Madam Speaker,

more than two months after stating that our

military action in Libya would be over in ‘‘days,

not weeks,’’ President Obama has yet to explain

to the American people what our mission

in Libya is, how it will be conducted, and when

it will be completed. He has failed to explain

how our military involvement in Libya fits with

our policy interests in the Middle East and

northern Africa. Most importantly, he has ignored

his constitutional responsibility to uphold

federal law by choosing not to acquire authorization

from Congress for our involvement

there.

That is why I cosponsored Mr. TURNER’s

resolution disapproving of the President’s actions,

and that is why I joined my House colleagues

today in demanding action from the

President.

The President must follow the law and seek

approval for this military action from Congress.

In doing so, he must explain some basic facts,

such as whether the removal of Moammar

Qaddafi is part of the mission, how stability

will be promoted in the region if Qaddafi is removed

from power, and who among the anti-

Qaddafi forces in Libya should be supported in

the event that he is removed.

Instead of following the clear path of seeking

congressional approval as outlined in federal

law, the President unilaterally escalated

our military efforts in Libya after assuring us

they would be scaled back. Now, some in the

Obama administration are saying we should

put boots on the ground in support of further

NATO actions. This is the opposite of what the

President promised and contrary to the will of

the House.

Congress appropriately shows a certain deference

to the commander-in-chief when it

comes to national security decisions, as we

must always have the ability to quickly respond

to threats to our sovereignty and our interests

around the world. Further, Congress

must not direct troop movements or set

timelines for our military operations, as such

decisions should be left to our highly skilled

commanders on the ground. But our deference

is contingent upon the President respecting

the Founders’ intent for the primary

role of Congress in providing for our defense

and security needs. It does not change the

fact that the President is obliged to seek congressional

approval and to explain how our

mission in Libya is vital to our national security.

The brave men and women in our armed

forces, as always, are performing their duties

with the greatest expertise and professionalism

of any military in the world. The

issue at hand is the failure of the President to

seek congressional approval required by law,

and the failure of the President to tell Congress

and the American people the details of

our mission.

The American people will always stand with

those who seek freedom and self-determination.

Today’s vote reaffirms that it is vital the

President obey the rule of law in doing so.