Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. Skelton and Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this legislation to continue the

work of the special inspector general for Iraq reconstruction. Our

Nation is committing substantial taxpayer funds to reconstruction in

Iraq. The most recent report of the special inspector general states

that over $18 billion has been obligated as of the end of September.

Further funds have been appropriated to continue reconstruction and

assistance to Iraqi security forces in the current fiscal year.

We know that the situation in Iraq is difficult and there is a

vigorous national debate about how to best proceed. The security

environment is extremely dangerous. Iraq's government institutions are

not working well, and the economy is struggling. For as long as we

continue to expend our resources there, it is important that we,

including the Congress, Department of State, and Department of Defense,

get the best oversight and accounting that we can of how these

resources are being applied. This not only provides accountability for

us; it also helps us demonstrate to Iraq's government ministries what

we believe to be necessary practices of good government and

accountability.

I am very encouraged that Dr. Bob Gates, the incoming Secretary of

Defense, endorsed continuing the work of the special inspector general.

And further, that recommendation No. 69 of the Iraq Study Group

specifically calls for sustaining the special inspector general.

I urge my colleagues to vote for this bill to ensure that this

important oversight and accountability function continues for as long

as we are committing significant resources to Iraq's reconstruction.

There is no doubt that there is very significant problems of

corruption and criminality in Iraq. It is regrettable that we have to

say that, but I think this inspector general has done an outstanding

job and we should overwhelmingly pass this bill and indicate our

support for this legislation