

Iraq Initiative Project
**Let the American and
Iraqi People Vote Directly
to End the War**



We are faced with the fact, my friends, that tomorrow is today. We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now. . . . There is such a thing as being too late. -- Martin Luther King Jr., "Beyond Vietnam," speech to the inaugural meeting of Clergy and Laity Concerned, Riverside Church, New York City, April 4, 1967

One million Iraqis, and 4,000 U.S. troops, have been killed so far in this war. How many more must die while we wait for politicians to fulfill their promises to end the war and bring the troops home? If we begin to act now, we can place initiatives against the war on the ballots in the November election in as many as thirty states as well as counties and cities across the country, giving as much as half of the American people an opportunity to vote to end the war.

*Iraq Initiative Project
A Project of the
Ecumenical Peace Institute
P.O. Box 9334
Berkeley, CA 94709*

We have an unprecedented opportunity to intervene in this election and make the war the deciding issue in upcoming months. As of March 5, most of the American people will have already voted in the primaries and will no longer be focused as much on who the presidential nominee will be. **We have a choice:** We can wait to see who is elected and see if they fulfill their promises to end the war, **or we can take advantage of this window of opportunity to place antiwar initiatives on state and local ballots** here and throughout the country and support a referendum in Iraq.

What You Can Do

1. Send information to antiwar groups and contacts in California and across the U.S. Contact the Iraq Initiative Project for more information about this strategy.
2. **Donate** to the Iraq Initiatives Project so that we can spread the word, in California and nationally. Make your check payable to EPI (see below) and earmark it IIP.
3. **Hold meetings to discuss this strategy** in your county or city. Report back to us at initiatepeace@yahoo.com so that we can inform others of your efforts.

**IRAQ INITIATIVES
PROJECT (IIP),**

a project of the
Ecumenical Peace Institute/
Clergy and Laity Concerned
P.O. Box 9334, Berkeley, CA 94709
initiatepeace@yahoo.com
(510) 655-1162



• **Sixty percent of the American people believe that all U.S. troops should come home within one year, as do three out of four Iraqis.** Yet neither of the leading Democratic presidential candidates supports a quick and complete withdrawal from Iraq.

• In April, Congress will vote on as much as **\$100 billion more** for the war.

• The money being wasted on the war could easily pay to **save** education, health care, and other **vital programs that will be slashed this spring**, as states face their most severe budget crisis in years.

• This summer, President Bush and Iraqi Prime Minister Maliki plan to unilaterally impose an agreement to keep U.S. troops in Iraq for at least ten more years, **unconstitutionally** bypassing both the U.S. Congress and the Iraqi parliament.

If you believe, as we do, that the Iraq War should be the central issue in this election, a widespread initiatives campaign is the best way to make our call to end the war so compelling that the candidates and the Congress will not be able to ignore it. These initiatives will create an unprecedented **grassroots national referendum for peace** and help elect many more candidates who share our views. It may be the single best way to defeat John McCain, forcing voters to choose between supporting withdrawal and supporting a candidate who favors endless war in Iraq.

It's too late to gather enough signatures for a statewide ballot initiative in California, but initiatives can be placed on the ballot in cities and counties throughout the state. If

the cities and counties that have already passed resolutions against the war would simply put the issue on the ballot, 25 percent of California voters could vote to end the war. Adding Los Angeles County would mean that 40 percent of California voters would have a say.

Suggested text of the initiative: *Shall the Congress and President of the United States end the U.S. occupation of Iraq and immediately begin the safe and orderly withdrawal of all U.S. troops and U.S. military bases from Iraq, to be completed no later than November 4, 2009?*

Shall the taxpayers' money being spent on the war in Iraq be spent instead to care for our veterans, address unmet needs here at home, help solve the budget crisis facing many states, and help reconstruct Iraq?

Shall the U.S. government support the holding of a national referendum in Iraq on whether the U.S. occupation of Iraq should continue, in order to allow the Iraqi people a direct and democratic voice in the future of their country and to enable a safer withdrawal of U.S. troops?

Placing initiatives on county and city ballots will be accomplished by convincing county boards of supervisors and city councils to place them on the ballot. (It's too late to use formal citizen-petition procedures.) This will involve gathering support through petitions and endorsements and lobbying elected officials to act. One key argument as to why they should put measures on the

ballot is that the amount of money that Californians pay for the war could make up most of the budget shortfall, making drastic state and local government budget cuts unnecessary.

This campaign can succeed because something like this has been done before. In 1982 the Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign won ballot initiatives in nine states and many cities (covering almost 30 percent of the population) calling for an end to the nuclear arms race. After this victory, President Reagan was forced to negotiate arms control treaties with the Soviets, lessening tensions and contributing to the end of the Cold War.

Not only can we create an unprecedented referendum for peace in this country, but we can also support the Iraqi people in voting in a national referendum there to end the U.S. occupation. Iraq's Parliament has repeatedly called for U.S. troops to withdraw, but they have been ignored by the Bush and the Maliki governments.

In a little-noticed poll, two-thirds of Republican voters said the U.S. should withdraw from Iraq if the Iraqi people ask us to leave. (Support for withdrawal increases 20 percent among Democrats and independents). The combination of initiatives against the war here, together with a national referendum in Iraq, will be the first time a people suffering under foreign military occupation and the people of the occupying country will have voted together to end that occupation.