Mr. Speaker, as the

co-Chair of the Congressional Georgia

Caucus, I rise in support of House Resolution

1166 and to express my strong

support for the sovereignty and territorial

integrity of the Republic of

Georgia.

On April 16, 2008, the Russian Government

declared that it would establish

legal and official ties with Abkhazia

and South Ossetia. This is nothing

more than a thinly veiled attempt by

Russia to extend these regions, which

are part of the sovereign nation of

Georgia. This action was denounced by

the international community, including

the European Union and the North

Atlantic Treaty Organization, better

known as NATO to all of us. Nonetheless,

Russia remained unfazed by international

opinion and further escalated

tensions in the region just 4 days later

by shooting down a Georgian unmanned

aerial drone over Georgian territory.

Georgia is one of the strongest allies

in the Caucasus region, and it is important

for the United States to continue

to stand by our allies. I spoke with

President Saakashvili on Thursday,

and he’s very concerned about the situation

and, as was mentioned by previous

speakers, has offered a number of

peace proposals. But he very much appreciates

the statements that were

made in support of Georgia by our

State Department and is grateful for

this resolution and the strong bipartisan

support it demonstrates from

Congress.

Since speaking with the President

last week, the situation has become

even more difficult for Georgia. The

Russian Federation continues to move

troops into Abkhazia, and yesterday we

heard reports of possibly two more

Georgian aircraft being shot down.

Considering our close relationship

with Georgia, it is appropriate that the

House of Representatives join the

international institutions that have

condemned Russia’s actions and called

for a peaceful resolution to the current

tensions in the region. This resolution

is supported by the chairman and ranking

member of the Foreign Affairs

Committee, who were original cosponsors

of the resolution. And it was introduced

by Representative WEXLER, the

chairman of the Europe Subcommittee.

I urge my colleagues to support this

important resolution and appreciate its

bipartisan nature.