Mr. Speaker, I thank our chairman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, this is a good bill. We are legislators. The President

has a job and we who represent the people have a job. It funds the war,

a war that the other side started, and the speech that they are giving

tonight is the same speech they gave 4 years ago.

It's time to change course. This bill funds veterans who have been

wounded severely, children who need health care, and all the

emergencies that this country needs to address and has not been taking

care of the last decade.

Pass the bill.

Mr. President, sign the bill. It's the best bill. The Senate and

House have agreed, and we don't care that the President has said,

before we even passed it out of the first Chamber, that he would veto

it. We have to pass this bill, bring our troops home, and have a plan

for success.

This is a good conference report. Americans, speak out. If the

President does veto the bill, there is something to be paid. The troops

need our help and our support, and I thank Chairman Obey and Chairman

Murtha for their leadership. Vote for the conference report.

``Few will have the greatness to bend history itself; but each of us

can work to change a small portion of events, and in the total of all

those acts will be written the history of this generation.'' Sen.

Robert F. Kennedy.

This vote will affect us today, it will affect our children tomorrow,

it will affect our grand children of the next generation. Unlike some

of our colleagues, I refuse to legislate any bill, much less this bill,

merely because the President has issued a veto threat. Our brand of

government has lasted for more than 230 years because of the separation

of powers. The President needs the money, and Congress controls the

power of the purse.

We have the opportunity to change course, confront crises, and

continue the legacy of not only the Democratic Party but of America

with this vote today.

As of April 23, 2007, there have been 3,333 U.S. Military Deaths

Confirmed by the Department of Defense. There have been at least 20,000

women and men who have been wounded, and untold numbers of women and

men who have been affected by traumatic brain injuries that we are just

discovering, and will suffer for decades from post traumatic stress

disorder.

The Democrats have worked to compromise with the Administration.

While I, like many of my colleagues, hoped that we would retain the

House language with regard to the troop deployment provisions, I

understand that honesty and compromise are the hallmarks of this august

body.

Make no mistake about it; this vote is a vote to support our troops

and will bring an end to the war in the near future. The military

options for Iraq are exhausted; we need to pursue diplomatic solutions

so that the Iraqis and other countries in the Middle East can be real

shareholders in the fate of Iraq.

This supplemental enforces the President's own benchmarks that the

Iraqis protect and end their civil war. This bill has the military's

own standards for readiness and deployment. This bill provides more

than the President requested for military procurement, construction,

health care, and readiness.

I am proud that the Committee supported my request for increased

funding for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, to remove

the matching funds for many of the grants and loans going to the

rebuilding of states affected by Hurricane Katrina, in particular the

city of New Orleans.

$450 million for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)/Counseling:

African American male Vietnam and Iraq theater veterans have higher

rates of PTSD than Whites. Rates of current PTSD are 28% among

Hispanics, 21% among African Americans, and 14 percent among Whites. African Americans have greater exposure to war stresses

and had more predisposing factors than Whites, which appeared to

account for their higher rate of PTSD.

$450 million for Traumatic Brain Injury care and research: Traumatic

brain injury (TBI) is caused by a blow or jolt to the head or a

penetrating head injury that disrupts the function of the brain.

$20 million to address the problems at Walter Reed: When the federal

base-closing commission recommended shutting down Walter Reed Army

Medical Center in Washington, it was noted through a number of reports

that most of the patients and communities affected were African-

American.

$100 million to allow the VA to contract with private mental

healthcare providers to offer veterans, including Guard and reserve

members, quality and timely care: African Americans are more likely to

be victims of serious violent crime than are non-Hispanic whites.

Food Assistance (PL 480 Title II): Adds $450 million, which is $100

million above the President's request, to support food aid in Sudan/

Eastern Chad, Southern Africa, and the Horn of Africa.

Agricultural Assistance: Adds $3.7 billion. According to the National

Farmers Union, over 80 percent of U.S. counties were designated as

disaster areas in 2005, and 60 percent were declared in 2006, making

this assistance essential if farmers are to maintain their livelihoods

in the coming year.

Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP): The Supplemental

adds $400 million to partially restore cuts to the program.

Pandemic Flu Preparedness: Adds $1 billion to purchase vaccines

needed to protect us from a global pandemic.

State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP): As amended in

Committee, the proposal adds $750 million for SCHIP to ensure continued

healthcare coverage for children in 14 states that face a budget

shortfall in the program.

Foreign Aid: $40 million in security assistance is added for Liberia.

This provision was added only because of the CBC.

After far too long, the bill will address the outstanding needs of

our working women and men by increasing the minimum wage of Americans.