Mr. Speaker, 4 years ago President Bush sent our

troops to war without a plan for success in Iraq, and without a plan to

care for our wounded soldiers returning home.

During those 4 years, the old Congress rubber-stamped the failed

policies of the Bush administration. The American people know well that

when you ignore failure and bad decisions, you simply get more of them.

Today, we are demanding accountability for a change, accountability

to ensure that our troops get the training and equipment they need,

accountability to ensure that our wounded soldiers returning home are

treated with a dignity that they deserve. We hold the Iraqi government

accountable for taking the steps toward political reconciliation which

they, themselves, have said are necessary to achieve stability.

The accountability measures in this bill track the recommendations

made by the independent bipartisan Baker-Hamilton Commission. The

President chose to reject those recommendations and, instead, to

escalate the war in Iraq.

At the same time, the President has not paid adequate attention to

those who were responsible for the attacks of September 11, 2001, al

Qaeda, operating out of Afghanistan.

This bill provides additional resources for completing that mission

and for holding those responsible who did attack us on September 11. Al

Qaeda is still plotting against us. It demands accountability, it

supports our troops, and it strengthens our national security.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for a change and direction in Iraq. It is

time to bring some accountability to the history of failed decisions we

have made so we don't continue to make the same bad decisions going

forward. The American people asked for and deserve a change in

direction. That is what this bill does.