Mr. Speaker, throughout the course of history, when our

Nation has faced its most significant debates over matters of war,

there comes a time when voices of pundits and politicians must drop

away and allow the voices of the people to be heard.

Our troops are brave and capable. They have fought heroically and

this resolution makes it unequivocally clear that those of us who feel

it incumbent to oppose the President's escalation nonetheless support

our troops. All of us, and all Americans, support our troops.

But Congress also has an oversight responsibility to ensure that they

are provided a mission based on a realistic assessment and an

achievable goal before we ask them to risk life and limb to implement

it.

The President has asked Congress to support his escalation plan to

send another 20,000 troops to Iraq.

This war is now almost 4 years long. Congress has not spoken as

loudly and as clearly as its responsibility requires. As the

Representative of the 13th District of Ohio, I cannot sit silent. I

oppose the President's plan for escalation and I fully support this

resolution.

The President's own military commanders have advised against this

course of action, and in November, my constituents and the American

people voted for a change of direction in Iraq. Escalation is directly

contradictory to that call for change. It takes us further down the

wrong path, deeper and deeper, with a policy that asks our military to

perform a nonmilitary mission of creating a unified government in Iraq.

But unity in Iraq has to be determined by the people who live there.

It is neither fair nor just to ask our troops to fix a sectarian civil

war.

Our Nation has paid a high price: the lives of 3,000 American troops

lost; $379 billion spent, with another $8 billion every month of this

war.

These lives cannot be retrieved; 139 brave men and women from Ohio

have been killed, 14 from my district. I have a responsibility to every

one of those casualties and to everyone that might lie ahead, to

represent their voices, especially those that can no longer be heard.

In early August 2005, Lance Corporal Edward ``Augie'' Schroeder II

was killed in Iraq. Augie and 13 other young lives from Northeast Ohio

were lost that day. In January 2006, Augie's father, Paul Schroeder,

shared his thoughts and feelings in a letter to the Washington Post

entitled, ``A Life Wasted.'' He said, ``Since August we have witnessed

growing opposition to the Iraq war, but it is often whispered, hands

covering mouths as if it is too dangerous to speak too loudly. Others

discuss the never-ending cycle of death in places like Haditha in

academic and sometimes clinical fashion, as in `the increasing

lethality of improvised explosive devices.' ''

Wiping the clinical talk away, Paul Schroeder went on to share the

painful reality that he and his family face, a reality that cannot be

understood when sanitized by clinical terms. He said, ``Listen to the

kinds of things that most Americans don't have to experience: The day

Augie's unit returned from Iraq to Camp Lejeune we received a book of

his notebooks, DVDs and clothes from his locker in Iraq. The day his

unit returned home to waiting families, we received the second urn of

ashes. This lad of promise, of easy charm and readiness to help, whose

highest high was saving someone, using CPR as a First Aid squad

volunteer, came home in one coffin and two urns. We buried him in three

places that he loved, a fitting irony, I suppose, but just as rough

each time.''

Mr. Speaker, the growing opposition to the war in Iraq must not be

whispered, hands covering mouths as if it is too dangerous to speak too

loudly. Accountability and oversight require more. This resolution

rings loud and clear. We support our troops and we oppose the

President's plan to escalate in Iraq.

Will the President hear our collective voice? If he does not, it will

not be because we sat silent