Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I

might consume.

Mr. Speaker and my colleagues, I rise today to express my opposition

to this emergency supplemental. My colleagues know that I have the

highest level of respect for my chairman, Mr. Obey. Together we worked

as partners in the 109th Congress, passing appropriations bills through

the committee and through the House. Indeed, the Appropriations

Committee is at its best when each of us works together across party

lines and rises above purely partisan politics.

During the last Congress I was privileged to serve as chairman of

this great committee, and Mr. Obey was our distinguished ranking

member. Today, our roles are reversed, and Mr. Obey is now our

chairman.

There is no question that if my friend from Wisconsin were permitted

to write this bill on his own, this would be a much better product.

Instead, the House is being asked to consider a spending bill that

reflects the priorities of Speaker Pelosi and a deeply divided

Democratic Caucus. It attempts to bridge these widening divisions over

the war in Iraq by delivering billions of dollars in unrelated and

unauthorized spending under an emergency designation.

This legislation ought to focus on our troops. It ought to focus on

providing those in harm's way with the resources they need to complete

their mission successfully. It ought to respect, not micromanage, our

combatant commanders in whom we place the ultimate responsibility of

prosecuting military actions.

Instead, this legislation ties the hands of our Commander in Chief

during a time of war, places military decisions in the hands of

politicians, and attempts to buy votes for its passage on the left and

on the right by literally promising something to everyone.

If the majority's goal is to end the war or withdraw our troops, then

that should be addressed in a separate piece of legislation. The

majority cannot have it both ways, pretending, on the one hand, to

support our troops, while on the other undercutting their ability to

prosecute their mission.

Men and women of good conscience can disagree about the war in Iraq.

But on one thing we must all agree, our men and women in uniform must

continue to receive our unqualified support and the resources they need

to complete their mission successfully.

My colleagues, consider carefully the consequences of our actions

here today. Passage of this measure in its present form will signal to

insurgents and terrorists that the United States doesn't have the

political will to continue supporting this fledgling Iraqi democracy.

Al Qaeda and other enemies of freedom will simply lay in wait until

our troops are withdrawn. And with the collapse of this fragile

democracy, our efforts, and the sacrifices of our troops, will have

been for nothing.

The fight in Iraq is also critical to the future of Israel. A failure

in Iraq will further destabilize the region, posing a direct threat to

Israel. We must not let that occur to our friend and ally.

There should be no carrot big enough to force Members into choosing

between their principled support for our troops in the field and

funding for the many unrelated and parochial items sprinkled throughout

this bill.

Republican Members in the House are simply not going to abandon our

principles, and troops in the field, for the promise of pork back in

our districts. To their credit, many Democrats also continue to express

grave reservations about this approach and about this legislation.

Last year Congress sent the President a clean supplemental bill for

our troops. This Congress, and our country, would be better served by

producing a clean bill free of extraneous spending and unrelated

legislative provisions.

There is no question that the President will veto this bill. In the

meantime our troops will face the uncertainty resulting from the

majority's mixed signals and lack of a clear commitment.

I am also deeply concerned that the Democrat leadership has brought

this emergency supplemental to the House floor under a closed rule

without opportunity for Members on both sides of the aisle to offer

amendments.

During my tenure as chairman, the House considered six emergency

supplemental appropriations bills. Of these six bills, the two largest

bills, H.R. 1268, was $81.2 billion; the other was a $91.8 billion

supplemental. Those two bills primarily focused on the global war on

terror. In both instances I worked closely with my leadership and the

Rules Committee in seeking rules that permitted open debate, including

amendments, on the House floor. And in both instances, these

supplemental bills were considered under an open rule. The remaining

four bills were noncontroversial and bipartisan in nature and were

considered by unanimous consent on the Suspension Calendar.

I assumed that Chairman Obey would continue in the longstanding

tradition and practice of the committee to advocate open rules on all

appropriations bills. Members on both sides of the aisle benefit by a

process that supports a fair, honest, open, and transparent debate on

the House floor. I was disappointed that Mr. Obey's first bill as

chairman, the fiscal year 2007 continuing resolution, was considered

under a closed rule, with only 1 hour of debate and no opportunity for

amendments.

Consideration of this supplemental under a closed rule is

unprecedented and leaves the minority little choice but to walk away

from the tradition of comity that has marked our longstanding work on

this committee.

By denying Members, both Democrats and Republicans, their right to

offer amendments to this legislation, I can assure you that all bets

are off on getting our committee work done this year. It simply will

not happen. There will be no unanimous consent agreements on the fiscal

year 2008 bills. I spoke personally with Mr. Obey about this and asked

him to carry that message directly to the Speaker.

This legislation is simply too important to have it rushed through

the House with no debate and no opportunity for the body to consider

amendments. Consideration of this legislation under a closed rule

signals to the House, and to the public, that the Speaker has imposed

martial law on the people's House.

Lastly, I would be remiss not to highlight my reservations about the

budgetary aspects of this bill that proposes more than $22 billion in

emergency spending items that are completely unrelated to the global

war on terror or legitimate emergencies in the Gulf Coast region.

I ask my colleagues what does a $25 million bailout for spinach

producers, $60 million for the salmon fishing industry, or $5 million

for fish breeding have to do with the global war on terror?

This legislation also includes authorization language to increase the

minimum wage. Again, I ask my friends why can't the committees of

jurisdiction in the House and the Senate meet in open conference to

resolve the differences between these bills? What place has this

provision in a wartime supplemental?

In short, much of what is included in this bill is completely

unrelated to the global war on terror and has no place in the bill.

Sadly, many items are being designated as emergencies for no other

reason than to make more room for additional spending on the part of

the Democrats under the fiscal 2008 caps.

I ask my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to consider

thoughtfully the precedent set by this legislation. Weigh in your

conscience the effects of undermining the authority of the President,

and future Presidents, and putting at further risk our men and women in

uniform.

Our Congress, and our country, would be better served by sending the

President a clean supplemental free of extraneous spending and

unrelated legislative provisions.

While I respect Chairman Obey, I cannot support this legislation as

it is presently written. I strongly urge a ``no'' vote.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.