Mr. Speaker, the double standard in this Congress takes

your breath away. In the 2\1/2\ years since I have been in Congress,

this body has allocated nearly $400 billion for Iraq without a worry

about the deficit. You have funded three wars with four tax cuts and

added $3 trillion to the Nation's debt. Yet when this Congress is

facing a tab for rebuilding the lives of Americans that is roughly half

of what we have spent in the Iraqi war, suddenly everybody is a deficit

hawk in this institution.

In Iraq we have spent millions to rebuild the Sweet Water Canal

system, including the repair of the levee system. But here in America

we cut levee construction and repair for Louisiana by 80 percent. When

it comes to rebuilding Iraq, this Congress writes hot checks.

Rebuilding America? You want to cut education and health care. Your

inconsistency is breathtaking, especially when America draws the short

stick. When it comes to rebuilding in the gulf coast, you are turning

yourself into pretzels, all to protect tax cuts for the wealthy.

But rebuilding Iraq should not come at the expense of America's

future. Everyone must have skin in the game when it comes to meeting

our challenges. Freedom is not free. This Congress cannot have one set

of books and one set of priorities for Iraq and another for the

American people and their future.