Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for this opportunity

to speak. I rise in support of this legislation.

Much has been said these past years about the extent of the U.S.

engagement in Iraq. The Iraqi people have made progress. Saddam is

gone. They have had elections. We are told they have got over 300,000

Iraqi police and soldiers trained, equipped, and in the field. They are

engaged in a civil war, and we cannot be involved in trying to referee

that. As well as others in this body, I have been given assurances that

they have that many troops.

I believe the war in Iraq has had a serious negative effect on the

readiness of our brave men and women in uniform who are serving with

honor and distinction. Their deployments and, oftentimes, redeployments

without adequate time at home to rest and train is affecting our

Nation's ability to meet future contingencies. As it stands today,

listen up, as it stands today, we do not have, repeat, do not have a

single combat-ready brigade ready to be deployed.

The United States cannot chart the destiny of the people of Iraq. The

Iraqi Government must take responsibility for its own nation, and this

legislation puts us on the path to see to that worthy and noble cause.