



Disapproving Democrats assail Bush's policy in Iraq

David Espo

WASHINGTON — Democrats relentlessly assailed President Bush's policy in Iraq as a catastrophic failure Tuesday as the House plunged into momentous debate on a war that has lost public support and cost more than 3,100 U.S. troops their lives.

"No more blank checks," declared House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif.

"This battle is the most visible part of a global war" against terrorists, countered the Republican leader, Rep. John Boehner, hoping to limit GOP defections on what loomed as an extraordinary wartime rebuke to the commander-in-chief. "If we leave, they will follow us home. It's that simple."

The Democratic leadership set aside most of the week for the historic debate, expected to culminate in a vote on Friday on a bare-bones, nonbinding resolution that "disapproves of the decision of President George W. Bush ... to deploy more

than 20,000 additional United States combat troops to Iraq."

The 95-word measure adds that "Congress and the American people will continue to support and protect the members of the United States armed forces who are serving or who have served bravely and honorably in Iraq."

Republicans said that despite quiet lobbying by the White House, they expected at least two-dozen GOP lawmakers to swing behind the measure.

The debate was Congress' first on Iraq since Democrats gained control of the House and Senate in midterm elections shadowed by voter opposition to the war. Decorum carried the day in the chamber — where cat-calls are part of near-daily discourse — as Democrats and Republicans took their five-minute speaking turns across the hours.

Passage was a virtual certainty. Democratic leaders said they expected no more than one or two members of their rank-and-file to oppose the resolution. Republicans said that despite quiet lobbying by the White House, they expected at least two-dozen GOP lawmakers to swing behind the measure, suggest-

ing that it would command the votes of at least 250 or 260 representatives in the 435-member House.

"A vote of disapproval will set the stage for additional Iraq legislation, which will be coming to the House floor," said Pelosi, who underscored the significance of the debate by delivering the first speech.

"In a few weeks, the war in Iraq will enter its fifth year, causing thousands of deaths, tens of thousands of casualties, costing hundreds of billions of dollars and damaging the standing of the United States in the international community. And there is no end in sight," she said.

Boehner followed her to the well of the House seconds later, the first Republican to speak.

"There is no question that the war in Iraq has been difficult. All Americans are frustrated we haven't seen more success more quickly," he conceded. Pivoting quickly, he called the Iraq War the latest in a string of conflicts dating to the founding of the nation more than two centuries ago.

"Every drop of blood that has been spilt in defense of freedom and liberty — from the American Revolution to this very moment — is for nothing if we are unwilling to stand against this threat," he said.

Republican congressional aides said the White House was working against the measure, although presidential press secretary Tony Snow, asked if that was the case, said "no."

"We've made our views known, in terms of what people have to keep in mind. But members of the House and members of the Senate have the freedom to go ahead and write their resolutions and do what they want

Iraq, continued to page 18



U.S. Sen. Barack Obama, D-Ill., applauds the crowd as he arrives to announce his candidacy for president at the Old State Capitol in Springfield, Ill. Following his announcement, Obama traveled to Iowa and New Hampshire, sites of two early presidential primaries. See story on pg. 6. (AP photo/Charles Rex Arbogast)

Leadership project's goal: More minority candidates

Dan Devine

Now that Massachusetts has elected its first African American governor, a new program intends to continue the job of developing leaders of color to enter public service in the greater Boston area.

Officially launched last Wednesday

at a Suffolk University event featuring a keynote speech by Mayor Thomas M. Menino, the Initiative for Diversity in Civic Leadership is a three-year effort that will provide education and training related to seeking elected office, managing and running political campaigns, and serving in all levels of government.

"This initiative represents a long-term commitment to a diverse civic leadership for Greater Boston. We need to welcome new leaders into elected office, into appointed positions and into political campaigns," said Commonwealth Legislative Seminar Executive Director Joel Bar-

Diversity, continued to page 24

Massachusetts residents leaving for new borders

Serghino René

Take it from Brad Singleton. He'll tell you he is living the good life. A native of Roxbury, Singleton has lived in the South for nearly 13 years, and at the moment, he has no intention of returning home.

Singleton attended Milton Academy, graduating a few years after Gov. Deval Patrick. From there, he went on to the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, and has kept moving south ever since.

A medical device salesman, Singleton has lived in Atlanta, Ga., for the last three-and-a-half years.

"I have a modest-to good-sized home, my kids go to good schools and we take two to three vacations a year as a family," said Singleton. "My wife is a stay-at-home mom, since

there is no need for her to work. If we lived in Massachusetts, I think it would be a requirement to have two incomes."

According to U.S. Census Bureau statistics released last summer, Massachusetts is continuing to hemorrhage people — especially young people. The census found that Massachusetts had an average annual exodus, on balance, of 42,402 people.

The population drop in Boston is consistent with the decrease on the state level. Of all the nation's major cities studied, Boston had the third largest decline. The statistics showed that since 2000, the city has lost more than 30,000 residents, a 5.1 percent decrease.

Boston's dwindling middle class is

Leaving, continued to page 24



Sen. John Kerry, D-Mass., speaks to a crowd as Gov. Deval Patrick (center) and Mayor Thomas M. Menino (right) listen during Kerry's Procurement Conference and Business Expo,

Friday, Jan. 19, 2007, at Northeastern University. Kerry stressed the importance of assisting small businesses in creating much needed jobs for the Commonwealth. (AP photo/Lisa Poole)

What's INSIDE

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT . . . 19-23

LISTINGS

BUSINESS DIRECTORY 31
CALENDAR 32
CHURCH GUIDE 30

PERSPECTIVE

EDITORIAL 4
OPINION 5
ROVING CAMERA 5

CLASSIFIEDS

HELP WANTED 35-39
LEGALS 33
REAL ESTATE 33-35