upon once again into service.

Not only are Guardmembers in Iraq, much of their equipment is too. Louisiana National Guard Lt. Colonel Pete Schneider told reporters in early August 2005, “Dozens of high water vehicles, humvees, refuelers and generators” used by the Louisiana Guard are tied up abroad. Schneider forbode, “The National Guard needs that equipment back home to support the homeland security mission.”

Just as Katrina has awoken Americans to the costs associated at home while we fight a war in Iraq, Cindy Sheehan’s August vigil outside President Bush’s ranch brought the human cost of the war into our living rooms.

The Iraq war has taken the lives of more than 1,900 U.S. troops and up to 100,000 Iraqis. It has cost over \$204 billion and the costs keep increasing.

Sixty percent of the American public disapproves of Bush’s handling of Iraq, 60% don’t believe the war has been worth the cost, and recent polls indicate that 55% of the public want to bring all or some of the troops home now.

Why not get out right now? Won’t a U.S. withdrawal mean violence and civil war?

The U.S. occupation isn’t bringing security to Iraq. It is a source of insecurity. U.S. military actions are responsible for most of the Iraqi killed and wounded since the U.S. invasion. The armed resistance is a direct result of the U.S. presence.

Iraqis, like people everywhere, do not want to live under foreign occupation. Yet the Bush administration refuses to commit to any “exit strategy” whatsoever. Instead it is constructing permanent military bases and refuses to say that U.S. troops will ever completely withdraw. This is a recipe for never-ending violence, not stability.

The divisions between Sunni and Shiite Muslims and between Arabs and Kurds are not being lessened by military occupation. Leaders in all of these communities condemn

sectarian violence and inter-ethnic strife. But they cannot successfully negotiate their differences as long as the U.S. holds ultimate power.

But didn't the Iraqi election mean that the U.S. is bringing democracy to Iraq?

In national elections, Iraqis took the valiant step of voting in order to change the course of events. While the jubilation in the streets was very real, it masked another reality—exit polls indicated that more than two-thirds of the Shi'ites wanted U.S. forces out of Iraq either immediately or once the elected government is in place.

The country is on the brink of ripping apart over a constitution process that was designed by the United States. Far too little attention has been given to creating space for a national dialogue and far too much focus has been on politics at the national level. And there has been little input from Iraqi citizens in the process and far too much influence by the U.S.

Plus, the new Iraqi government doesn't really hold power in its own country. One hundred laws put in place by former U.S. administrator Paul Bremer are still in force and Iraqis have little say over U.S. troops and operations. Iraqis want democracy and self-determination. Neither exists under occupation.

Still, doesn't the U.S. have an obligation to stay and help the Iraqi people?

The U.S. has both a moral and legal responsibility to help reconstruct Iraq. But continuing military occupation prevents rather than helps fulfill this obligation.

Most Iraqis - and most people in the world - believe that George Bush is more interested in controlling Iraqi oil than helping Iraqis. The indefinite presence of U.S. troops reinforces this belief. So does the fact that only a small proportion of the money allotted to reconstruction has been spent - while U.S. companies like Halliburton and Bechtel make millions.

The Iraqi people are capable of rebuilding their country. The U.S. should supply funds, and support international expertise if requested. But control must be in the hands of the Iraqis.

Won't getting out of Iraq bring an increase in terrorism?

A new report by the Saudi Arabian government and an Israeli think tank found that the majority of foreign fighters are not former terrorists and instead became radicalized by the war itself—a troubling statistic given that the Bush administration's goal for the war is to stem future terrorism. The CIA-affiliated National Intelligence Council declares that "Iraq has replaced Afghanistan as the training ground for the next generation of 'professionalized' terrorists."

Data collected by the State Department and the National Counterterrorism Center confirms this analysis. The number of "significant" terrorist attacks in 2004 reached 655, three times the previous record of 175 in 2003. Terrorist incidents inside Iraq also increased by a factor of nine—from 22 attacks in 2003 to 198 in 2004.

The longer the U.S. occupies Iraq, the more resentment builds against the U.S., increasing the danger of terrorism. The best way to reduce this danger is to get out now.

Won't announcing a withdrawal undermine and demoralize U.S. troops?

Attacks on U.S. troops in Iraq average several hundred each week. Frightened young GI's are shooting first, asking questions later. The best way to support the troops is to get them

out of a situation where they are killing and being killed for no good reason. Iraq Veterans Against the War says: “We, the veterans of the war, now know...the reasons for invading the sovereign country of Iraq were false, and we have paid a heavy price for these lies....We call upon our President, the Congress, and all elected officials to immediately and unconditionally withdraw all U.S. troops from Iraq and the Middle East.”

Won't setting a timetable for withdrawal allow resistance fighters to “wait it out”?

Setting a time and date for withdrawal to start will likely decrease much of the strength of the resistance. The resistance is comprised of more than 40 different groups-many of them are united only by the U.S. presence and occupation. By removing their chief recruiting tool, the occupation, most will be weakened. Foreign fighters, numbering no more than a few thousand, and a handful of hard core Baathist groups will remain but as they are increasingly isolated, more and more Iraqis will turn against them, limiting their strength and power.