Mr. Speaker, I rise today to

express my enthusiasm about what the future holds for Iraq's women.

This past weekend marked yet another courageous showing of women who

are eager to live in a democracy, first in Afghanistan and now in Iraq.

The message is very, very clear that these individuals are ready,

willing, and able to vote for a change. President Bush stated that our

fight in Iraq includes promoting the rights of women everywhere. This

fight is a very important one. Our society proves that when women are

given the same rights and opportunities as men, the entire nation

benefits greatly.

The constitutional referendum specifies equality regardless of sex

and actually reserves 25 percent of the national assembly for women.

Because of this provision, for the first time in Iraq's history, women

will have a voice in their country.

Currently, two-thirds of all Iraqi women are illiterate. Since our

presence in Iraq, 2,400 schools have been renovated, 3,000 teachers

trained. And this is resulting in 2 million girls back in school.

The progress that has been made for the women of Iraq is exceptional.

During Saddam Hussein's reign, women were imprisoned, tortured and

raped; and their attackers faced no recourse. There was no justice

under this dictator of terror.

Today, injustice no longer is the rule. Iraqi women will no longer

have to fear the terribly cruelty of their past because they will have

control of their future.