Mr. Speaker, I stand today as a proud veteran in support

of this bipartisan resolution which states that Congress and the

American people support our men and women in uniform, but do not

support deploying over 21,000 additional troops to Iraq.

I fear that President Bush's plan to increase troop levels is a

mistake. Sending more troops will not reduce the violence. Indeed, in

the past 2 years, we have had three surges to Iraq, only to see

dramatic increases in violence. Why would we think a fourth surge will

be different?

Mr. Speaker, 21,000 troop is far less than a half measure of what is

truly needed to secure Iraq, but the unfortunate reality is that we no

longer have the troops available to do the job properly. Indeed, the

Army's strategic reserve is used up. They told us so. We are now less

able to respond in other trouble spots around the globe because of this

failed policy.

Why are we not matching our military surge with a diplomatic surge?

Why are we not engaging every nation in the region to end this civil

war?

A superpower at war uses all means at its disposal to win, including

diplomacy. Diplomacy is the only way for us to succeed now, and I urge

the administration to launch a diplomatic offensive in the region.

Our enemies are encouraged and emboldened by the successes that they

have enjoyed already. We do not need to send 21,000 troops additional

to reinforce this. Instead, we should be changing our focus. Rather

than sending more American troops into combat, we should be training

Iraqis to handle the job for themselves. For every Iraqi battalion we

train, we need to bring an American battalion home.

My district in northeastern and central Pennsylvania has many of its

bravest men and women in harm's way. I am very proud of them, so are

their families and their communities. Our district, sadly, has lost 22

men in this war, brave troops who paid the ultimate sacrifice for their

country. I rise today to honor them and also to stand up for the troops

currently in combat.

The stories I hear from soldiers who return home leave me concerned

that the administration has not done enough to protect them. One of my

own former students, a member of a Pennsylvania National Guard unit,

told me how his unit had to scrounge through Iraqi junkyards for scrap

metal to weld on to their trucks for more protection.

Junkyards? Scrap metal? Where is the outrage that this administration

has not given the troops the protection that they need? Where is the

outrage that our fine men and women, whose job it is to protect our

Nation, are scrounging through foreign junkyards for that protection?

The troops have won the war, but the administration has failed to

secure the peace. We must now pursue policies worthy of our troops and

their sacrifices.

Mr. Speaker, I came to Congress to serve and protect my country. That

is why I rise in support of this resolution.

In the Navy, when we run a ship aground, we change the course. It is

now time to change the course in Iraq, not needlessly send more

American troops in harm's way.