Madam Speaker, I attended the Charlie Norwood

funeral today in Augusta, Georgia. He was a veteran of Vietnam. I think

it is ironic that because he was a veteran, we saw at the beginning of

the funeral the honor guard walk in carrying the flag of the United

States Army and the flag of the United States and all the battle

ribbons on that flag, that as 70 to 80 of the Members of this body were

showing respect to Charlie and his family, we were having this debate

on another war.

The resolution before us is a sham resolution. It is nonbinding. I

have voted on resolutions of war and peace in my time in this Congress.

I voted on the first gulf war resolution back in the early nineties

when we thought that there might be tens of thousands of body bags

coming back with our troops in them. I voted on the first resolution

supporting our President in this war after 9/11. Remember 9/11? We had

more American citizens killed in one day in the Twin Towers and in the

Pentagon than we have had in all the years that our troops have been in

Iraq and Afghanistan. That doesn't demean their sacrifice. I have

attended three funerals in my hometown of young men who have been

killed in the line of duty in this current war.

This nonbinding resolution tries to have it both ways. It says at the

first, in part A, we support the troops and in part B, we don't support

our President's decision, the Commander in Chief, to send these

reinforcements. Well, if it's nonbinding, why have the debate? I think

it's commendable that we are having this debate. I wish it would have

had some meat on it. Let's put a real resolution on the floor. But the

Republicans weren't offered an alternative, so we have to vote for or

against a nonbinding resolution that has it both ways in the

resolution. I don't think that is very becoming to this Congress.

But when the time comes, I am going to vote ``no'' because I believe

as Thomas Jefferson believed, and if you go to his monument not too far

from here and look up around the ceiling, Thomas Jefferson says, ``I

have sworn upon the eternal altar of God unending opposition to all

forms of tyranny over the mind of man.'' This Islamic terrorist

campaign is a direct attack on our democracy. It is a direct attack on

our tolerance. We need to support our President. We need to vote

against this nonbinding resolution. And then if we want to have a real

resolution, let's bring it to the floor and have that debate.

I rise today in opposition to H. Con. Res. 63. This nonbinding

resolution serves only to degrade and demoralize the troops currently

engaged in forward operations and those additional troops President

Bush has called upon. This is not a call for a new direction in Iraq

nor is this a call for a new course of action. This is a political

distraction and a call to our enemies around the world by showing a

lack of resolve and fostering the idea of uncertainty towards support

and funding for the men and women of our Armed Forces.

Speaker Pelosi and her fellow Democrats have charged that the

previous policy did not work, the new policy will not work, and yet

amongst all this rhetoric my colleagues on the other side of the aisle

do not have a constructive alternative to put forth. Instead they offer

legislation that if enacted would fuel the call for setting timelines

and the withdrawal of our troops. To leave before the job is finished

would leave our country in a weaker position globally and leave the

Middle East without any hope for democracy to ever take hold. The

extremists that oppose us are against freedom and we are right to be

engaged in the fight for democracy and tolerance. The stakes are high

and our enemies know this. They are not going to quit, but if we pass

this resolution it will be the first step in signaling that we will. It

is right to support the President as he lays out his plan for securing

Iraq and is in our national interest.

The necessary framework for democracy has been established and the

labor of our brave troops has produced many measurable results. A

constitution was written by the Iraqis resulting in democratic

elections where nearly 12.5 million people braved the threat of

violence to cast their votes. A fair criminal trial was held for Saddam

Hussein, the country's former dictator, who denied that right to his

own people. I urge my colleagues to let the Iraqis lead and give

democracy a chance. Establishing a secure Iraq, a thriving democracy

and a noticeable reduction in crime will pave the way for numerous

infrastructure improvements.

Sustainable achievements in the reconstruction effort include the

building of more than 5,000 schools, the training of more then 60,000

teachers, the training and equipping of 323,000 police and military

forces, the vaccination of 98 percent of Iraqi children, the ability of

more than 7 million people to access phone service, the repair of

nearly all of Iraq's railway stations, the restoration of electricity

output and oil production to near prewar levels and the increased

availability of clean water and sanitation. The milestones that have

been reached are a testament to why we should not abandon our presence

in Iraq. Progress is being made and we must continue to support our

troops and Iraq's democratic government.

The President's call for more troops is a decision not made in haste.

It is made with careful consideration and thoughtful advice from his

commanders both at home and in the field. The additional troops will

work with Iraqis to solve serious challenges and to find ways to curb

future outbreaks of violence. To achieve success in combating those

serious challenges it is important that America stands with Iraq so

they can defend their own soil, create a sound economy and govern

themselves effectively. The President understands the consequences of

failure in Iraq, something this resolution proves the Democrats do not

comprehend.

I have been to the funerals of men and women from my district that

lost their lives in this war. I have pinned medals on the chests of the

brave men and women from my district who returned home safely. Visiting

with families at home and troops in Iraq I have seen first hand the

effects this war has on Americans. This resolution serves to discredit

the memories of fallen soldiers, the efforts of those still fighting,

and to embolden our enemies. If we remember, our enemies attacked us on

September 11th and instead of living in fear and leaving ourselves open

to more attacks we chose to take the fight to them. In the time since,

there has not been another major terrorist attack on U.S. soil. That is

a testament to the fight our men and women are waging to protect the

freedoms we so richly enjoy. I remain committed to supporting our

forces serving abroad and ensuring they have the funding they need to

complete their mission.

Some of my colleagues misguidedly stand to dismiss our efforts in

Iraq. I stand with the resolve of former President Thomas Jefferson who

said, ``I have sworn upon the altar of God, eternal hostility against

every form of tyranny over the mind of man.'' We must not stand divided

and turn our backs on those fighting for democracy where tyranny

threatens to reign. We must be steadfast and support them in every way

we can. We cannot let the difficulty of the task diminish our support

for the troops and the cause for which they are so diligently fighting.

We must not let this frivolous resolution pass.