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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 14, 2006

LARSON DECRIES SHAM IRAQ DEBATE

WASHINGTON, DC ♦ U.S. Congressman John B. Larson (CT-1) today admonished the Republican House Leadership for denying any Democratic resolution to be debated during consideration of the War in Iraq.

Larson stated, ♦Time and time again, the Republicans make it clear they control the House, Senate, and the Presidency. They mock our democracy with their Rovian strategy of denying any Democratic alternative to be debated. This is an effort to paper over the Administration♦s failures and deem anyone who questions them as against the troops and unpatriotic.

♦This is not debate between alternatives, its rubberstamping the President♦s policies of preemption and unilateralism. The Republican leadership is only bringing forward a resolution to blur the lines between the war on terrorism and the preemptive, unilateral strike on Iraq. Democrats have supported efforts in Afghanistan and around the world to reduce the threat of terrorists. However, along with a growing number of Americans, we have questioned the policies that brought us to Iraq and the lack of a plan to get us out.

♦This resolution is nothing more than a self-congratulatory gesture to coincide with President Bush♦s visit to Iraq. Instead of merely speaking in patriotic rhetoric, Democrats have fought to ensure that our troops on the ground have up-armored vehicles and proper equipment. We have fought service cuts and fee increases for veterans and military retirees returning from Iraq. Democrats like Congressman Jack Murtha (D-PA) have offered a strategy to bring our troops home and pursue security and stability in Iraq through diplomacy. While we are supposed to be providing an example of democracy for Iraq, democracy is withering in the House because Democrats are consistently excluded from any policy decisions.

◆The American people have been watching for years as the Republicans wrap themselves in the flag as they talk about Iraq. With the deaths of over two thousand American troops and injuries to thousands more, the American people demand more than a ◆stay-the-course◆ resolution. They demand a serious and substantive debate on the war. They want their government to be accountable for its actions. They will not, and I will not, stand for this Republican attempt to praise themselves and paint their opponents as unpatriotic.◆

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