Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of this

bipartisan resolution that expresses disapproval of the President's

escalation of troops in Iraq. In October of 2002, I stood on this floor

in this House and voted against giving the President authority to wage

war in Iraq. And I did so because I strongly believed that Congress

should not abdicate its war powers and hand over to the President a

blank check on the war.

I also recognized, having served on the Armed Services Committee and

on the Terrorist Task Force prior to 9/11, that the evidence was not

there. I may not agree with how this war has been handled, but I, along

with everyone here and all of my colleagues on both sides, firmly stand

by our troops. It is our servicemen and -women who are making a great

sacrifice on the battlefield on behalf of all of us here in this

Chamber and everyone across the United States.

And they, the troops, all deserve our unequivocal support. This war

is creating a new generation of veterans and a new generation of needs

for them. Today, over 25,000 both dead and wounded have been reported,

while this body continues to appropriate billions of dollars to the

administration for this war.

Let us remember our veterans and the cost to fulfill the promise that

we have made to them for medical care. Today, the issue is not whether

we were right or wrong to grant the President such broad authority in

regards to this war in Iraq, but instead how he has exercised that

power, what the results have been, and what his plans are for the

future.

We have now entered the fifth year of this war. And I ask you, what

progress have we made? What is our exit strategy? It is not a new

question. It was a question that was raised from the very beginning

when we went into this war, and when we raised it in the Armed Services

Committee. This war and the reckless strategy behind it have cost us

Americans some $532 billion, and over 3,100 American lives, as well as

over 3,000 serious injuries.

It has resulted in increased sectarian violence and an uncertain

future in Iraq. Madam Speaker, I think most of us here know that we

need a new direction, and a new direction is justified. I can assure

you that the American people want a new direction.

But what the President has offered to them is more of the same. The

President is now asking for a massive escalation of over 20,000 troops.

The escalation plan will not work, just like the previous troop surges

that we have had have not worked. Madam Speaker, the American people

have asked and have had enough. And with an up-and-down vote on this

resolution, this Congress will not only send a message to the President

regarding his misguided policy, but also send a message to the American

people that their Congress is listening, it is here, and it is calling

for a new direction.

I oppose this escalation plan because more troops in combat means

more casualties and more loss of American lives. I have been to Walter

Reed Medical Center, and I have seen our injured young men and women

coming back from the battlefield. I have seen the sacrifice of what

this war has done to our families and our loved ones.

Earlier this week, my office was visited by Mr. Jim Goodnow. He is a

veteran from my district and an active member of the Veterans for

Peace. Mr. Goodnow has traveled all over the country from his home base

in Terlinqua, Texas, aboard his bus dubbed the Yellow Rose. He has been

spreading the message of peace for many years.

Mr. Goodnow is not alone. And with this resolution we want to make it

clear that this Congress and America and the American people have had

enough. No more blank checks, no more violence, and no more escalation.

Madam Speaker, it is time that we stand by our country and stand up

for our troops. I strongly urge my colleagues to support this

bipartisan resolution.