Thank you, Mr. Obey.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans'

Health and Iraq Accountability Act.

For the past 4 years, the previous leadership in this Congress has

given the President a blank check for his misguided and mismanaged war

in Iraq. That war has taken the lives of more than 3,200 of our brave

troops, wounded tens of thousands more; countless Iraqis have died.

Congress refused to fulfill its constitutional obligation for

oversight and its moral obligation to end the war. So today, we take

the first step toward meeting those duties.

Mr. Speaker, I have opposed the Iraq war from the beginning; I voted

against it in 2002. And as a member of the Out of Iraq Caucus, I want

to bring our troops home sooner than the fall of 2008. But tomorrow,

with this bill, we all will make a decision. Either we will continue to

give this President a blank check in Iraq on a never-ending war, or we

will have established a responsible timetable for withdrawing our

troops. Bring this war to an end. The choice is clear for me, I will

vote to bring this war to an end.