Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the ranking member

profusely for granting me this time.

It is with regret that I rise today in opposition to the defense

supplemental bill. As a member of the House Appropriations Committee, I

wanted to be able to support a bill that would provide our soldiers

with the funding they need to carry out their mission in Iraq. But I

must oppose it because it presupposes our defeat in Iraq by tying the

hands of the military leaders.

Further, it adds nonemergency spending, lots of spending, and sets

new precedents. And of particular concern to me, fails to fix some

major problems that were created in the continuing resolution with

respect to rental assistance for our neediest families.

The continuing resolution changed the formula for distributing $16

billion in rental assistance under the section 8 program. The result is

less funding, more uncertainty, a ``use it or lose it'' mentality, and

a loss of any incentive to plan over the long run. It rewards excessive

spending and punishes cost-effectiveness and will set public housing

authorities against one another by creating new winners and losers

every year.

The impacts on the program are staggering. Over 1,220 PHAs in 30

States will lose $460 million permanently. That means forever. I have

here a list that I include for the Record of all the PHAs that are

going to lose funds and how much they are going to lose. It also

includes the name of the Member of this body who represents each of

those PHAs.

So the supplemental bill before us today tries to fix some of the

problems in the CR, but it fails to do that, and it distracts from the

true purpose of this bill which is to support our troops in harm's way.

Mr. Speaker, I will be the first to admit that mistakes have been

made in the execution of the war. No one is disputing that. Even

Secretary of State Rice has admitted there are mistakes. But there is

no sense in looking backward. Not now. We should give the

administration's new policy a chance to work before presupposing its

failure and our ultimate defeat in Iraq.

Let me be clear: I want our troops to come home as soon as possible,

but I want them to return in victory, not defeat. It is time for the

Iraqis to assume responsibility for the security of their nation. I am

hopeful that the administration's new policy will bring to an end the

sectarian violence in Baghdad and provide an opening for the Iraqi

Government to step up to the plate.

It was a bipartisan vote of Congress that authorized this war 4 years

ago. It is going to take bipartisan cooperation to bring about its

successful conclusion. This bill, unfortunately, is anything but

bipartisan. It is nothing more than a crafty way for the Democrat

majority to set a hard-and-fast deadline for troop withdrawals before

we have even given the new Iraq strategy a chance to succeed.

Let's give our troops a chance to stabilize Iraq and come home in

victory. Let's pass a clean supplemental which gives the troops the

resources they need to protect themselves. I strongly urge a ``no''

vote.