

12/12/2006 - Congress Approves Extending the Office of Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction

Effective oversight of the \$38 billion dollars appropriated for Iraq reconstruction has been safeguarded.

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The House of Representatives approved Senate bill S.4046, companion bill to H.R. 6313, which extends the mandate of the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGIR). The legislation sponsored by Congressman Ike Skelton (D-MO) and Senator Susan Collins (R-ME) was co-sponsored by more than 90 legislators in both chambers, including Congressman Albio Sires (D-NJ).

The bill ensures that the Inspector General remain in Iraq until 80% of the reconstruction work has been completed. Prior to this legislation being passed, the office would have been terminated within 3 months of October 1, 2007.

"I believe Congress and the American people have a right to see how their tax dollars are being spent," said Congressman Albio Sires. "There must be more Congressional oversight of the money being appropriated for the war in Iraq. This bill extends the SIGIR's work until at least 2009, and ensures that both Congress and the Administration continue to receive the audit information on the billions of dollars invested in Iraq".

The Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction is in charge of reviewing U.S. rebuilding activities in Iraq. Previous to the position being created, there were numerous reports of reconstruction funds being squandered. Abbreviated contracting procedures were being utilized, with both contractors and auditors attempting to oversee the work. The SIGIR has done a remarkable job in providing constructive and aggressive oversight of these activities, resulting in estimated savings and potential benefits of more than \$400 million.

"I am proud to have co-sponsored this legislation that creates more transparency to the Iraq reconstruction process" Congressman Sires said.