Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding me

time.

Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of voices in the debate about our

success in Iraq, but I think the two most relevant voices in this

debate are the Iraqi people themselves and the troops that have served

and are serving in Iraq.

The Iraqi people spoke loud and clear yesterday when over 70 percent

of them turned out at the polls to put in place the only constitutional

democracy in the Arab world.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to share the voice and perspective of a

young soldier that just returned home to Indiana. Staff Sergeant Ben

Joy with the Gary, Indiana, based 113th Engineering Battalion returned

just last Tuesday after a year in Iraq just in time for the holidays.

Obviously, his family is overjoyed to have him home.

Staff Sergeant Joy set up security for elections earlier this year,

and he explains, ``Election time is very busy. It was probably working

16 or 18 hours a day. The polls were peaceful then and now,'' he says,

``and the U.S. effort is working.'' He went on to say that ``you can

tell that the people, they want to be free. They didn't really know how

in the beginning. They're starting to show it more and more now.'' He

adds, ``The build-up that is going on there, the Iraqis taking over,

they clearly want us there. And I mean, if we stay the course, I think

everything will work out just fine.''

Mr. Speaker, I think we should heed the actions of the Iraqi people

and the words of Staff Sergeant Joy and support this resolution.