I first want to commend Speaker Pelosi for her

leadership and tenacity, for doing the right thing for America; to

Chairman Obey and Chairman Murtha for working together to bring this

bill to the floor.

In my 30 years of public service, this is probably one of the most

difficult votes I will make, but it is the right vote. I will vote

``yes'' to support the supplemental.

This war has lasted longer than World War I and World War II. More

than 3,200 young men and women have lost their lives, over 30,000

amputees and the like, mental health services that we don't yet know we

will have to endure from this ill-advised war.

It is a good supplemental. Is it perfect? No. But it does begin to

change course, to change course that this Nation needs that we begin to

invest in America, to take care of our children, to bring our soldiers

home. I wish we could bring them home tomorrow, but there is a process,

and this bill begins that process by using the President's own

benchmarks that the Iraqis would rise up and take care of their own

country, their own people. This is a civil war; we ought not be in it.

I ask you to vote ``yes'' on the supplemental.

The Americans who live in the 13th Congressional District of Michigan

want our women and men in our military home now. As a Member of

Congress who has opposed the war from the very beginning, so do I. In

my three decades of public service to the citizens of Michigan and all

Americans, this is one of the most difficult votes I have had to cast

as an elected official.

As you know, I voted against the resolution authorizing the use of

force in Iraq. I did not support the pretext nor the context for our

involvement in Iraq. I felt then, and I feel now, that we did not

exhaust all of our diplomatic,

political or military options. Regrettably, I have been proven correct.

In January of this year, we will have been involved in Iraq longer

than we have been involved in World War I and longer than we were

involved in World War II. We will have lost over 3,200 lives, over

25,000 women and men wounded and maimed, and over $500 billion dollars

in a conflict that, as of today, is only getting worse and worse day by

day. I want our women and men fighting in Iraq home now.

Three decades of public service teaches you that Americans do not do

revolutions, Americans do evolutions. As steadfast, as earnest, as

honest as I, and the vast majority of my constituents, want our troops

home immediately, I support this bill and will support this bill

enthusiastically. Why? This bill does three things--first, it finally

establishes and demands that the President of the United States be held

accountable for our troops in Iraq and how our tax dollars are being

spent. Second, it has a deadline for our troops to come home. Third, it

provides some emergency support for some of the programs decimated by

the permanent tax cuts for the rich and by the fiscal demands of the

war.

As my colleagues who have been to battle in Iraq and who have borne

the burden of war and its concomitant issues, I am not merely anti-war;

I am anti-failure. This bill will get our women and men home, and it

will require that Iraqis bear the responsibility for ultimately

managing the country that is theirs.

Under this bill, the President will have to send troops to war under

the same rules, regulations and guidelines established by the Pentagon.

Rules that say that troops need adequate rest between tours of duty.

Rules that say that no soldier or Marine will be sent without adequate

training, equipment, or supplies. Rules that allow infantry commanders

to have the final say in the welfare and safety of their troops. If the

President chooses not to follow these long-established rules, he is to

let Congress and the American people know why not following these rules

is a national emergency.

Under this bill, accountability is demanded from contractors who are

in Iraq. It cuts all of their contracts by ten percent, to allow

Congress to see if taxpayer dollars are being spent on what these

contractors say they are. For four years, there has been no

accountability, no oversight, no responsibility in how the $500 billion

that has been spent in Iraq--currently, we are spending an estimated

eight billion dollars per month in Iraq--and finally, this bill

establishes that accountability. As a Member of the august

Appropriations Committee, this is not only my privilege, but my

responsibility, to all of the taxpayers of America.

Under this bill, by July 1, 2007, the President must certify that

Iraq is making meaningful and substantial progress in meeting political

and military benchmarks, including a militia disarmament program and a

plan that equitably shares oil revenues among all Iraqis. If the

President does not provide this certification then U.S. forces must

begin an immediate redeployment to be completed no later than December

2007, or 180 days.

This bill does not ignore the fact that it is everyday Americans who

have also paid a price for this war. Senior citizens who could go

without heat in the winter or air conditioning in the summer. Children

who could go without health care. And it has been 191 days since

Katrina landed, and over half of the houses, hospitals and businesses

have still not been rebuilt. As much of an emergency as Iraq is, these

are equally important emergencies.

I requested that the Committee add $1 billion in funding for the Low

Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP); along with the

Chairman, I was able to get $400 million. I requested that the

Committee add $1 billion in funding to rebuild houses in the Gulf

region; the Committee was able to commit $2.9 billion to Katrina

relief. The bill also ensures the long term health of our warriors at

home and abroad. It adds funds for those veterans who are disabled by

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder; it provides for the hiring of more

staffers at the Veterans Administration to speed up medical claims; it

ensures that those veterans who have severe brain injuries have the

therapy and care that they need; and it makes sure that Walter Reed

Hospital remains open and that Walter Reed, as well as other VA

hospitals, receives the funds they need to take care of our warriors.

Thirty years as a legislator will teach you that no bill is perfect,

and that compromise and negotiation is the hallmark of this country. If

this bill fails, the President is further empowered to do what he has

been doing for the past 4 years--a process of failed promises,

fratricide among warring factions in Iraq, and fomenting doom.

Compromising your tactics is not compromising your principles. My

principle is to bring all of our troops home as soon as possible; end

this war; and rebuild America's reputation as the standard for human

rights, freedom and dignity.

It seems ludicrous to this Member of Congress that our President has

threatened to veto legislation that contains his own benchmarks for

success in Iraq, ensures our troops have the training they need, and

supports our veterans. For months, conservative and Republican

commentators and elected officials asked ``what is the Democratic plan

for Iraq''? Ladies and gentlemen, this is that plan. While Democrats

have offered a plan to support our troops and change direction in Iraq,

Republicans are preparing to oppose legislation that funds protection

and equipment for our troops and supports our veterans. Instead of

working to change direction in Iraq, opponents to this bill are turning

their backs on our troops and our veterans, and backing the stay-the-

course strategy in Iraq.

I am a warrior for peace. I am a supporter of our women and men who

serve our military throughout the world. I will vote for this bill

because it provides emergency help to our Nation's senior citizens and

children, who have borne a different burden from this war; it brings

our troops home; and it demands, for the first time in four years,

accountability, credibility, and responsibility from our President.