

October 10, 2007

Letter to the Voters in Maryland's 8th Congressional District

Dear Friends,

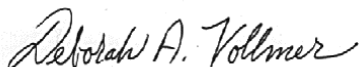
I would like to bring to your attention a little publicized vote which was taken in the House of Representatives on Wednesday, September 26, 2007. It was a "Continuing Resolution" to keep the Federal Government funded at current levels, and it contained an estimated 14 billion dollars for continuation of the War and Occupation in Iraq. Your elected representative, Chris Van Hollen, voted for this resolution. The "Continuing Resolution" is insidious for two reasons: it contained continued funding for the war, and it made it possible to put off the debate on the big money for funding the war and occupation for some months.

Chris Van Hollen would prefer that you not know about his vote on the Continuing Resolution. When asked in a public setting a general question about Iraq war funding (at Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church in Bethesda, Maryland, at the eleven o'clock Sunday morning service), he stated that the votes in Congress were not there to end the war, but that they were working on that. He then gave a description of the history of some of the votes on some of the bills and resolutions on the war, but made no mention of the September 26 vote for the Continuing Resolution. He addressed this issue, only when the question was shouted out from the audience—WHY had he voted for the Continuing Resolution, which contained an estimated fourteen billion dollars for the war in Iraq—when, by the way, fourteen of his colleagues had voted against it? Van Hollen responded that voting the Continuing Resolution down would have meant shutting down the Government, and that would have turned the nation against Congress.

I resent the fact that Mr. Van Hollen attempted to hide the fact that he had voted for the Continuing Resolution (this was hardly a secret vote, but it received virtually no coverage in the mainstream media). I also take issue with his explanation for voting the way he did. A majority of Americans want the U.S. to end the War in Iraq; and this is precisely why the Democrats swept Congress in the last election cycle. If voting down the Continuing Resolution had resulted in a shutdown of the Government, perhaps that would have created just the needed leverage that the Democrats needed—to at the very least force a separation of Iraq War funding from the Continuing Resolution. I believe that any such shutdown of the Government would have been short, that it would have forced a separation of the issues, and that a Continuing Resolution funding the Government would ultimately have been passed without Iraq War funding, leaving that debate to continue in the House.

Where is the courage of our Democratic Congress? Have they no spine? If you agree with my assessment of this situation, please ask your elected representative, Chris Van Hollen, WHY he voted for the Continuing Resolution, and PRECISELY WHAT HE INTENDS TO DO to bring a speedy end to this disastrous war. Van Hollen has a powerful role as Chair of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee. Tell him that you want him to use that leadership to bring an immediate end to this tragic and immoral war.

Peace,



Deborah A. Vollmer
Candidate for Congress, Maryland, CD-8