Mr. Speaker, I intend to vote for this resolution

because I want to salute the elections in Iraq and our U.S. troops

there. And I oppose set time tables for a U.S. withdrawal from Iraq.

However, in good conscience, I must say I am deeply offended that, for

the second time in 1 month, the House Republican leadership has brought

a resolution dealing with the vital issue of war and peace to the floor

of this House on a partisan basis without a single committee hearing,

without a single witness and less than 24 hours after this resolution

was even introduced.

Eight seconds. Eight seconds. That is how much the House leadership

and Rules Committee has given each Member of Congress to speak on this

vital issue today. How dare the leadership give itself the time to

express their views of conscience but deny other Members of Congress

the right to express their views of conscience on the issue of when to

bring our troops home from harm's way.

We have had time to rename dozens of post offices. Are our troops not

worth more than 8 seconds per House Member for debate? I think so. I

hope and pray the Iraqi parliament gives its members a greater voice in

their democracy than U.S. Members of Congress are being given in ours

today.

The Republican leadership could have worked on a bipartisan basis to

write a resolution saluting the Iraqi elections and our troops there.

We could have had a unanimous vote to send to our troops during the

Christmas and holiday season. Instead, the leadership cynically chose

to push a partisan resolution that they knew would split the House,

would split the American people, and send a mixed message, not a

unified message, to our troops in harm's way.

And as someone who has represented over 40,000 soldiers, Army

soldiers who have fought in Iraq, I think it is shameful that the House

Republican leadership would put its partisan ploys above the interests

of supporting and sending a unified message of support to our troops in

Iraq.