

WAR RESISTERS SUPPORT CAMPAIGN

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MEDIA ADVISORY

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Private Member's Bill to be introduced in support of U.S. Iraq War resisters

OTTAWA—On Thursday, September 17, Toronto Member of Parliament Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale—High Park), is expected to introduce a private Member's bill in the House of Commons that, if passed, would allow U.S. Iraq War resisters to stay in Canada. The war resisters are U.S. military personnel who have refused to participate in the illegal and immoral Iraq War.

The bill, which will be seconded by Vancouver Member of Parliament Bill Siksay (Burnaby—Douglas), will make binding on the government the direction that Parliament has already given twice (on June 3, 2008 and March 30, 2009) by way of motions that resulted from studies of the issue by the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration (CIMM).

"It is time that the current government of Canada reflected Canadians' desire to allow war resisters to stay and contribute to our country", said Gerard Kennedy, MP. "This law will simply compel them to do what they haven't had the good graces or the good sense to do on their own – and recognize the special circumstances that strike a chord with the majority of Canadians."

"Canada's Parliament has already voted twice to allow these courageous men and women to stay," said Bill Siksay, MP. "Canadians have never supported the Iraq war. This bill reflects the significant support for Iraq War resisters that can be found in every part of our country."

The introduction of this private Member's bill comes at a time when several U.S. Iraq War resisters are threatened with deportation. Two others, Robin Long and Cliff Cornell who both lived in British Columbia, have already been deported to the U.S. where they were court-martialed and jailed as prisoners of conscience for their opposition to the Iraq War. The felony-equivalent convictions given to Iraq War resisters who have been sent back to the U.S. by the Canadian government will result in life-long punishment such as the loss of the right to vote in many states and severely limited chances for employment.

"We are hopeful that this bill will succeed in achieving what should have been done a long time ago," said Michelle Robidoux, spokesperson for the War Resisters Support Campaign. "Iraq War resisters have done the right thing, and Canadians have welcomed them with open arms. The Conservative government is out of step with the majority sentiment in this country, intent on imposing its own minority view. Canadians want to have their voices heard through this very important bill."

A [public opinion poll](#) conducted by Angus Reid Strategies in June 2008 found widespread approval (64 per cent) for Parliament's initial vote directing the minority Harper government to immediately stop deporting Iraq War resisters and create a program to facilitate the resisters' requests for permanent resident status.

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