Mr. Speaker, what the Republicans have done today is

nothing more than a cheap political trick . . . a clever but

appallingly undemocratic way for the Republican majority to trash an

honorable American--and decorated war veteran--simply because he

disagrees with them on the war in Iraq.

Yet, no one should be surprised. My 5-year old grandson could have

written this tired script: whenever a Democrat criticizes a Republican

policy, they attack your character and question your patriotism.

And while we're on the subject, let's just ask: what is more

patriotic than opposing an unjust war? What is more patriotic than

trying to save the lives of America's soldiers? What is more patriotic

than questioning the Bush Administration's failed Iraq policy?

The American people deserve better than this. They deserve a thorough

and substantive debate on the war and a debate on the Murtha resolution

. . . not a bill that can't be amended and has been brought to the

House floor for purely political reasons.

Mr. Speaker, a group of Democrats has written a discharge petition to

bring the Homeward Bound legislation, H. J. Res. 55, to the House

floor.

The discharge petition will allow 17 hours of debate on this vitally

important issue. And, in sharp contrast to the bill the Republicans

introduced today, it would be brought up under an open rule that allows

amendments to be introduced to the bill.

The fact that the other party refuses to have this debate--and the

insults that have been hurled at Mr. Murtha over the last 24 hours--are

an affront to our very democracy. I urge my colleagues on the other

side to repudiate these appalling tactics and hold a real debate on

this issue.