Mr. President, I say to my friend from North Dakota,

thank you for being here to talk about this issue because there is a

huge misconception out there that is being perpetrated by the

administration and that is that there is something wrong with the

Democrats in Congress who are insisting the emergency needs of the

American people be met in this bill.

Mr. President, in my question to the Senator from North Dakota, I was

trying to make the point that history will show these emergency

supplementals have always been used to help the American people. After

all, it is their taxpayer dollars being used. The reason I wanted to

take the floor this afternoon is because there are a number of

amendments coming that will strip from this bill the help for the

American people they deserve. Many of these people are the ``salt of

the Earth'' people that we all know, that we visit, and I will talk

about them in a minute. I will talk about the hardships they have gone

through.

Here is something interesting. If you look at the Senate's Web site--

this is not part of my Web site; this is the Senate's Web site, so it

is written with Republicans and Democrats--you will find a glossary of

terms that is intended to help the public understand what it is we are

talking about when we use terms of art on the floor, such as

``emergency supplemental appropriation.''

The Senate glossary--and remember it is bipartisan--states this:

So the supplemental appropriations are meant to cover emergencies in

America. Now, the President has tried to lead people astray when he

says: No, no, this is only about the war in Iraq; I want all of the

money to go to Iraq. I don't want any money to go to the people of

America because this isn't the right vehicle to take care of those

problems. Not true.

It is not only curious, it is wrong. That is why I am so

proud of the work that Senator Conrad and so many others did to make

this bill a balanced bill that meets the needs of our people. Yes, we

are giving the President what he is asking for in Iraq. We have been

critical that the President has not funded Iraq in the regular budget.

So we are saying: OK. We are not happy about it, but, yes, we will give

you every penny, plus what you ask for, for Iraq. But for goodness'

sake, you are getting $102 billion for Iraq. How about $20 billion for

the needs at home? I think my friend is right. It is curious, and it is

wrong that he didn't balance his request.

Mr. President, we have spent half a trillion dollars from

our Treasury on the war in Iraq, and we know there are 3,000-plus dead,

20,000-plus wounded. I think it is instructive to listen to what

President Ronald Reagan once said. He said:

Let me say that again:

Well, the Bush administration thought the price of this war would be

cheap. They were wrong. We heard Secretary Rumsfeld tell Congress: The

war will last 6 days, 6 weeks, I doubt 6 months. Budget Director Mitch

Daniels said Iraq ``will be an affordable endeavor.'' And we remember

the President saying, ``Mission accomplished,'' when it wasn't anywhere

near accomplished. We remember Vice President Cheney proclaiming

``they're in the last throes, if you will, of the insurgency.''

They were all wrong, and Congress has to weigh in. That is what this

last election was about. We were weighing in with the help of a couple

Republicans yesterday. We said to this President: Your one-man show in

Iraq is over, Mr. President. You need to deal with the people of this

country through their elected representatives. And don't issue these

veto threats because that doesn't move us forward.

Senator Reid has asked the President to please meet with us; we can

talk, we can work things out. So it is really up to him. He is wielding

a veto pen because he doesn't like the fact that Congress has finally a

spine to say, no, we are not going to have an open checkbook anymore

for Iraq, we are not going to keep sending our troops over there to

die, we are not going to put them in the middle of a civil war, we are

going to change the mission in Iraq from a combat mission to a support

mission.

We say to this President: Accept reality, please; it is time you do

that. If you love the troops, you have to give them a mission they can

accomplish. If you love the troops, you don't send them to moldy

hospital rooms to recuperate from their injuries. And thanks

to the Senator from Washington, we have money in this bill to fix

Walter Reed. If you love the troops, you don't send them back to fight

with a post-traumatic stress disorder and a bottle of antidepressants.

We will give the troops what they need, but we will also be heard

when we say: Don't put them in the middle of a civil war, Mr.

President. Give them a mission that works, a support mission, to train

the Iraqis. It is their country. They have to stand up and fight. We

can no longer do it for them. And that was the importance of

yesterday's vote.

In this bill, we do a lot of good things. We deal with the problems

we are facing in Iraq. We say we ought to change the mission and make

it binding and give a date that says, yes, start bringing the troops

home and a goal for when we will bring them all home, except for those

limited missions.

It is a smart piece of legislation, I say to the President.

And, yes, don't forget America. Don't forget the people, the ``salt

of the Earth'' people who are suffering because of this freeze. I will

show a few more pictures as I wind down on my time.

My State was devastated by the freeze. It left thousands of farm

workers without employment. One of my constituents, a 46-year-old

single mother of two in Tulare County, spent years working in the

citrus fields and now has no job.

In this picture we can see the ice icicles near these avocados.

A look at this picture tells a thousand words. We can't turn our

backs on these people. We can't turn our backs on our salmon fishermen

who have been suffering so much. We can't turn our backs on the

American people.

In conclusion, we have to serve as a check and balance on the

Executive. When this Executive says it has an open checkbook for Iraq,

nothing for America, we say: Whoa, whoa, whoa, Mr. President. That is

not right for the American people. Look at the people who have been

suffering because of natural disasters. Look at for what we are

supposed to use emergency appropriations bills. Come to the table with

us. Don't wave your veto pen because we have a spine and we stand up

for these people and we stand up for our fighting men and women. Come

to the table, we say, let's work things out.

If we read the Constitution, that is exactly what we are supposed to

do.

I was interested to hear Senator Hagel talk about the fact that this

is not a monarchy, and he is right. We already had one King George, and

that was enough.

It is my sincere hope that the President will respect the rule of the

people and come to the table. I strongly support this bill, and I will

vote against any amendment that hurts the people.

I yield the floor.