Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2206, the revised

Iraq Accountability Act.

This legislation fully funds the troops in Iraq and Afghanistan,

provides health care to our active duty soldiers and veterans, holds

the Iraqi Government accountable, and continues to pressure President

George W. Bush to change the course and responsibly end our military

involvement in Iraq.

The American people have spoken clearly time and again that the

United States must find an end to its commitment in Iraq. Last month,

Congress responded to the American people by sending President Bush a

bill that required him to be accountable in his execution of the Iraq

war. He responded to that legislation by vetoing it and asking for a

blank check for his Iraqi misadventure. How symbolic that the President

vetoes the Iraq Accountability Act on May 1, 2007, the 4-year

anniversary of his ``Mission Accomplished'' speech.

In an attempt to compromise with President Bush, the House of

Representatives has revised its legislation. H.R. 2206 provides over

$42 billion immediately to fund the operations and equipment needs of

our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan.

To ensure real accountability over execution of the war, the bill

requires the President to submit a report to Congress by July 13

regarding the success of the Iraqi Government in meeting security and

political benchmarks. Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki and

President Bush proposed these very benchmarks in January 2007. These

benchmarks include provisions such as eliminating militia control of

local security, disarming the militias, and enacting a bill to

equitably share oil revenue among all Iraqis.

After the submission of this report, both houses of Congress would

vote on whether to release an additional $52.8 billion for military

operations and equipment in Iraq. Before such a vote, H.R. 2206 would

require an important vote on an amendment to use these funds only to

plan and execute a redeployment of troops from Iraq in 180 days. This

is the crucial vote: will we finally change course in Iraq and

represent the aspirations and the best interests of the American

people?

This legislation requires the President to confront the realities of

the Iraq War and take account of the facts on the ground. Since

President Bush has shown a tin ear by failing to listen to the American

public's discontent concerning the Iraq War, it is the responsibility

of Congress to lead America out of this war. By sending this strong

piece of legislation to the president, we are one step closer to

reaching that goal.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation to bring

accountability in Iraq and provide the necessary help to our troops and

veterans at home.