

Washington – During the debate over the House Republican budget proposal (H.R. 1), which would cut funding for innovation, education, and manufacturing, U.S. Rep. Rush Holt proposed eliminating \$1.5 in taxpayer funding slated for the Iraqi Security Forces, arguing that Iraq’s oil revenues can be used to train, equip, and pay Iraq’s own police force. Despite identifying the need to eliminate the wasteful spending, only 16 Republicans voted for Holt’s amendment and it did not pass. Holt’s remarks are below. Video of the speech can be found [here](#) .

“If we are going to be cutting Pell Grants and energy research and heating assistance for families here in the United States, we certainly should take a hard look at Pentagon spending as well. Would taxpayers want their dollars to go to pay for Iraqi police on the streets of Baghdad when we are cutting funding for police in Trenton, New Jersey, and other cities and towns across our Nation? I want my colleagues to understand what the authors of H.R. 1 are proposing here today. It is about choices.

“My colleagues, I am sure, could present a good justification for funding Iraq Security Forces. I certainly want to see the people of Iraq living in peace and freedom, free from harm, either domestic or foreign harm. However, the Government of Iraq has ample revenue from oil sales to pay for Iraq security. In contrast, our country faces not only a budget deficit, but critical unmet domestic needs, and this legislation before us today makes many, many unwise cuts.

“H.R. 1 calls for spending \$1.5 billion in taxpayer money to pay for foreign police officers in Iraq while simultaneously cutting \$300 million for the highly successful COPS program here at home. The COPS program is vital. Our local police departments count on it to help them hire additional officers to combat crime in our communities and to provide true community policing. The contrast couldn't be more stark and absurd; have American taxpayers foot the bill for police in Baghdad but not for police in America.

“H.R. 1 showcases the misguided priorities of the new majority. What are they thinking?”

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