I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Speaker, we are debating today a nonbinding resolution to

disapprove the Iraqi-American military surge in Baghdad. We do so

knowing Congress cannot manage a war, let alone micromanage one. We do

so knowing the surge has begun, and we will continue despite our debate

and vote. We do so hoping our debate will not discourage those called

upon to execute the surge, but we also do so knowing that it might.

Mr. Speaker, that is enough for me to oppose the resolution. I will

vote ``no'' on the anti-surge resolution, despite the fact that for 3

years now I have

consistently contended that we should have fewer troops in Iraq, not

more. Clearly, the surge is inconsistent with my general view with how

to make our effort in Iraq sustainable and winnable.

But the anti-surge resolution is akin to sitting on the sidelines

booing in the middle of our own team's play because we don't like the

coach's call. I cannot join mid-play naysaying that might discourage

even one of those engaged in this current military effort in Baghdad.

To those soldiers and marines who are engaged, I would say the

following. Don't be discouraged by this debate and vote. It is birthed

by the very democracy that you are defending. If you are successful,

Iraqis may one day enjoy the same right to debate and vote like we are

debating and voting. If they do, they may well look back at you as

having birthed that right for them.

Nearly 40 years ago, I was a grunt platoon sergeant in Vietnam, a kid

who dropped out of college and enlisted specifically to go to Vietnam.

And at the very time that I was fighting insurgents in Vietnam, our

country was torn by antiwar protests and debate. I didn't worry about

that. You should not either. I didn't let it discourage me. You should

not let it discourage you. You should simply do your duty and be proud

of the fact that you have done it. Do it to the best of your ability.

I made tons of mistakes, failed many, many times to do what I should

have done. But do what you can to discharge your duty on behalf of the

country and let others, the President and the Congress, debate what

that duty actually is. There are legitimate differences of opinion in

the United States among the leadership concerning the best way forward

in Iraq, how to get to the best possible result. Don't worry about

that.

No doubt you have your own ideas. I certainly did when I was in

Vietnam. While in combat in Vietnam, I was convinced that the tactics

that we were using needed to be dramatically changed. But,

nevertheless, I continued to do the best I could as I was instructed to

do.

I gave a eulogy for Sergeant Victor Anderson of the Georgia National

Guard about 2 years ago, 39 years old, disqualified because of diabetes

when the National Guard was called up. He fought his disqualification,

he went to Iraq.

The week before he died, hit by an IED, he saw some of his men

killed. He sent an e-mail back to his family. In that e-mail, he

explained this, people ask me why I fight. I do not fight for some

ideology. I fight for that man to my left and the one to my right. They

are men of their honor. When called, they responded and did their duty.

They did not run away. If you believe in nothing else, believe in them.

It is that kind of spirit that I hope you have. I hope, in fact, that

I can look at you when you come back from Iraq and be as proud of you

as I am of so many others who have fought for us in Iraq and elsewhere.

I am a good bit older. It has been 40 years since I was in combat. When

I look back at combat, I remember the things that I failed. I forget

the things that went particularly well.

Don't fail, do as well as you can. Don't be discouraged by this

debate, and we will continue to have additional debates. There will be

laws, et cetera, passed. Just do your duty as best you can.