Madam President, the Senate will vote on whether

America is on the right course in Iraq, or the wrong one.

I have spent the past two years traveling all over Rhode Island,

listening to people from my state who were angry and frustrated at this

President's refusal to see that his policies in Iraq were wrong from

the start, and remain wrong today. Last November, they and millions of

Americans cast their votes for a new direction.

They sent us here to hold this President accountable: for distorting

intelligence to serve his policy goals; for failing to give our troops

the equipment they needed to do their jobs overseas, and failing to

take adequate care of them when they return home; for telling our

country the mission was accomplished when, as we've seen, the war has

now stretched on for five long years; for now proposing to send tens of

thousands more American soldiers into harm's way, against the wishes of

the American people, and without a plan to bring the conflict to an

end.

Americans know the truth: escalating the war in Iraq will not make

that nation more secure, or bring Iraq

and its people any closer to a lasting peace. It will not make our

nation more secure. And it is not the new direction Americans demanded.

There is a way to change course in Iraq. If we announce clearly that

the redeployment of American troops will begin, and begin soon, that

opens up diplomatic opportunities in Iraq, in the Middle East, and

around the world.

When it is evident to the insurgents that America is not an army of

occupation, the factions within the Iraqi government will be obliged--

and better able--to assume responsibility for the security and

governance of their own nation. Iraq's neighbors will be newly

motivated to take steps that will encourage a peaceful and secure Gulf

region.

This binding resolution makes it clear that the situation in Iraq has

changed since Congress authorized the use of force in Iraq in 2002. It

states the President must begin the phased redeployment of American

combat troops in no later than four months, with that redeployment

completed by March 31, 2008.

The President failed to show America a new direction, and so the

Senate will step forward to lead where he will not. I will vote yes to

a change of course in Iraq, and I hope my colleagues will do the same.