Thank you to the gentleman

from Wisconsin.

Mr. Speaker, there are 435 Members of Congress, and I know there are

many people on the other side of the aisle who don't know who I am. I

am Patrick Murphy, and I am from Bucks County, Pennsylvania. Back home,

my wife and my daughter Maggie are watching, probably on C-SPAN right

now.

Over 13 years ago, I wore the United States Army uniform for the

first time. I was able to live the American dream. I was able to rise

through the ranks and become a captain and a paratrooper in the 82nd

Airborne Division. We had a saying in the Army: Lead, follow or get out

of the way.

Well, in the past 4 years, the Republican-led Congress followed. They

had their chance, and they followed lockstep as this President led our

country into an open-ended commitment refereeing a religious civil war.

For the last 4 years, this Republican Congress followed lockstep as

my fellow soldiers continued to die in Iraq without a clear mission,

without benchmarks to determine success, without a clear timeline for

coming home. In the last 4 years, the Republican Congress followed this

President as thousands of brave American soldiers returned home in

coffins with our American flag. Nineteen of those coffins had soldiers

that I served with in Iraq, 19 paratroopers.

Mr. Speaker, with this bill, with this vote, we mark the end of that

error.

Many of the 49 new freshmen, both Democrats and Republicans, were

elected a few months ago on the promise of new leadership, and that is

what this bill does. It leads our way out of Iraq. It leads the way to

rebuild our overextended Army, and leads the way to win the war on

terror.

To those on the other side of the aisle who are opposed, I want to

ask you the same questions that my gunner asked me when I was leading a

convoy up and down Ambush Alley one day. He said, ``Sir, what are we

doing over here? What's our mission? When are these Iraqis going to

come off the sidelines and stand up for their own country?''

So to my colleagues across the aisle, your taunts about supporting

our troops ring hollow if you are still unable to answer those

questions now 4 years later.

Mr. Speaker, to vote ``no'' on this bill is to stand idly by, to let

our commitment to Iraq remain open-ended and to let countless more

American soldiers be killed in the sands of al-Anbar and the streets of

Baghdad.

Short-term political peril may sidestep those who cast their vote for

the status quo, but our children's history books will not treat them

kindly, nor should they.

Mr. Speaker, the 110th Congress will be judged whether we have the

political courage to put forth a plan to restore accountability and

oversight, to bring our troops home from Iraq and, most importantly, to

win the war on terror.

This is our opportunity. This is our chance to lead. For too long,

the American people have been craving leadership, craving

accountability and craving a new direction in Iraq. Let's give that to

them today.