Mr. Speaker, I rise

in support of the resolution.

Mr. Speaker, in doing so, I cannot minimize

the gravity of its ultimate outcome—the potential

deployment of American Service men and

women to engage in war against our enemy.

There is no more solemn responsibility, or burden,

for a Member of Congress than acting to

put our troops in harm’s way.

I am supporting this resolution because I

believe President Bush has made a solid case

for acting to remove weapons of mass destruction

from Iraq. He has taken the appropriate

steps to achieve United Nations’ support

through a new Security Council resolution, and

I remain hopeful this initiative will be successful.

However, it is imperative that Congress

give consensus to our commander in chief as

he navigates through difficult diplomatic channels,

and so we must give this measure a

strong, favorable vote.

During my service here, I have joined my

colleagues too many times to send our military

personnel to war—from the gulf war to Bosnia

to Afghanistan. Despite reservations, I have

supported former Presidents Bush and Clinton

because it is their constitutional role to make

decisions involving war. We must all be nonpartisan

on these issues and not support only

the President of our party. To act in a partisan

manner damages our Nation’s credibility

abroad and harms the reputation of Congress.

This will be one of my final votes in the

House and it does not get any easier to act on

matters of war. This vote late in my 18-year

career will be one of the hardest. I am confident

it is the right vote.