Mr. Speaker, in the 230-year history of our country, the

United States has fought in conflicts both at home and abroad that have

tested the resolve and unity of the American people. During that time,

the purview of the Commander in Chief has justly been scrutinized and

questioned. These debates are a part of our past and will be a part of

our future as long as we send our men and women into battlefields to

fight for our country.

Today's debate is no exception. The question we must answer for

ourselves is a fundamental one that speaks not to our approval of the

War in Iraq but rather to our commitment to the men and women fighting

this war. It is a commitment we must reaffirm without question or

doubt. With commitment and unity.

Now it seems to me that we have two courses of action we can take

regarding the War in Iraq. We can pull our troops out immediately and

leave the stability of the region up to an increasingly violent

insurgency, thereby admitting defeat, or we can send in further

reinforcements to work with Iraqi Security Forces to seize control of

their country.

We can all agree that a change in the status quo must be made. With

an increased level of violence between Sunni and Shia insurgent groups,

an escalating cost, and the loss of American lives, it is imperative

that we have a legitimate and substantive debate on the direction of

this war.

However, if we are to succeed in Iraq and complete the mission, then

the United States House of Representatives should not waste its time

debating a nonbinding resolution criticizing the Commander in Chief.

This resolution offers no real policy alternatives for Iraq and does

not bring our men and women home any sooner. It is a political shot

aimed at the President, but it is really our troops who suffer most

from these grandstanding tactics.

I recently visited Walter Reed Hospital to hear from the wounded who

have been to Iraq and sacrificed so much for their country. I talked to

a wounded soldier who had a bone infection that prohibited him from

returning to Iraq. He was not concerned about his physical well-being

but instead he was upset that he could not go to finish the job that he

had started. His feelings reflected the thoughts of many of the

soldiers that I had the privilege to sit and talk with that day.

The fact is we face a moment of unparalleled opportunity to, in

voice, in one vote, fulfill our promise to our troops--the promise that

we will give them the resources, the armor, the manpower and

reinforcements they need so that they may safely and effectively win

the War on Terror and come back home.