Mr. Speaker, as the November election clearly

showed, Iraq is the number one issue weighing on Americans' minds. A

vast majority of people across the Nation strongly disagree with the

President's plan to send nearly 21,500 additional troops into Iraq, and

a bipartisan majority in this Congress has also voiced its opposition

to this measure.

This week here in the people's House, we will have an opportunity to

express our opinions on the troop escalation, and then we will have to

vote whether or not we support the President's plan. The American

people want a debate. And while there is one going on in this House,

the Senate Republican leadership continues to block debate in the

Senate.

One has to wonder what Senate Republican leaders are so worried

about. After all, Republican Senators, like John Warner and Chuck

Hagel, joined with Democrats to propose their own resolution opposing

the troop escalation.

Are Senate Republican leaders really willing to stifle the voices of

their own Republican colleagues so that they can continue to protect

the Bush administration? It is time for real debate. It is time for a

new direction on this war.