Speaker, having served as poll

manager, poll watcher, county election commissioner, State ballot

security coordinator, campaign manager, and candidate, I know firsthand

the challenges of free elections.

In our developed democracy, we are confronted with serious problems

of securing polling locations, recruiting poll workers, printing

intelligible ballots, finding dedicated managers, providing current

poll lists. The challenges are endless, but unlike Iraqi voters, we

have rarely been asked to brave bullets, bombs, and terrorist thugs on

our way to the polls.

The millions of Iraqi voters are to be commended for their bravery. I

also credit the Iraqi security forces, American servicemembers, and

coalition troops for securing the over-5,000 polling sites across the

nation.

The success of Sunday's election is a tangible fulfillment of the

vision of President George W. Bush and proves that democracy abroad is

the best way to protect American families at home. Terrorist extremists

cannot and will not survive in free nations.

In conclusion, may God bless our troops, and we will never forget

September 11.