Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of

H.R. 2956.

I just returned from Iraq. The trip was only a snapshot of what was

happening on the ground, but I heard two messages: One, we need more

time to train Iraqi troops and leadership; but two, progress is not

evident. We are taking two steps back for every step forward. Our men

and women are serving heroically, but it is clear our progress is

limited, at best. So where do we go from here?

Mr. Speaker, we need a plan that moves beyond the surge to a time

frame that says we will continue to support Iraqis in a limited

capacity but that we will redeploy the bulk of our forces within a

prescribed period of time.

We are all concerned about the impact our redeployment could have on

our adversaries, and the region as a whole. However, the reality on the

ground is that, whether it's in 6 months or 2 years, the size of our

current force cannot be sustained. The true focus must be on how we

disengage, how we and our allies work together to support our aims for

a free and open society in Iraq.

Our choices are bad, awful and worse. But this legislation, I

believe, will move us a step closer to a day when Iraq's leaders and

politicians can take back control of their country and our men and

women can return home to their families and a grateful Nation.