

**Washington DC**— At the conclusion of the President's remarks to the nation regarding our strategy in Afghanistan, Congressman Walz released the following statement.

"It is important that President Obama went through such a thorough decision-making process and talked with experts both within and outside of the Administration. His speech tonight gave us some good information about not just the troop increase, but also the mission, the plan for withdrawal and the resources necessary to finish the job.

"This speech is the first page in a new chapter on Afghanistan. I'm looking forward to the testimony of experts like General McChrystal and Secretaries Gates and Clinton before Congress as we carefully examine this new strategy. I'm also committed to continuing to engage the public on this topic and to having the Administration fill in additional details about our strategy. We as a nation need to better understand the total cost of continuing to wage war, and also the cost to our national security if we choose not to continue our efforts in Afghanistan. These are the kinds of things that I believe can be achieved by a national discussion on the topic, and I look forward to taking part in that discussion in the coming weeks and months."

Walz, the highest ranking enlisted soldier ever to serve in the United States Congress served in support of Operations Enduring Freedom prior to his retirement from the Army National Guard. Since being elected, Walz has traveled twice to Afghanistan and currently sits on the House Veterans Affairs Committee. In May, Walz signed on as a cosponsor of HR 2404, which requires require the Secretary of Defense to submit a report to Congress outlining the United States exit strategy for United States military forces in Afghanistan participating in Operation Enduring Freedom. In October, Walz held a townhall in Winona on Afghanistan. *The Washington Post*

recently profiled Minnesota's 1<sup>st</sup>

District and the varying perspectives residents hold on Afghanistan.

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