

Swanson Supports Statewide Vote on Iraq

Sun Staff Reports

Just a week after the Alameda City Council passed a resolution calling for an end to the Iraq war, the state Legislature chimed in on the affair.

A bill previously passed by the Senate that moved through the Assembly on Monday would give Californians a chance to weigh in on the war.

It would be the country's first statewide vote on the war.

State Assemblyman Sandre Swanson, D-Oakland, favored the measure Monday that would place an advisory vote against the Iraq war on the Feb. 5, 2008, primary ballot.

If the Senate agrees with some amendments, which is likely, the bill would go to the governor for approval.

Known as SB 924, Alameda City Council members had read the bill's language before passing the city's resolution last week.

The state bill calls to "end the United States occupation of Iraq," withdraw troops and "provide the necessary diplomatic and nonmilitary assistance to promote peace and stability in Iraq and the Middle East."

"Of course we are all here in support of the men and women of the armed forces for carrying out their duty to protect our democracy," Swanson said in a statement. "I rise specifically to challenge the dangerous policy of pre-emptive war and to call for a return of strategic, international collaborations, and I believe this measure furthers that goal."

Swanson's cousin was a senior flight attendant on United Airlines flight 93, the hijacked San Francisco-bound plane that crashed in rural Pennsylvania on Sept. 11, 2001.

"It is disingenuous to say that this war is being fought to honor the victims of 9/11," Swanson said. "My family, other families, know the truth. It threatens any democracy to give any president pre-emptive war authority."

The bill was sponsored by Senate Pro Tem Don Perata, D-Oakland. It passed 43-31 mostly along party lines with Republicans against the bill.

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