Mr. Speaker, we all want success in Iraq. We want a

stable region. We want safety and security for our troops and peace in

the Middle East.

Our service men and women are the finest in the world, the best

trained, the most dedicated. They are incredibly fine soldiers and

people. They deserve a clear mission in Iraq. They deserve to have all

the protective equipment and armor needed to keep them safe. They

deserve to have all the funding required, and they deserve to have the

best leadership in the field and the finest military planning from

Washington.

What our brave troops do not deserve is Washington's bungling. We had

bad intelligence at the start, a flawed occupation plan that failed to

send enough troops, despite the best advice of the Army's Chief of

Staff at that time, and Washington failed to properly plan for critical

logistics such as electricity and infrastructure. These mistakes have

put our troops in much greater danger.

With these issues in mind, I sent a letter to the Administration over

1 month ago asking for specific answers as to how this surge would

increase our chances for success in Iraq. I was very hopeful for

positive solutions. I also asked at that time what specific benchmarks

we could look at to indicate whether or not we were making progress. As

of this date, I have yet to receive any answer from the Administration.

I have spoken to veterans in Winamac and in Osceola, Indiana, to

constituents in restaurants and churches and to concerned Hoosiers

throughout my district. I have also met with Iraq Study Group

cochairman, Lee Hamilton, with military representatives, and with my

valued colleagues. What I have heard consistently is that our brave

troops should not be placed in the middle of what is increasingly

becoming a very dangerous civil war.

Our fighting troops have been placed in an almost impossible

situation. They are trying to bring stability to Iraqi cities and

provinces where a fierce and bloody religious war rages between the

Sunnis and the Shiites. Our service men and women from Michigan City

and South Bend and Logansport cannot end this vicious cycle of death.

Only the Iraqis can do that. The Iraqi Government and people have to

want peace and stability for their country as much as we want it for

them.

If the proposed surge increased our chances of succeeding in Iraq, I

would support it wholeheartedly. However, I fear this surge will not

lead to an Iraq that will be stable over the long term, but instead

will simply put over 21,500 more American troops into harm's way. There

will not be stability until the Shiites and Sunnis decide that the

price of the death and destruction they inflict upon each other is no

longer worth the cost. The Iraqis have to make this decision, and

sending 21,500 more of our finest citizens will not cause the Iraqis to

make that decision any quicker. In fact, it might only delay that day

of decision for them.

Two recent surges by American troops did not bring additional

security to Iraq, and I do not see how placing more troops in the most

dangerous areas of the country at this point will calm things down. Our

troops deserve America's full support, full funding, and all the

equipment and materials they need to remain safe and battle ready. The

time has come for the Iraq Government and its troops to step up and to

seek peace with each other. Our obligation in Congress is to provide

common-sense judgment that guarantees complete support for our troops

and a plan that provides a path toward peace and stability.

I do not see, and I have not been shown, how this surge will further

our chances for success. For the above stated reasons, I will be voting

for House Concurrent Resolution 63. May God bless America and our

troops serving in Iraq, Afghanistan and everywhere else throughout the

world.