Mr. Speaker, the new Democratic Congress has made good on

its promise to change the direction of the war in Iraq while providing

critical funding for our veterans and our wounded soldiers. Yet, the

President is still threatening to veto a final conference report when

it comes out of this Congress.

Why would the President veto a bill that requires Iraqis to take

control of their country by meeting key security, political and

economic benchmarks the President himself established?

Why would he veto a bill that provides greater protections for our

troops and our veterans than what was originally requested by the

President?

The supplemental provides 1.7 billion more for military health care,

which includes facility upgrades at Walter Reed and other hospitals

that require renovation. We also provide an additional $1.7 billion for

veterans health care to ensure that they have access to quality care.

The veterans I have met with from New Jersey have told me that this is

one of their top priorities.

I have been opposed to the preemptive war in Iraq from the beginning

because the administration has failed to explore diplomatic solutions.

And therefore the stay-the-course strategy is wrong. And I hope that

the President will sign and not veto this bill.