Mr. Speaker, for the sixth

time, I rise calling for a change of direction in Iraq. For the sixth

time, I call on the President to stop sending our brave men and women

to referee a religious civil war. For the sixth time I call on this

administration to focus our efforts in fighting the central front on

the war on terror by killing Osama bin Laden and destroying al Qaeda in

Afghanistan.

Mr. Speaker, last week countless folks back in Pennsylvania stopped

me and asked, Aren't you frustrated by this President who refuses to

listen to Congress and the American people?

I told them, I am frustrated that our President refuses to follow the

advice of military experts and the will of the American people. I am

frustrated because my fellow paratroopers are still fighting and dying

in the 138-degree heat of a Baghdad summer. I told them that I will

refuse to stop fighting for the best policy for our troops and our

families back here at home.

Mr. Speaker, leaving our troops in the middle of a religious civil

war isn't resolute. It's reckless. No question that change is slow, but

take heart, America. Change is coming. Congress is not going to stop.

President Bush, the legislative branch of government is back and we

are not going to go away. We will change the course in Iraq and fight

for a smarter global war on terror.

Some Republicans have questioned the patriotism of my fellow

Democrats. Even former soldiers here in the House floor. But those

types of Republicans are the exception and not the rule. In my short

time in Congress, I have learned that most of my colleagues across the

aisle are good, decent, and patriotic Americans. Mr. Speaker, I know

how much pressure my friends across the aisle are under from the

President, from their party leaders to just stay the course.

But I ask you as a soldier, as a father, and as a colleague to

acknowledge what the status quo entails. That means additional

warnings, walking to our desks here in the Halls of Congress, holding

our breath and hoping we don't get word of another fallen soldier.

Mr. Speaker, I implore my Republican colleagues who know in their

heart that we need a change. I implore you to think about how many more

of these calls you have to make, how many more calls to wives, to

fathers, to mothers we all will be forced to make if we don't take

action.

I have heard the other side say 4 more months. This President has had

his 4 months. He has had his 4 years and 4 months. In 2004, the

President said we are turning the corner. In 2005, the Vice President

said the insurgency was in its last throes. In 2006, that was the year

in transition. And now in 2007, the President says just be patient.

In the last month alone in Bucks County, we have buried four of our

finest sons. Four names have been added to the memorial board outside

my office. I, for one, don't want to add any more names.

My Republican colleagues, you have the power today to stop these

tragic phone calls, to stop adding faces and names to our memorials.

Let's change the direction in Iraq and get back to fighting a smarter

war on terror together, not as Democrats and Republicans, but as

Americans.