Mr. Speaker, apparently a number of people have not read

this bill. I know my friend Bill Young has read it.

We have $1.5 billion to cover the full cost of housing allowances for

the troops. If you vote against this, you are voting against housing

allowances. We have a total of $2.3 billion in this bill to cover the

full cost of fielding an additional 36,000 Army troops and 9,000

Marines. If you've read this bill, you'll realize we added $2 billion

to address the training and equipment shortfalls in the forces not

deployed. One billion dollars is dedicated to purchase Army National

Guard equipment. If you vote against it, you're voting against $1

billion for the National Guard. You're voting against an additional

$750 million for Afghanistan. You're voting against $2.4 billion with a

joint IED task force. In procurement you're voting against the very

thing that the military wants most, and that is the new vehicle with

the V shape which is resistant to IEDs.

Now, let me talk a little bit about IEDs. In the last 4 months, we

have lost more troops than any other period during this war. And I am

sorry to hear from a friend of mine's wife who called me and said there

was a joke on one of the shows last night by a Republican Presidential

candidate who said that he brought an IED back and he put it under this

guy's desk. That individual owes an apology to every troop that serves

in Iraq.

When we go to the hospital, all of us, we see burn victims. We see

victims that are wounded badly. And many of us don't get an opportunity

to see the families. I went to Fort Hood, Fort Bragg, and Fort Stewart. These folks are

burned out. The truancy rate is up in the schools. The achievement is

down in the schools where our troops' children go. One soldier said to

me, a first sergeant, a woman, she says, I hate to tell my children I'm

going back to Iraq.

They're going back the third and fourth time.

A general said to me, ``I can only take 9 months.'' And we're sending

them back to 18; I hear rumors that they are going to extend them to 18

months.

We have an accountability bill, this is called the ``Iraq

accountability bill.'' This war has been so mismanaged that we have the

responsibility to force the White House to be accountable. The policy

is not set by the military, the policy is set by the White House, and

we have to hold the White House accountable for the mistakes that they

have made.

We will have appropriated $1.2 trillion for the Defense Department in

1 year. We are spending nearly $10 billion a month in Afghanistan and

Iraq. We have 126,000 contractors. And it took us 2 months, the

committee that funds every cent that is spent in Iraq and Afghanistan

had to spend 2 months to find out there were 126,000 contractors. And

we told this to the Secretary of Defense. When one of the Members of

Congress said, and one of them is making $300,000 a year, one of the

contractors, he said, ``That's more than I make.'' Imagine, we've got a

contractor making more than the Secretary of Defense makes. We have a

contractor that I saw, when I talked to the Cavalry Division that was

in Iraq, here is a guy pumping gas, this is what a soldier told me, he

gets $25,000 a year, and right beside him was a guy pumping gas for

$80,000 a year. This is what I call accountability.

We have to hold the White House responsible for accountability. Why

do they have 126,000 contractors? Because we don't have enough troops.

Why are they extending the troops to 18 months, possibly?

And finally, they realized they couldn't send them back before they

had a year at home. They had to be trained and they had to be equipped.

That is what we say in this bill, we say you've got to be trained and

equipped.

I had General Pace come up after the last hearing. I said, General,

you've got to tell me you're not sending any troops back there

untrained and ill-equipped. And I don't know that this conversation

made the difference, but a short time later they announced they are

going to extend people, and they are not going to send anybody back

unless they had a year at home. It is absolutely essential.

I talked to some of the wives at Fort Bragg. I got one story from the

hospitals about how the service was there, they were able to get

service anytime they wanted, within a week they were able to get

service. Then I talked to the wives, the officers' wives, I said, after

talking to them for a while, how many of you got service in a week? No

hands went up. How many did it take over a month? Half the hands went

up. We've got to take care of the people at home.

Let me tell you something, I get fatigued in going to the hospitals.

The caregivers that care for them every day, think what they go

through. A nurse called me and said you've got to put some money in the

bill, and we did, to take care of caregivers to give them some relief.

These caregivers see it every day. So we put $6 million in for

Landstuhl program. We put $1 million in for Walter Reed, for Brooke's

and for Bethesda. They are burned out. The troops are burned out. What

we are trying to do in this bill is hold the White House accountable

for the policy mistakes that they made.

We went into Iraq without weapons of mass destruction. I believed it.

When I went there the first time, I saw a line drawn around Baghdad.

They told me they were going to use biological weapons. I believed

that. It took me 6 or 7 months to realize we had made a mistake. We

went to Afghanistan, it was the right place to go.

I am inspired by these troops, I am inspired by their families; but

they are burned out and they are bearing as much as they can bear. When

we sit here, and one of the previous speakers said ``we.'' I hear this

all the time, ``we're fighting,'' ``we're fighting terrorists.'' We are

not fighting terrorism, we are sitting here in an air conditioned place

while they are out there in dust.

And let me tell you about the policy in this latest deployment. I

worried. I didn't say anything in public, but I worried. When you send

37 different elements out by themselves among the Iraqis, when you've

got interpreters who you don't trust, you are going to expect the kind

of disasters you just saw. That's the thing that worries me when you

don't have enough troops. And one general said to me, he said, ``If

you're there more than 9 months, you start making mistakes.'' Imagine

what he's saying? He said, ``I question myself after 9 months.'' A

psychologist told us, who came before the committee, he said 3 months

in heavy combat, 3 months of going out every day and having IEDs,

imagine a Presidential candidate making jokes about IEDs when these

kids are blown apart? It's outrageous.

Let me tell you something, we owe a great deal of gratitude to these

families and these young people who are doing the fighting. It's not

``we'' doing the fighting, it's ``them'' doing the fighting. They

deserve accountability from the Congress of the United States, and we

are going to demand that from this accountability bill.