Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to H.R. 1591, a

pork-laden $124.3 billion war supplemental that would force U.S. troops

to withdraw from Iraq.

I strongly support benchmarks and high accountability for military

and political progress in Iraq, but not in a manner that hurts our

chances of accomplishing those goals. Under this legislation, U.S.

troops would be withdrawn from Iraq unless the President's benchmarks

for progress are met by July. This unreasonable requirement would not

give General Petraeus enough time to show if the new ``troop surge'' is

effective.

In addition, this bill would force U.S. troops to withdraw by August

2008 regardless of whether the benchmarks are met. Members of Congress

should not be dictating strategy to our generals in the field.

The authors of this bill are talking out of both sides of their

mouths. In attempting to reach a compromise, they would fund the troop

surge while dooming it to failure by not allowing enough time to see if

it works. It is clear that a forthright and honest vote on withdrawing

U.S. troops would fail. The Majority Party's Leadership has instead

chosen to entice Members of Congress with pork-barrel spending in

exchange for their vote on this bill.

The Washington Post reported: ``House Democratic leaders are offering

billions in federal funds for lawmakers'' pet projects large and small

to secure enough votes this week to pass an Iraq funding bill that

would end the war next year.''

This so-called ``emergency'' war supplemental includes non-defense

spending such as $283 million in milk subsidies, $474 million in peanut

subsidies, and $25 million in spinach subsidies.

This legislation abandons the Majority Party's supposed leadership on

fiscal discipline. It is a hypocritical and blatant attempt to gain

votes from Members of Congress through special interest spending. The

bill includes non-military items such as an increase in the minimum

wage, tax relief for small businesses, drought aid, hurricane relief,

agricultural subsidies and funds for child health insurance. Each of

these items should be debated under regular order in the House.

I strongly support the defense-related spending items in this

legislation, including critical equipment for our troops and health

care improvements for our veterans such as funding for Walter Reed Army

Medical Center. I was also proud to sign the discharge petition to vote

on Congressman Sam Johnson's legislation to ensure full funding of our

troops.

We must demand meaningful progress in Iraq to curb sectarian

violence, disarm militias, train security forces and strengthen the arm

of the new Iraqi government until Iraq can govern itself. However, H.R.

1591 is clearly not the answer. Immediately withdrawing U.S. troops

would be an irresponsible display of politics that would endanger

future generations of Americans.

I urge all of my colleagues to join me in voting against this

legislation, and to demand a ``clean'' war supplemental that meets the

needs of our troops without pork-barrel politics.