Mr. President, this is a war which never should have

started and on this President's watch may never end. But the face of

this war is not the face of President George W. Bush, nor is it the

face of any Member of Congress. The face of this war can be found in

the grief of children, wives, mothers, in 3,333 homes across America

where a folded American flag and fading photograph are daily reminders

of a fallen soldier.

The face of this war can be found in a hospital room in the Midwest

where a 22-year-old soldier sits in a wheelchair. When you walk in the

room he notices you and watches you, but he cannot speak. He is a

victim of traumatic brain injury, the signature injury of this war. His

powers of communication are very limited. We hope that will change, but

it may not.

Seated next to this 22-year-old soldier in the hospital room is a 21-

year-old wife, holding the picture of a 2-year-old daughter. For 10--

20--30--or 40 years, this may be his life and her life. The face of

this war can be found in hundreds of counseling sessions that are now

treating thousands of soldiers who returned, haunted by the demons of

this war or fighting post-traumatic stress disorder. The face of this

war can be found in the wives and mothers at home, anxiously awaiting

the return of their soldier, paying the bills, caring for the kids,

hoping their marriage will survive.

Today we send the President a chance to change the course of this

war, a chance to finally demand accountability from the Iraqis, and a

chance to honor our great men and women in uniform by bringing them

home in an orderly, sensible, safe way.

When the President receives this bill early next week, I hope he will

ask himself some basic questions. How many lives? How many wounds? How

many soldiers must America sacrifice, waiting for the Iraqis to accept

their responsibility?

Time and again the Iraqis have failed to shoulder the burden of

leadership. They have set their own timetables and deadlines to finally

bring political order to their country, and have failed time and time

and time again. Instead of being held to the task of governing their

own country, some in this Government make excuses and say let's send in

some more soldiers and buy them some more time. As the Iraqis fail,

brave Americans fall--victims of IEDs, victims of car bombs, victims of

a civil war that has its roots in an Islamic battle that has gone on

for 14 centuries; victims of Iraqi politicians who delay making the

hard political decisions which might bring stability to their country.

The law we send the President will give him a chance to start anew,

an opportunity to finally accept change--a moment in history where he

can accept the reality of this grim and deteriorating war in Iraq.

The President has already predicted he is going to take this bill and

veto it. But we hope there will be 1 moment--1 moment of prayerful

reflection before he puts that pen to paper. In that moment, if he

closes his eyes in prayer, I hope he sees the faces I have spoken of,

of these fallen soldiers, of these battered warriors, of these men and

women and families who have given more than we can ever ask of anyone

in this country, and I hope he will realize, with that pen in his hand,

he can honor them, honor this country, and bring this war to an end.

I reserve the remainder of my time and yield the floor.