Mr. Speaker and Members of the

House, I rise in very strong support of this bill, and I want to thank

Chairman Obey and Chairman Murtha for all of their hard work to put

this legislation together.

I believe it is time to bring our troops home, to come home from

Iraq, and I believe it is time for this Congress to support this

legislation.

As the American soldiers begin their fifth year in this war of choice

in Iraq, we confront the tragic fact that the Bush administration's

preparation, planning and execution of this war has not kept faith with

the enormous sacrifices our men and women in uniform and their families

have made.

More than 3,200 American soldiers have died in Iraq, and close to

25,000 more have been seriously wounded. And Iraq is mired in a civil

war, with tens of thousands of civilians killed, or even more

internally displaced. Hundreds of billions of tax payers dollars have

been squandered in this war that has left our military readiness in

jeopardy, the All-Volunteer Army is at a breaking point, and the

world's faith in America's leadership is gravely shaken.

The American people recognize President Bush's approach in Iraq for

what it is, a failure. That is why we sent a message to Washington this

past November to change the course, to end this war, to get out of

Iraq. That is what the American people said in November.

Instead, this President, in all of his arrogance and all of his

lying, chose to choose a surge.

Well, the time is now for the Congress to do something about that

because the American people do not support a war in Iraq, and has no

end in sight, and continues the tragic, unnecessary loss of life. And

given the President's unwillingness to change course, it is incumbent

upon the Congress to act. With this bill the Democrats in Congress are

taking a stand against the President on behalf of the soldiers in this

country and the American people.

The bill before the House would protect our troops on the battlefield

and at home, and require accountability from the Bush administration

and the Iraqi Government, and set a responsible timeline for the phased

redeployment of U.S. troops with a date certain by September 2008 at

the latest. We must support this legislation. And again, I thank the

authors of this legislation.

I rise in strong support of this bill and I encourage all of my

colleagues who believe it is time for our troops to come home from Iraq

to support it.

As American soldiers begin their fifth year of this war of choice in

Iraq, we confront the tragic fact that the Bush Administration's

preparation, planning, and execution of this war has not kept faith

with the enormous sacrifices our men and women in uniform and their

families have made.

More than 3,200 American soldiers have died in Iraq and close to

25,000 more have been seriously injured. Iraq is mired in a civil war,

with tens of thousands of civilians killed and even more internally

displaced. Hundreds of billions of taxpayer dollars have been

squandered in this war that has left our military readiness in

jeopardy, the all-volunteer Army at the breaking point, and the world's

faith in America's world leadership gravely shaken.

The American people recognize President Bush's approach in Iraq for

what it is--a failure. That's why they sent a message to Washington

this past November to change course.

Americans do not support a war in Iraq that has no end in sight and

continues the tragic and unnecessary loss of life. Given the

President's unwillingness to change course, it is incumbent on Congress

to act. With this bill, Democrats in Congress are taking a stand

against the President but on behalf of our soldiers and the American

people.

The bill before the House would protect our troops on the battlefield

and at home, require accountability from the Bush Administration and

the Iraqi government, and set a responsible timeline for a phased

redeployment of U.S. troops--with a date certain, by September 2008 at

the latest, for U.S. combat troops to be redeployed from Iraq.

Adoption of our plan is the answer to America's plea to bring this

war to an end and turn away from the President's bottomless commitment

to U.S. participation in the Iraqi civil war. Our plan provides a

responsible, phased plan for requiring the Iraqis to take

responsibility for their own future. And voting yes on this bill will

clearly show to the American people that a majority in Congress clearly

stand with them in their desire to bring an end to the tragic U.S.

occupation of Iraq.

My colleagues must understand that if they oppose the war, if they

oppose spending more money on the war, if they oppose continuing the

tragic loss of life in Iraq, then they must support this bill.

The only alternative to this bill that could garner enough votes to

pass would be a supplemental appropriations bill to fund the war with

no accountability, no timetables, and no end. That is the reality.

I know that the majority of the House opposes the continuation of the

war. There are differences over strategy, on how best to achieve our

goal on behalf of the country, on behalf of the soldiers, and on behalf

of their families.

Defeating this bill would prolong the war. Defeating this bill would

enable the President to continue to his irresponsible and deadly

failures. Defeating this bill would send a message to the American

people that Congress is not listening to them.

The President has run out of excuses for his failures in Iraq.

The American people have correctly run out of patience waiting for

him to change course.

And America's soldiers have done everything asked of them and

everything that could be expected of them.

It is time for a new direction.

The bill before the House provides a new direction for America. And

it is the only bill that can take us in that direction.