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15 Years of Endless War – No End in Sight

Washington, DC – *Three days after the horrific terrorist attacks on September 11th, 2001, Congress considered a 60-word authorization for the use of military force (AUMF.) Following a brief debate, the House passed the measure 420-1. The only “no” vote came from Congresswoman Barbara Lee. Congresswoman Lee released this statement marking the 15th anniversary of her lone vote against this blank check for endless war:*

“I remember the fear and anger following the terrorist attacks on September 11th. I remember watching in horror, running from the Capitol and grieving with the families and friends of those lost.

In those dark days, we all knew that action was needed to bring justice to the perpetrators of these horrific acts.

However, I believed, as I do now, that the AUMF presented to Congress was an overly broad blank check for endless war.

In the 15 years since its passage, we’ve seen this authorization used to justify unchecked military action around the world. In fact, a recent report from the Congressional Research Service shows this authorization has been used to justify 37 military actions in 14 countries, indefinite detentions at Guantanamo Bay and warrantless wiretaps on Americans.

This is simply unacceptable. The Constitution is clear: Congress has an obligation to give the American people a voice on matters of war and peace. Tragically, we have neglected our responsibility to debate the costs

and consequences of war for the last 15 years.

How can we ask our brave men and women in uniform to fight a war that Congress lacks the courage to even debate?

In Congress, I will continue working to build bipartisan support to repeal this blank check for endless war and restore Congress's constitutionally-mandated responsibility to debate and vote on matters of war and peace.

The American people and our brave servicemembers deserve better than a Congress that lacks the courage to debate whether or not our nation goes to war."

Background:

Congresswoman Lee has introduced H.R. 1303 to repeal the 2001 AUMF. Earlier this year, she led bipartisan amendments to the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) and FY17 Department of Defense Appropriations bill to repeal the 2001 AUMF. These amendments received 138 votes and 146 votes, respectively.

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Congresswoman Lee is a member of the Appropriations and Budget Committees, the Steering and Policy Committee, is a Senior Democratic Whip, former chair of the Congressional Black Caucus and co-chair of the Progressive Caucus. She serves as chair of the Democrat Whip Task Force on Poverty, Income Inequality and Opportunity.

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