Mr. President, I rise to encourage all of my colleagues,

Democrat and Republican, to support the Cochran amendment as a

responsible action. The situation in Iraq is deeply controversial and

divisive. As we debate it, everyone here and in the country say they

are clearly for supporting our troops in the field and giving them what

they need once they are put there to do their mission. That is why just

a week or two ago huge numbers of Members of the Senate supported the

Gregg resolution, 82 Senators saying clearly: We are going to support

the men and women in uniform in the field; likewise, they supported in

huge numbers the Murray resolution, 96 Senators, to support the men and

women in uniform in the field.

I am afraid the path some are urging us to go down today belies that

statement, contradicts that statement, and does not support those men

and women in uniform in the field.

We all know the consequences of the Reid language. That language

insists that the President pull our troops out of Iraq on a date

certain with no regard at all for the conditions on the ground or the

progress being made by our troops or the Iraqi Government. It

micromanages the war, taking what is in the purview of the Commander in

Chief and bringing it to Congress. The Reid language will absolutely

draw a veto from the President. What would that do? It would delay for

a significant amount of time getting aid, money, help, and equipment to

our troops in the field.

We should not go down this path. This language will earn a veto from

the President. Indeed, it would earn a veto from any President because

it micromanages his responsibilities as Commander in Chief, and that

will delay getting resources to folks in the field.

Our military leadership has said in no uncertain terms that they must

get this supplemental funding to support the troops in the field by

mid-April. This language will push all of that well beyond that

deadline, will delay it by 5, 6 weeks or more, and endanger our troops

in the field by not getting them the resources and equipment they need.

That is not right. That is exactly contrary to what almost all Members

of this body have spoken for: supporting our troops in the field.

This supplemental appropriations bill also has important help for the

victims of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita on the gulf coast, emergency

measures that are supported by the President and the Congress but have

not yet been fully funded. Just as we are playing politics potentially

with our troops in the field with this veto scenario, we would be

playing politics with this language, drawing a veto from the President,

with the victims of the worst natural disaster in U.S. history. That is

not right. It is politics over people. Worse than that, it is politics

over our people in uniform. It is politics over our people who suffered

the worst natural disaster in history. We should not go down this path.

We should not be so cynical and callous. We should put our people in

uniform first and get them the funds and support they need in the field

as we promise to do speech after speech after speech.

Words are cheap. Actions, votes lead to consequences. That is what

this debate and what these votes are all about--supporting our troops

in the field, supporting the victims of the worst natural disaster in

U.S. history.

I yield the floor.