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For Immediate Release:

Benson demands action on behalf of Alaskan Troops

Just days before the Alaska-based 172nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team was scheduled to return home, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld extended the tours of some 3,500 members of the Alaska-based unit. Most of the members of the unit have served nearly a year in Iraq. The extension is planned for up to four (4) months.

“As a mother of a Iraqi War Veteran, whose son was severely wounded 13 days into a forced extension, my heart goes out to those families that were expecting joyous reunions”, stated Democratic Congressional Candidate Diane Benson.

“The country has been crying out for a reduction in troops in the Iraqi region and it seems that the voice of the people has once again fallen on deaf ears. Not one of Alaska’s representatives, to include Rep. Don Young has made any statements in regards to this forced extension for our Alaskan Sons and Daughters. I must ask the question, Are they not important enough to our current representation to earn a voice of concern in this matter?”

Pentagon officials state that the extension is part of a plan to bolster security in the Iraqi capital of Baghdad. When asked for details of the new plan, Pentagon spokesman Bryan Whitman declined to provide any details saying the top commander in Iraq, Gen. George Casey, "is working through a very tough problem".

“Unfortunately this administration’s plan of action has cost the American people 2,878 lives and over 19,000 wounded. We must have a clear and solid goal of returning control of Iraq to the Iraqi people and their government” continued Benson.

“I call on Representative Don Young to immediately stand up for our Alaskan Sons and Daughters and demand that our Alaskan families are reunited as planned. We cannot allow our families to suffer any longer. We have asked them to serve, we have told them they are coming home, and we cannot inform them at the twelfth hour that we broke our promise to them.”

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