Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this important

legislation.

This supplemental appropriations bill contains vitally important

funding for critical priorities and unmet needs. For example, this bill

includes $1.7 billion more than the President requested for military

health care, including funds to correct the scandalous conditions at

Walter Reed and other military hospitals. It includes another $1.7

billion for veterans' health care, $2.5 billion for improving the

readiness of our stateside troops and $1.4 billion for military housing

allowances. A nation at war simply must provide necessary funds to

support our troops.

In addition, this legislation includes $3.1 billion for military

construction to implement the BRAC mandates that impact Fort Bragg in

my Congressional District and military communities all across the

country. It is important to note that the former Republican

Congressional Majority failed to pass the military construction

appropriations and imperiled these priority projects. This legislation

corrects that failure.

Mr. Speaker, the standards and benchmarks in this legislation will

assert some measure of oversight and accountability to a war policy

that has been tragically mismanaged by this administration for too

long. I have resisted supporting date certain language for troop

redeployment because it is preferable that the executive branch have

the lead in foreign policy in partnership with the legislature.

Unfortunately, this Administration has mistakenly interpreted that

deference as a blank check for its go-it-alone approach. No more.

The President's speech this week calling for ``courage and resolve''

demonstrated a continued state of denial. The American people do not

need more lectures from this President about resolve. Our troops do not

need more lectures about courage. What we need is a new direction to

rebuild our military and refocus on the true threat to America from al

Qaeda and the Islamic jihadists who attacked us on 9/11. We must deploy

our military might to Afghanistan, Pakistan and elsewhere to eliminate

Osama bin Laden and the true ``grave and gathering threat'' to America.

We must pass this legislation to send a wake-up call to the President

that ``Stay The Course'' is no longer an option. Denial is no longer an

acceptable policy. I urge my colleagues to support a new direction and

vote for this bill.