

## Vermonters vote yes

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WASHINGTON — Vermont's senators supported two amendments Thursday calling for the end of the Iraq war. Though each measure failed, Sen. Patrick Leahy, a Democrat, hailed the vote as one of his proudest moments in the Senate, in which he's served for 32 years.

"It is time for the Congress to change the course of a policy that has cost us hundreds of billions of dollars that would have been far better spent here at home, that has weakened our leadership, that is dividing our country, and that has not made us safer," Leahy said on the floor.

Sen. James Jeffords, an independent, said: "We have 'stayed the course' for far too long. It takes political courage to change course, and it is time Congress showed such courage. Our troops deserve nothing less."

Shunning a controversial amendment by Sen. John Kerry, D-Mass., all but 13 Senate Democrats joined Republicans in defeating it. The amendment called on President Bush to withdraw most American troops by July 2007.

A second amendment offered by Sen. Carl Levin, D-Mich., urged Bush to begin a withdrawal this year but without a deadline for completion. Republicans largely attacked the moves as a policy of defeat, though some welcomed the debate.

Democrats used the debate to detail the conditions under which the war occurred, attempting to discredit the president's policy.

"Unlike the war to defeat the Taliban, which continues to this day and shows no signs of abating, the invasion of Iraq had nothing to do with Osama bin Laden or the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon," Leahy said.