Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

First, I want to express my great respect for my colleague, the

chairman of the Armed Services Committee, a partner on many, many

legislative endeavors and a gentleman who really has the welfare of the

troops of the United States in his heart when he speaks and when he

legislates.

But, Mr. Speaker, let me say this about this piece of legislation

which has been brought by the Democrat leadership before this House.

This is an attempt once again to stampede a retreat from Iraq, and it

is a gratuitous attempt to do this. There is no reason, only 3\1/2\

weeks after the surge of troops has been put in place, to now race for

the borders, to demand that the President start to wind up this

operation and start to leave, especially when General Petraeus will be

making recommendations to us on September 15. There is no reason to do

this. And I am reminded of when the surge was first announced and I was

on the floor in a discussion with a good colleague from the Democrat

side, the day after the surge had been announced when only a few people

were even in country from this increase in forces, and she said, There

has been a car bombing and that proves the surge doesn't work. And she

was ready to immediately start a retreat from the country, and I take

it a number of folks on that side of the aisle were willing to do that.

There is no reason to do this. We have an interim report which has

just come out. The interim report says that in the 18 areas of interest

in which progress has to be registered, there has been progress on

eight of them, there has been unsatisfactory progress on eight of them,

and on two of them it is too early to really make an evaluation. Well,

that is the interim report. And on September 15 we will get a further

report.

And as I look at the important things, the things that to me are

important in this report, one thing that is very important is the fact

that when we needed to get the three additional brigades and that

additional troop strength into Baghdad from the Iraqi Army, we got them

there. Even though they didn't show up early on 1\1/2\ years ago, this

time they showed up. Mr. Maliki was good on his commitment. They got

there. So things that were important to me with respect to this report

are being accomplished.

But the facts are we are only 27 days into this surge. And the

Democrat resolution really spells out no plan whatsoever. It asks the

President to come up with yet another plan, which is highly interesting

since he has a plan and since General Petraeus has stated that he will

recommend adjustments on September 15. So if there are adjustments to

make to the plan, they should come after General Petraeus appears

before us and gives us his recommended adjustments.

So what are we doing here? Well, what we are really doing is counting

votes. This is basically an attempt by the Democrat leadership to get a

hard vote count, see if any more people have slipped, if there are any

more votes on their side of the aisle so that they will be able to tee

this thing up and have another vote, hopefully, from their perspective,

to forward their goal, which is to start a retreat from Iraq as soon as

possible.

There is not a single recommendation in the resolution that is

offered by my good friend. There is no recommendation for a new

strategy. There is simply a series of questions asked of the

administration, and those questions can all best be answered when

General Petraeus comes before us.

So, Mr. Speaker, there are two messages that I see coming from Iraq;

and we all see in this very complex, very difficult mission lots of

messages. A message I saw the other day came from a senior Marine

leader. Do you know what it said? It said, ``We are crushing the enemy

in Anbar.'' And then a few minutes later, I saw a message from the

Democrat leadership that said, ``We have to get out now.'' I have seen

the Democrat leadership many times say, We are going to end this war.

Mr. Speaker, they don't have the ability to end this war. No American

has the ability to end this war. What they do have if they gain enough

power is only the ability to leave this battlefield.

Let's not stampede for the border, Mr. Speaker. This is not a time to

make a precipitous decision to start ordering the President on a policy

that is going to be reported on on September 15. Let's keep our

stability. Let's make sure that we don't pass this gratuitous piece of

legislation, Mr. Speaker, which really is nothing more than a vote

count for the Democrat leadership.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, it's been asked that we consider this debate

in such a way that our sons and daughters are involved, and that's why

the gentleman who just spoke, Mr. Wilson's son has done a tour in Iraq.

The gentleman I am going to announce now, Mr. Kline, has a son who has

done a tour as a helicopter pilot in Iraq.

I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield myself 4 1/2 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to vote against this bill. I have

great respect for my friend, the chairman of the Armed Services

Committee. We work on many bills together, many pieces of legislation,

and 99 percent of the time we find common cause in supporting the men

and women who wear the uniform of the United States.

This bill is not one of them. I think that this bill, Mr. Speaker, is

a call to retreat by the Democratic leadership of the House, which can

only hurt this country.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have been here before. I have listened to my

colleagues on the Democrat side declare that the operation that we were

undertaking in El Salvador to provide a little shield around that

fragile government back in the 1980s was going to be ``America's next

Vietnam.'' Yet we persevered. We kept that shield in place. We stood up

a democratic government. Today, the free government of El Salvador

supplies troops who stand side by side with Americans in Iraq.

I was here when Ronald Reagan stood up against the Soviet Union when

they were putting SS-20 missiles around our allies, Germany and France,

in Europe. Many people on the other side of the aisle said he was going

in the wrong direction. He was going to start World War III. We were

going to have a nuclear war because of the fact that the President was

standing up to the Soviet Union. Yes, he did that, moving Pershing II

and ground-launched cruise missiles to offset the Soviet missiles. At

one point, they picked up the telephone and said, Can we talk?

Ultimately we brought down the Berlin Wall. We freed, with American

perseverance, hundreds of millions of people.

Now, we all agree that if Iraq works, it is to the benefit of the

United States. When I say that ``if Iraq works,'' I mean if we have a

nation which has a modicum of freedom for its people, a nation which

will not be a state sponsor of terrorism, a nation which will be a

friend to the United States, then we win. That is in our interest. That

is what we are trying to build in Iraq.

We all agree that it is rough and tough and difficult. Mr. Speaker,

it is dangerous. We all know that. That is why I had the last three

speakers being fathers of Americans who have served in Iraq in the

Marine Corps and in the United States Army. So we know it is difficult.

But, you know, every time I hear good news coming out, every time I

hear that, I saw the message from one of our senior Marine commanders

who said, We are crushing al Qaeda in Anbar province, then I pick up a

statement by one of the Democrat leaders saying, We have lost. We have

lost the war. I put this piece of legislation in that same category.

Twenty-seven days, less than 4 weeks after we put the surge in full

force, we are already being called to leave. Now, we were just

criticized, the President was criticized, for saying, This is the

starting line. Well, I think we should criticize the Democrats for

saying, This is the finish line. I have heard so many Democrat leaders

say, We are going to stop the war. That has been said over and over.

Mr. Speaker, there is no Democrat leader here or anywhere who can

stop the war. The only thing we can do is leave this battlefield. We

can't stop this war any more than the people of Great Britain stopped

the war when they just had this incident last week in Scotland. We

can't stop this war any more than the victims in the Kobar Towers

stopped the war. We can't stop this war any more than the marines in

the Beirut barrack had the power to stop the war. We can't stop this

war any more than the sailors of the USS Cole had any ability to stop

the war. This war has been forced on us. The only way we should end it,

the only way we can end it, is to win.

Now we have the surge going on. It has been going on for 27 days. The

leader in whom we all vest great confidence, General Petraeus, is to

speak to us about the policies, about the tactics, about the

strategies, and he will suggest adjustments on September 15. The idea

that only 4 weeks after we have fully funded and we have fully deployed

this surge we are somehow going to sound the retreat is a real

disservice to this mission.

Mr. Speaker, what I would ask of all of our Members, Democrat and

Republican, is vote against this call to retreat. If we stop fighting

the terrorists, we will start losing this war against the terrorists.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.