Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to this

resolution. I oppose the resolution not for what it says, but for what

it does and what it will lead to.

As someone who enlisted at the age of 18 and spent 6 years as a

member of the Air National Guard, I can tell you firsthand that this

resolution will undermine our troops' morale and diminish their ability

to accomplish their mission.

Passage of this resolution is also a first step towards cutting

funding for our troops, and that is something that I absolutely cannot

support.

Mr. Speaker, the war in Iraq is an important part of the global war

on terror. Failure in Iraq will go beyond being a disaster for American

foreign policy. Failure would destabilize the country, destabilize the

Middle East, and make America less safe.

The American people are well aware of al Qaeda's plans to turn Iraq

into a staging area to spread global terrorism. Failure in Iraq would

also result in diminished influence and credibility for America at a

time when global alliances are critical to address threats from Iran

and North Korea.

Mr. Speaker, this week I have been briefed by the U.S. intelligence

officers, foreign ambassadors from the region, and I have reached out

to many of my constituents, including Colonel John Saputo, who served

in Iraq, and Colonel Lee Kitchen, who served in Vietnam. We all agree

that although legitimate questions can be raised about whether this

surge strategy will prove successful, the stakes are too high, the

threats to America too great to walk away without giving our troops one

last chance to restore order in Iraq. Passage of this resolution would

deny our military leaders and our troops this one last opportunity.

Like all Americans, I want to bring our troops home safely,

successfully and soon, but now is not the time for an immediate

withdrawal. Now is the time to support our troops, support the values

they fight for, and do everything possible to give them the best chance

to succeed in their mission. This resolution does nothing to help in

those efforts. In fact, it does the opposite. It is for this reason

that I must oppose this resolution.