Mr. Speaker, we owe our Nation's freedom and

quality of life to America's veterans. These brave men and women left

their families behind and risk their lives for us and their country.

Our government promised to take care of them when they returned home;

this is a promise we simply must not break.

Today, the House has an opportunity to live up to these promises. The

emergency supplemental bill provides $1.7 billion more than the

President's request to fund veterans' health care needs. The bill

provides $550 million to address the maintenance backlog at VA health

care facilities, preventing situations like the one at Walter Reed.

$250 million for medical administration to ensure sufficient personnel

to maintain a high level of service for the rising number of veterans.

$100 million to allow the VA to contract with private mental health

care providers to offer veterans timely mental health care. And $62

million to speed up claims processing for returning veterans.

Mr. Speaker, those who put their lives on the line for our country

deserve not only our respect, but also the best medical care we can

provide. This bill will ensure that they receive just that, while

beginning a process to bring our troops home.