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## Inglis defends vote against more troops in Iraq

### The Associated Press

One of the few Republican congressmen to oppose President Bush's plans for Iraq said Monday that Iraqi leaders need to get behind the U.S. military and is telling Bush he needs to make public how much support they are providing.

"We're committed in Iraq; let's get the Iraqis committed to us," Rep. Bob Inglis said in a letter to Bush that the South Carolina congressman released Monday. "The surge must be more than a military surge; it must be a surge in political will among Iraqi leaders."

Inglis voted earlier this month for a resolution that opposed the president's decision to send more U.S. troops to Iraq. The move drew fire from constituents in his district, one of the most conservative in South Carolina. The state has in the past overwhelmingly supported the president, which was evident Monday when Inglis took some 90 minutes to answer questions from constituents and defend his vote. Inglis was one of 17 Republicans whose vote crossed party lines.

Inglis on Monday was unapologetic. He said Bush should shed some light on Iraqi progress toward meeting certain "success checkpoints," which should include a fair division of oil and the return of banned Baath Party members.

"We have an obligation to our service men and women to insist that the Iraqi leaders make the decisions that could stop some of the sectarian violence," Inglis said.

Inglis was in Spartanburg attending an event with Republican presidential candidate Sen. Sam Brownback of Kansas, who voted with a majority of Republicans to block the resolution.

Inglis said criticism of his vote has not deterred White House hopefuls from appearing with him. He said former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani attended a fundraiser for him last week.

With a 246-182 vote on Feb. 15, the House approved a resolution supporting U.S. troops in Iraq but opposing Bush's plan to send 21,500 more to fight there and stabilize parts of the country wrecked by insurgent attacks.

After Inglis' vote, he said in a news release that the troop surge "will only delay the day that Iraqis make the political decisions necessary to quell the sectarian violence."

During a monthly meeting with constituents last week at Tommy's Country Ham House, Inglis got an earful about his vote.

Constituent Tom Mims repeatedly interrupted Inglis as he talked to the crowd, shouting at one point: "Are you on our side? Forget Washington and remember what goes on in your district," The Greenville News reported.

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