Mr. Speaker, as the representative of the 48th Brigade

and the 3rd Infantry Division, I have thousands of constituents in

Iraq. I look each day, as most Americans do, for good news to come from

that area of the world; and good news did come this weekend with their

unprecedented election.

This election, which had a lot of high stakes, will hopefully, when

the tally is counted, ratify their constitution, which so many have

worked on in the international community for so long.

The election itself, though, was a great success, with an over-60

percent turnout. In over 6,000 different polling places, violence was

absent. Compare that to the June election, when there was a lot more

absence and a lot less participation. This Saturday was a success.

Even the Sunni population, the minority population that has a lot of

apprehension about this constitution, showed up in record numbers. And,

remember, they boycotted the election in June.

There is a lot of progress that is happening in Iraq. I hope that

this constitution does pass. I hope that the elections in December are

a success. I hope that the new national government takes hold and does

a great job of moving this great country to democracy.

America has made this possible, and America is standing behind our

friends in Iraq.