Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding as this

debate comes to an end.

The legislation we have debated here tonight was at one point

supposed to be an emergency supplemental spending bill for our troops,

dispatched to them with urgency, resolution, and purpose. It was

supposed to provide money and resources for our fighting men and women

on the frontlines so that they had the tools and equipment they needed

to finish the task at hand.

Instead the majority turned this important funding package into an

exercise in political theater, along the way, disregarding the

testimony of our military commanders, the wishes of many in their own

caucus, and basic and numerous dictates of our Constitution and our

history.

The result has been a final conference report, though we know it

really won't be a final conference report. It has been a conference

report that imposes artificial deadlines, ties the hands of our

commanders in the field, and demotes those tasked with managing an

active military engagement to the rank of administrative assistant,

forced to check new boxes before exercising the authority they have

today to execute their mission.

And it would spend billions of dollars on things that should have

been debated at another time. Some of those things have merit. Some of

those things I agree with. Some of them I don't. But they shouldn't

have been debated as part of this bill.

Those who attended today's briefing with General Petraeus benefited

from a clear and sober assessment of our chances for achieving success

in Iraq and the consequences we can expect by declaring defeat. But not

a single person in that room today, with knowledge of our progress on

the ground, believes this war was lost or that our presence there was

without merit. Unfortunately, too many in this Chamber seem convinced

of the inevitability of defeat.

However this vote turns out, I am hopeful that tonight's roll call

will end this effort to undercut our mission by undermining the

authority of our commanders in the field. Republicans are willing, and

have been willing, to work with the majority on this bill. But we will

not waver on our insistence that an emergency troop support bill passed

by Congress actually be focused on supporting the troops. The

legislation before us tonight fails to meet that most basic standard.

I urge a ``no'' vote on this bill and ask my colleagues to join me

tonight in standing up for the interests of our men and women in harm's

way. And hopefully, very soon, we can join together in crafting a bill

that will be considered quickly, as this one should have been, passed

quickly, with help to the frontlines as soon as possible.

It's time for the political theater to end and the real work to

begin.