Mr. Speaker, like millions of other Americans, I am pleased

that Iraq held a democratic election for permanent representation and

commend the bravery of the Iraqi people who risked their lives to vote

for their vision of an Iraq ``by and for Iraqis.'' And I remain a

stalwart supporter of our sailors, soldiers and marines who are serving

in Iraq. What I do not support is the Republican leadership's political

manipulation of the Iraq war and their attempts to stymie debate about

how to get U.S. troops home as quickly and safely as possible.

I could not vote for H. Res. 612 because it does not call for

immediately bringing U.S. troops home. U.S. troop presence fuels the

insurgency. If the administration acknowledged this fact and started

bring our troops home, we would remove the dangerous veneer of

``occupiers'' and put pressure on the Iraqis to step up to the plate

and take over their own security, particularly now that the Iraqis have

a representative government. The administration's bogus statement of

``they stand up we stand down'' is a hollow promise to our troops: It's

just a slogan that provides no concrete answers on how we're getting

out of Iraq. I urge my colleagues in Congress and the administration to

stop wasting our troops time with slogans and politically driven

resolutions like H. Res. 612 and instead focus on what's really

important: bringing our troops home.