

Iowa Occupation Project

A Campaign of Sustained Nonviolent Civil disobedience to End the Iraq War



In cooperation with The Occupation Project initiated by Creative Voices for Nonviolence - www.vcnv.org

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The Iowa Occupation Project

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TWENTY NEW ARRESTS IN THE IOWA OCCUPATION PROJECT

Twenty Iowans were arrested today for occupying or attempting to occupy Senators Grassley's and Harkin's Linn County offices in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Ranging in ages from 20 to 72, participants were from seven cities in Iowa. The action was part of the Iowa Occupation Project, connected with the National Occupation Project <http://vcnv.org/project/the-occupation-project> out of Chicago IL. Friday's occupations were a response to the senators' affirmative votes on the Iraq war supplemental spending bill that was recently passed by Congress.

The occupation followed the morning sentencing of the CR11, eleven people who were arrested February 26 inside Grassley's Cedar Rapids office following a similar action. The CR11 were all given \$65 fines plus court costs.

After the sentencing, 75 people attended a 1 p.m. rally held in a park near the Federal Building in Cedar Rapids. At the Rally organizers explained that both senators had been mailed and hand-delivered letters asking them to "pledge to vote against any further funding requested for the continuing war and occupation in Iraq." The senators were informed that if the pledge was not signed by July 4, 2007, that occupation would occur.

The rally was co-sponsored by several Iowa peace groups including The Iowa Occupation Project, Women for Peace Iowa, the Linn County Green Party, Iowans For Peace, Des Moines based Catholic Peace Ministry, Des Moines Catholic Worker, Iowa Peace Network, School For Moral Courage in Iowa City, University of Iowa Anti-war Committee and the UNI Campus Antiwar Network.

After the rally ended, around 1:30 p.m., the entire group went directly to Senator Grassley's Office in the Federal Building. Upon arriving at the door of the Federal Building where Senator's Grassley's is located, activists were informed only one member of the group would be permitted to enter the building at one time. Iowa City, activist, Mona Shaw, 56, of Iowa City had arrived at the building shortly before the group and had already been admitted to building. The remainder of the group was informed that none could enter until Shaw returned.

An hour-long stand off proceeded in which activists insisted that all who wanted to get into Grassley's office should be allowed. Activists expressed their concern that the public office of a public official was cut off to the public and that the restriction violated their constitutional right to petition their representative. A spontaneous rally took place at the entrance of the Federal building. Shaw remained in Grassley's office determined to stay until others were allowed to join her.

An hour into the stand off the Federal Marshals relented and allowed the rest of the group to enter the building.

The group intending to visit Senator Harkin's office broke off from the activist assembled at the Federal building and went directly to Harkin's Office in the Wells Fargo building, two blocks from the Federal building. All were allowed access to Harkin's Office.

At 5:00 p.m. when the buildings were closing, both groups were asked to vacate both premises or risk arrest. Soon after 5:00 p.m. those willing to risk arrest were arrested by the Cedar Rapids police, issued citations that included a July 20th court appearance date to answer to charges of criminal trespass, and then released.

Below is a list of those who were arrested and the offices they occupied:

In Senator Grassley's Office

Mona Shaw, Iowa City, 56 yrs
Lou Hellwig, Cedar Falls, 72 yrs
Ajax Robert Ehl, Iowa City, 37 yrs
Kathy Hall, Cedar Rapids, 63 yrs
Megan Felt, Iowa City, 20 yrs
Lee Mickey, North Liberty, 71 yrs
Nyssa Koons, Iowa City, 20 yrs
Brian Shearer, Iowa City, 22 yrs
Gloria Williams, Iowa City, 57 yrs
Brian Terrell, Maloy IA, 50 yrs
Renee Espeland, Des Moines, 46 yrs

In Senator Harkin's Office

Michael Rack, Iowa City, 35 yrs
Lara Elborno, Iowa City, 20 yrs
Kerry Hofferber , Cedar Falls, 21 yrs
Chris Gaunt, Grinnell, 50 yrs
Rose Persaud, Iowa City, 47 yrs
Jamie Fredericksen, Iowa City, 37 yrs
Daisy Espino, Iowa City, 26 yrs
John Paul Hornbeck, Iowa City, 25 yrs

David Goodner, 26, of Iowa City was arrested earlier in the afternoon while attempting to enter the Federal Building through a side entrance. He was taken to the Linn County jail and later released after friends posted his bail.