Mr. Speaker, from the very beginning of the war, which

is now an occupation, in Iraq, the Bush administration has not kept

faith with our troops. Whether it was sending them into combat without

the proper body armor or failing to provide wounded veterans with

proper care at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center, this administration

has turned its back on our brave men and women time and time again.

Another example of this outrageous mistreatment is the Pentagon's

``stop loss'' policy. A very disturbing article about ``stop loss''

appeared 3 days ago in the Chicago Tribune. Actually, it should be

required reading for every single Member of this House. The article

says:

Mr. Speaker, it is time to stop mistreating our troops and the

families who wait so patiently for their return.

We need bold action to bring our troops home.

Last month this House had the opportunity to take such bold action.

We had a bill before us that would have fully funded a safe withdrawal

of our troops and defense contractors starting within 90 days. This

bill also would have provided for the social and economic

reconstruction of Iraq so that the Iraqi people could look to their

future with hope. And it would have supported diplomatic efforts and

multinational efforts to restore security in Iraq. That plan of action

made sense.

But instead of taking bold action, the Congress took the same old

action and gave the President every single thing he wanted in the

supplemental spending bill. There is no timetable for withdrawal, and

the President doesn't even have to hold the Iraqi government

accountable for failing to meet the benchmarks in the bill.

Mr. Speaker, every third grader in America is being held accountable

for meeting his or her reading and math benchmarks under No Child Left

Behind. We are demanding more from our 8-year-olds than the Iraqi

government.

Mr. Speaker, the American people didn't send us here to go all wobbly

in the knees and weak in the stomach when the moment of truth arrived.

They sent us here to stand up to the President to end this war, and

that is what we must do.

So let us begin to restore the good name of the Congress by

overturning the original authority for the war. Congress didn't

authorize this President to use U.S. troops to police a civil war,

which is what Iraq has come to.

From here on, there must be one benchmark and one benchmark only. The

orderly, fully funded, and fully protected withdrawal of our troops.

They have done their duty. Now it is our time to do our duty for them.