

**Washington, DC** - Congressman Charlie Gonzalez (TX-20) issued the following statement responding to the President's comments on the war in Iraq:

"While it is welcome news for our military families, the return to 12 month deployments will not reduce the strain on our military that existed prior to the President's surge. Our military was stretched thin long before the President decided to send more troops to Iraq with extended deployments. That has not changed, nor will it change by simply reverting to the ways of a strategy that has been flawed since its inception."

"The President's unwavering commitment to an open ended presence in Iraq is in fact the cause of our strained military's diminished readiness. The only real solution to this dilemma is to change the President's strategy."

"The situation in Iraq can only be solved politically and diplomatically by the Iraqi people themselves. American troops, whether there are 1,000 or 100,000 troops serving in either 12 or 15 month deployments, can not deliver this much needed political reconciliation. We need a new direction in Iraq with a policy that respects, not ignores, the will of the American public and the lessons of history, and that policy must be based on redeploying our troops out of harm's way."

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