Mr. Speaker, Speaker Pelosi, Chairman Obey,

and Chairman Murtha have put together a very solid piece of

legislation. This bill puts us on a path to end this war. This

legislation holds the Iraqi Government accountable, and it holds

President Bush accountable. Let us not forget, this is an Iraqi

Government that refuses to pursue national reconciliation.

This bill takes President Bush's benchmarks and puts them into law.

This is a bill about accountability. Others have said we are

handcuffing, micromanaging. No, this is a bill about setting a policy

to extract us from a misguided war.

I ask my colleagues, vote for this bill because it tells the Iraqis

it is time for you to step up and defend your country.

I rise today in support of this important legislation and would like

to thank Chairman Obey and Chairman Murtha for their work in crafting

this critically important bill. There are no easy choices to be made

regarding Iraq, but the choices they have made are the right ones.

I believe there are two fundamental issues we must address concerning

the on-going war in Iraq. First, we must provide the resources

necessary for our troops on the ground so they can protect themselves

and our allies. Second, we must redeploy them as soon as we can, and

bring to an end American involvement in ill-conceived, poorly planned,

and mismanaged war.

I believe this legislation achieves both of these goals. The bill

provides more funding for the equipment and training of our troops than

the President's request. It offers a new direction that promises to

finally bring closure to our open-ended commitment in Iraq. And Mr.

Speaker, this bill promises to give our returning troops the health

care that they need, with the honor they deserve for honoring us with

their service.

As the people's body, it is imperative that the House of

Representatives listens to the will of the people. Equally important,

it is imperative that the President listen to the will of the people.

After four years, $400 billion dollars, and the tragic loss of 3,200

service men and women, every survey of public opinion shows a clear

majority of Americans disapprove of the President's handling of the

Iraq War. And more Americans believe Congress, not the President,

should be primarily responsible for setting policy in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, with passage of this legislation, we are taking the

first steps to end our involvement in a war that currently has no end

in sight.

I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation and move

us in a new direction in Iraq.