Mr. Speaker, I rise today with

a heavy heart. This week, nine of my fellow paratroopers from the 82nd

Airborne Division were killed in Iraq. Nine more heroes killed, nine

more paratroopers returning home in coffins draped in the American

flag.

Mr. Speaker, Daniel Webster's words that are etched in the marble

above implore each of us in this room, and I quote, ``To see whether we

also, in our day and generation, may not perform something worthy to be

remembered.''

Mr. Speaker, I know the task is daunting, but let this Congress be

remembered for leading our country in a new direction in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, I was deployed to Iraq in 2003 and 2004. Nineteen of my

fellow paratroopers I served with never made it home from the streets

of Baghdad. I carry their names with me every single day to remind

myself of the solemn responsibility we face each time the Speaker bangs

down her gavel.

Nineteen men, including Specialist Chad Keith from Indiana. Nineteen

guys who never made it home to their families. Specialist James Lambert

III, from North Carolina. Nineteen all Americans who paid the ultimate

sacrifice. Private Kyle Gilbert from Vermont. Nineteen men who are

missed. Private First Class Marc Seidan from New Jersey. Nineteen men.

Now we have nine more paratroopers to add to this list.

Mr. Speaker, how many more suicide bombs must kill American soldiers

before this President offers a time line for our troops to come home?

How many more military leaders must declare the war will not be won

militarily before this President demands that the Iraqis stand up and

fight for their country?

How many more terrorists will President Bush's foreign policy breed

before he focuses on developing a new strategy, a real strategy for

fighting and beating al Qaeda?

Mr. Speaker, this bill says enough is enough. No more shortchanging

our troops. No more open ended commitment in Iraq. No more refereeing a

religious civil war.

Mr. Speaker, on the fourth anniversary of the war, I led this body in

a moment of silence. Now my fellow Democrats offer a time line to bring

our troops home.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues on the other side of the aisle who

are about to vote ``no'' on this bill, will you stand with us next year

to offer a time line on the war's fifth anniversary?

How about a time line on the sixth? How about a time line on the

10th? Because that's what voting ``no'' does. It says no to the tough

questions. No to accountability and no to providing our troops on the

ground with a clear mission.

Mr. Speaker, I may be hopeful, but I am not naive. I hear Vice

President Cheney taunt patriotic Americans who are concerned with the

direction of our country. I see the President using his veto to hold

our troops hostage to further his failed strategy in Iraq. I read the

Bush Republicans' attacks questioning my patriotism and support for my

fellow soldiers. But, Mr. Speaker, we have all heard these attacks

before.

The American people know that President Bush and his allies are sadly

out of touch. The American people know that supporting the troops means

demanding accountability. The American people know we need a change.

Mr. Speaker, one of my fellow soldiers lost his brother in the World

Trade Center on September 11 of 2001. This soldier is now in Iraq

serving on his second deployment. And last week he sent me a message,

unsolicited. It said, and I quote, ``Never did I think I would disagree

with our foreign policy 5 years after my brother was murdered. Our

latest mission here is to secure the Iraqi people. I signed up to

secure the American people.''

My fellow colleagues, this bill, this vote helps us secure the

American people. For too long the American people have been craving

leadership, craving accountability, and craving a new direction in

Iraq. Let's give this to them today.