Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking Speaker

Pelosi and Chairman Obey for bringing the conference report for the

Iraq supplemental to the floor. You have shown tremendous leadership in

the face of great opposition and criticism.

To my colleagues who joined me in passing this legislation, we have

demonstrated to our constituents that we are listening to their

mandate.

Five weeks ago, we commemorated the fourth year of the U.S. invasion

of Iraq. Today, we move with urgency to end 4 years of bloodshed that

has resulted in the death of 3,300 men and women in uniform deployed in

Iraq, 59 of those being sons and daughters of the great State of

Maryland.

While I opposed the war from the very beginning, I believe we have a

duty to redeploy in a responsible manner that protects the Iraqi people

and our troops.

Additionally, we have a responsibility to our courageous men and

women in uniform, their families, and the American people by putting an

end to their incredible sacrifices.

Despite the rhetoric, the President's plan is simply not working.

According to a Washington Post report dated April 4, 2007, the number

of Iraqi policemen killed across Iraq nearly doubled from 171 in

February to 331 in March.

Meanwhile, the numbers of unidentified bodies found across Baghdad

are rising again, suggesting an increase in sectarian-motivated death

squad killings. Surely, this is not a sign of us winning the war in

Iraq; but instead, it is a sign of how the conflict is swiftly tumbling

into a civil war that is on the edge of becoming a battle beyond our

control.

As Members of Congress, it is our duty to bring President Bush back

to reality. Progress in Iraq will not be measured in military terms.

The primary solution to many of the crises in Iraq are simply

political, in that obtaining bilateral assistance from Iraq's

neighbors, the international community and the Iraqis themselves, is a

vital step to resolving many of the present conflicts.

Unfortunately, the President views the situation quite differently.

Rather than attempting to reach compromise, he has threatened to use

his veto power. In doing so, he will be rejecting the benchmarks for

Iraq that he himself has repeatedly stated must be reached to resolve

this crisis. The President will also be vetoing so much more.

The supplemental provides troops with three things they need to be

successful: Training, equipment and rest.

Further, as a member of the House Armed Services Committee, I am

particularly proud that $3 billion is provided for the purchase of mine

resistant, ambush protected vehicles.

The President should take note that he will be vetoing accountability

requirements in the area of homeland security. To that end, the

supplemental makes important changes to the Coast Guard's $24 billion,

25-year Deepwater contract to prevent the development of assets that

simply do not work.

Further, the supplemental will require the Coast Guard to identify

both the staffing structure it needs to manage Deepwater, and the

training that acquisitions oversight staff will require to be

effective.

Having chaired two oversight hearings involving Deepwater, and having

worked with Chairman Oberstar, chairman of the full committee, to

conduct an investigative hearing into Deepwater, I know that the

significant problems that have been experienced with this contract have

arisen at least in part due to the decision of the Coast Guard to move

forward with the program before they had the staff, expertise, and

management systems in place to ensure effective oversight.

Finally, I strongly support these provisions and look forward to

building on them in the Coast Guard reauthorization which we are

drafting. If this supplemental is not signed and if we fail to override

the veto, we will start from scratch, forcing us back to the drawing

board. However, I will not give up or give in. It is time to bring our

troops home