Madam Speaker, I rise to support the resolution

and to express my opposition to the President's plan to send additional

troops to Iraq. While I rise as a Member of this House who opposed

authorization of the Iraq war, I also rise as a member of the new

Congressional majority, representing millions of Americans who voted

for a new direction in Iraq, and I rise representing my own 34th

congressional district of California, whose constituents overwhelmingly

oppose this escalation.

Perhaps, most importantly, I rise as the proud stepmother of a U.S.

Army serviceman who served in Iraq, and a proud wife of a marine who

saw two tours of duty in Vietnam. While I will never personally

experience war on the ground, I can speak from a wife and mother's

perspective about what it means to have a loved one sent into harm's

way.

Over 4 years ago, I spoke from that very perspective when I, with

many of my colleagues, urged the President to exhaust all diplomatic

efforts, give the U.N. weapons inspectors a chance to finish their job

and, if necessary, establish a multilateral coalition force to confront

Saddam before invading Iraq. These steps would have made it possible to

say to my stepson and to all our Nation's sons and daughters, your

country did everything in its power to keep you from harm's way.

Regrettably, the President did not do everything in his power to keep

them from harm's way. We know now that decisions to invade Iraq were

based on, at best, faulty intelligence, and, at worst, intelligence

viewed to favor a

specific policy outcome. It is breathtaking now to consider how

incomplete, simplistic, or just plain wrong our intelligence and

projections were about the need to invade Iraq.

It is breathtaking to consider the cost to our Nation of this ill-

conceived and mismanaged war in which billions of dollars have been

spent without significant and appropriate oversight of the war effort,

the occupation, or the plan for reconstruction and withdrawal from

Iraq. Even more tragic is the huge price that has been paid in American

and Iraqi lives and in our esteem around the world.

I share the commitment of my husband and stepson and that of all

Americans to defend this Nation against all enemies. I believe, even as

a peaceful Nation, we must be resolute in our determination to defend

our country against hostile interests.

But the bar to war must be set high, and information on which we base

our entry into war or escalate our involvement must be clear,

compelling, and as unfiltered as possible. The President did not, in

good faith, make the case to preemptively and unilaterally go to war in

Iraq, and he has not made the case for this escalation. He has not

explained to the American people why, after four failed escalations,

this one will succeed. Even many of his generals and military advisors

oppose this plan. To give approval to this administration, to continue

its failed strategy, and put into jeopardy the lives of an additional

20,000 troops defies common sense.

Madam Speaker, we will all forever be grateful to the brave men and

women in uniform who have done everything they have been asked to do

valiantly and courageously.

Therefore, I continue to hope that the debate over this resolution

will be absent the charges that we undermine their mission and their

morale, for this is nonsense. There is not a Member in this body that

does not respect and honor their service or support their efforts. Our

message is to the Commander in Chief, not the brave troops who serve

our Nation.

Four years ago, I asked myself whether we were doing everything in

our power to keep our Nation's sons and daughters out of harm's way.

Four years later, I stand here to oppose this escalation and ask that

we begin the process of doing everything in our power to take our sons

and daughters out of harm's way and bring them safely home