Mr. Speaker, there have been many false dawns in Iraq

over the past 2 1/2 years, times when we hoped we might be seeing a

new day, but yesterday was truly remarkable. More than 11 million

Iraqis went to the polls, many dressed in their finest clothes, to cast

their votes for a new parliament and a new future.

Iraqi Sunnis, who boycotted the polling in January, turned out in

droves to ensure their voices would be heard in the new legislature.

Perhaps most remarkable was the absence of violence. Across the

country, only 52 attacks were recorded, and there were no mass casualty

incidents. For this, we have the men and women of the U.S. Armed Forces

to thank.

For months, our troops have endured ever more numerous IED attacks

and fierce urban combat in order to secure the country for yesterday's

vote. They have done everything we have asked of them and more, and we

are all, all deeply grateful for their sacrifice.

I want to support this resolution. I have an enormous respect for the

chairman of our committee and the chairman of the Mideast Subcommittee,

but I am deeply troubled by what is a calculated and transparent

attempt to use the unity of the Iraqi vote to cause further disunity

here at home.

Two days ago, I was invited to the White House along with Mr. Lantos

and a number of our colleagues to meet with the President and senior

administration officials on preparations for the elections and the next

steps in Iraq. I appreciated the President's efforts to reach across

the aisle for unity as we exchanged ideas on how to best move forward

in Iraq. Unfortunately, this resolution is not in keeping with the

spirit of that meeting.

I hope to have the opportunity to return to Iraq in the near future

and visit our troops along with several of our colleagues. We are

going, as we have in the past, not as Republicans and Democrats but as

Americans and as Members of the Congress of the United States.

It is too early to know if the election will be a turning point that

we have all hoped for, but one thing is plain, greater division at home

does not further the war effort. This is not the way to honor

yesterday's triumph and the sacrifice of so many young Americans.