I would like to thank the gentleman from Texas for

yielding me time.

Madam Speaker, I rise today realizing the seriousness of this

resolution and the importance of the debate on the war in Iraq.

As we continue this debate, I hope that all of us remember we have

serious disagreements about what this resolution says or intends to do,

but that we cannot and should not besmirch one another's opinions and

the right to that opinion and belief.

I would also like to say how proud I am to be an American, to realize

the bounty of our Nation, to appreciate the strength of our

forefathers, and to stand in awe of our democracy.

As the daughter of a World War II Purple Heart veteran, I have a

great understanding of the sacrifices that have been made in the past

to allow us to live freely. I understand and fully appreciate the men

and women who have so bravely put themselves on the frontline to

protect our country.

I have thought a great deal about what I want to say today and how I

want to say it. When the President announced his plan for a troop surge

last month, I expressed my disagreement. And as we debate this

resolution today, I still harbor those grave concerns. While I have

voiced a disagreement over tactics on how to achieve success in Iraq,

the fact remains that I have not backed away from my belief that

success in Iraq is vital, and that leaving Iraq prematurely would be

disastrous for our Nation's security and the stability of the Middle

East.

And let me stress that I will never back away from my commitment to

the men and women who serve in our military, and I will not support

anything that I believe endangers their safety while they serve in

harm's way to protect our country.

So I rise today in opposition to this resolution. My opposition lies

not in what this resolution says, but what it intends to do; and that

is, to lay the foundation to begin cutting funding for our troops as

they fight the radical jihadists who want to destroy our Nation. My

fear is not based on wild assumptions or partisan politics, but what

leaders are already saying they are planning to do.

The passage of this resolution has been called a baseline. And the

Speaker of the House has called it a first step. And then she added

that approval of this resolution will set the stage for additional Iraq

legislation which is set to come before the House.

Leaders have been tight lipped about the pending legislation. But we

have learned that what they want to do is set the stage for legislation

that will fence off and limit funding by tying the hands of our

commanders on the ground, by presenting benchmarks that will be written

so that certainly those funds cannot be spent. To be sure, such actions

would restrict funds and tie the hands of our commanders in Iraq. I

cannot and will not support any effort to systematically disassemble

our greater effort, to defend our liberties and our way of life, and to

provide our enemies with a breath of hope that we have lost our will.

Let me be very clear to my constituents and the men and women in

uniform. I will never vote to cut funding for our troops, nor will I

allow my vote on a symbolic resolution, one that has the force of

politics and not the force of law, to be used as a baseline or a first

step towards cutting funding for our troops.

I will assertively maintain my support for the troops in my words and

my vote, and I will continue to analyze how I can best help achieve

success in Iraq so that we may begin to bring our men and women home.

In that spirit I plan to vote against this resolution.