Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to voice my very strong

support for Chairman Skelton's legislation. It represents an

unequivocal belief that the United States cannot and should not be in

the business of fighting Iraq's civil war.

For over 4 years, it has been clear to me that our troops

successfully and bravely accomplished the mission authorized by the

President in the fall of 2002.

Today's report that our troops have done their job but the Iraqi

Government has not underscores the deep problems with the Bush

administration's approach. We are no longer at war with Iraq's

Government; instead, our forces are caught in the middle of an

escalating sectarian conflict in Iraq, with no end in sight. Yet, the

President continues to blindly stay the course, with disastrous and

deadly consequences.

Chairman Skelton's bill would make significant reductions in our

troop presence by April of 2008. Democrats, along with our Republican

colleagues who no longer trust the President's leadership, are doing

all we can to change the President's full speed ahead mismanagement of

the war in Iraq and divert the policy toward returning our troops home

sooner and safer.

This more responsible presence, which limits U.S. presence to

Fighting terrorism and training Iraq forces, will be a first step in restoring

stability in Iraq and the readiness of our military which has been

badly damaged over the last 4 years.

I appreciate Chairman Skelton's leadership on this matter, and I urge

my colleagues to support this commonsense approach.