Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding and

rise in opposition to the bill.

I want to say this: We have had a lot of good, sincere debates in the

Defense Subcommittee of Appropriations, but one of the things that, in

our honest disagreement about, that we have not talked about as much is

the effects that the surge has already had. I wanted to bring up some

statistics.

The 4 weeks prior to the surge which began on February 15, we had

1,440 civilian deaths; since that time, 265. That is a reduction of

about 500 percent.

In terms of bombings, prior to the surge, we had 163. Then from

February to March, it is down to 102.

Similar with car bombings, down 35 percent from 56 to 36.

The surge is already showing a significant impact. Two-thirds of the

Iraqis polled by a British polling firm, 5,000 people which were

sampled, the largest poll in the history of Iraq, two-thirds of the

people say they are better off now than they were under Saddam Hussein.

Seventy-three percent say they are not in a civil war. Al-Maliki, the

Prime Minister's approval rating has gone from 29 percent in September

to 49 percent now.

We are making progress. We are not defending the status quo. We are

changing the course, and the Petraeus plan needs to be given time to

work, and that is very, very important.

The second point that I want to make is there are so many

extracurricular things in the $23 billion in spending that have nothing

to do with the war in Iraq. Now, I serve on the Ag Committee, and I

want to mention some of those.

There is a $100 million increase in the PL-480 program, but there is

not a single word of it in the report as to why this is justified, why

this is considered an emergency, $100 million.

Secondly, we have $25 million in there for spinach recall. The USDA

did what they were supposed to do, but I want you to know you are

setting a precedent for recall. We are not in the product compensation

business on recalls.

Finally, we have $5 million in the bill because of a Canadian fish

import issue.

All of these things are good, debatable topics, but they do not

belong in an emergency appropriation bill. I think they should come

back through the committee process on regular order where we can have a

good debate and look at them on a separate piece of legislation.

While some of the provisions I support, such as the peanut storage

and handling provision and some type of agriculture disaster

assistance, this bill is not the appropriate place for them to be

considered.

Title II-P.L. 480 Grants--The bill contains $100,000,000 above the

President's request for Title II-P.L. 480 Grants.

There is not a single word of explanation in the report as to what or

where the additional funds are to be used for.

The President's request included $350,000,000 of which approximately

$150,000,000 would go to Sudan and for populations in Chad affected by

the violence in Darfur; $30,000,000 for Afghanistan; $95,000,000 for

Southern Africa; and $75,000,000 for the Horn of Africa.

Just last month the Congress included $1,215 billion for this program

in the Joint Resolution to fund this program for the remainder of

fiscal year 2007.

The bill provides $140,000,000 in additional relief for loses related

to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita of which $25,000,000 would go to provide

additional compensation to livestock producers and $100,000,000 would

go to provide additional compensation for citrus producers--it appears

that these additional funds are included in the bill only for the

reason of doubling the $80,000 payment that livestock and citrus

producers have already received, taking their payments up to $160,000.

The need for agriculture disaster assistance has been debated for the

last several months.

While disaster assistance is clearly needed in some areas of the

country, this bill provides $25 million for spinach producers who had

losses due to a nationwide spinach recall last fall.

The FDA did what is was supposed to do, and initiated the recall to

protect consumers.

This assistance is unprecedented, and there will be pressure put on

this Committee to compensate producers whenever other food products are

recalled.

Can you imagine the cost if we get in the business of compensating

producers for losses that they incur because of food recalls? The

latest list of some of the food recalls from FDA and USDA include:

bread; peanut butter; corn chips; olives; oysters; milk; fresh cut

fruit; summer sausage; ground beef; and the list goes on.

The reason foods were recalled is because they presented a health

risk to the public, and the FDA or the USDA did what they were supposed

to do.

The bill includes $5,000,000 for compensation to aquaculture

operations who may have incurred a loss due to a restriction on imports

from certain fish from Canada.

The emergency order, put on by the Animal and Plant Health Inspection

Service, on these fish from Canada was due to outbreaks or potential

outbreaks of a destructive pathogen responsible for several large-scale

fish deaths in the Great Lakes region--the reason APHIS put the order

in place was to protect aquaculture in the Great Lakes states, and

somehow $5,000,000 makes it into this bill to compensate for possible

losses without any justification. Where did this number come from?

Finally, there are no funds for USDA to administer any of the

disaster assistance provisions in the bill that total nearly

$4,500,000,000. Members are already reacting to proposed FSA office

closures that are occurring all over the country. This will only

exacerbate the problem.