

Washington D.C. - During Congress' district work period, Congressman Kevin McCarthy traveled to Iraq and Afghanistan on a bipartisan Congressional fact finding mission with Congressmen Vern Buchanan (R-FL), Brad Ellsworth (D-IN), Hank Johnson (D-GA), Adrian Smith (R-NE), and Gene Taylor (D-MS). McCarthy issued the following statement after returning from the fact finding mission:

"I went on this fact finding mission to see and experience first-hand what is happening in the Global War on Terror. I learned and received updates from our military commanders on the ground, as well as government officials in Iraq and Afghanistan. But most of all, I wanted to meet with our brave men and women in uniform to hear their experiences, and make sure they knew that I support them and that America appreciates their sacrifices and the sacrifices their families make to defend our country.

"I saw that the new strategy in Iraq to reinforce our troops' mission and hold the Iraqi government accountable is already showing signs of improvement. For instance, sectarian violence has declined in Baghdad, a reinvigorated Ramadi Police force has taken control of the city from insurgents, and when meeting with Iraqi security personnel, I sense they feel a newfound hope for peace.

"Troops on the ground told me that they want our united support and encouragement, and that is what I intend to give them. Congress must support our troops and should not tie their hands through restrictions in an emergency funding bill.

"We liberated Afghanistan from Al Qaeda terrorists whose objective was to destroy our peace of mind and from Taliban thugs that tyrannized the Afghan people. Al Qaeda no longer holds Afghans hostage and uses their country as a base to launch terrorist attack. Additionally, without the Taliban in power, a woman was able to become the top high school student this year, whereas 6 years ago, she would not have had the opportunity to even attend school. However, even with the progress, we must never lose sight that this democracy is fighting a persistent terrorist enemy and still needs the continued support of the American people."

While in Iraq, McCarthy and the delegation was briefed by the top U.S. commander and architect of the new strategy, General David Petraeus, traveled to the Al Anbar Province and Umm Qasr Port, spoke with troops, and met with Iraqi security officials. Following the

fact-finding mission to Iraq, the delegation visited the USS Eisenhower stationed in the Persian Gulf and observed the strategic support of the air power from the Fifth Fleet. The delegation then traveled to Kabul, Afghanistan where the delegation spoke with our troops, met with Afghan President Hamid Karzai, and was briefed by U.S. military commanders.