Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to the issue of the

Iraqi supplemental that we are currently about to redo.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, the President in his regional message

indicated that the bill

He went on to say that Congress should debate these spending

measures on their own merits and not as a part of an emergency funding

bill for our troops.

Mr. Speaker, for 19 months now, we have been trying to get this

administration to pay attention to the people on the gulf coast. We

have for weeks and months been trying to get the President to support

our efforts to make sure that many of the families and friends of our

troops, who have been affected in Louisiana, Mississippi, and even in

Florida and Texas by this catastrophic event perpetrated by Hurricanes

Katrina, Rita, and Wilma, get help. Today, we have not been able to get

the President to support our efforts as we have tried to address these

emergencies.

And so, Mr. Speaker, since we are doing an emergency spending bill,

we thought it very appropriate for us to do both international and

domestic emergencies all in one piece of legislation. Consequently, we

have moved in this legislation to address issues such as the East and

West Bank Levee Protection and Coastal Restoration System in New

Orleans and the surrounding parishes by inserting into this legislation

$1.3 billion. We have added another $30 million for K-12 education

recruitment assistance, another $30 million for higher education

assistance.

I plan to be in Baton Rouge next week to address Southern

University's commencement exercises. I would hope that, as I go there,

I can carry them more than mere promises to get them to feeling, once

again, that we in this body are paying attention to and responding to

the problems that they are suffering, many of them having lost a full

year out of their educational pursuits.

I would hope that those children in K through 12 can begin to feel

that here in this Congress, with this emergency supplemental, that we

are going to respond to them as well.

And then there is the Community Disaster Loan Forgiveness Program. We

have put language in this bill to address that issue, $4.3 billion for

FEMA disaster recovery grants. These State and local grants will be

waived, meaning that the Federal Government will be able to finance 100

percent of the grants.

We have been trying for a long time now to get this administration to

treat the victims of Katrina, Rita and Wilma in the same way we treated

disasters after 9/11 in New York, the same way we treated the

earthquakes in California, the same way we treated the Hurricane Andrew

down in Florida some years ago and Hurricane Anika out in Hawaii. In

each one of those instances, we waived matching requirements. In this

instance, we have not. And so we want, in this administration, to waive

those requirements of the Stafford Act, the matching requirements, so

that we can begin to address these emergencies.

There are other emergencies that we plan to address here, and that is

the Children's Health Insurance Program. We think, with 14 States out

of money, another 3 States expected to be out of money by September 1,

it is an emergency for the children in those 17 States, and I would

hope that when we put the final bill together to send back to the

President, we will address these emergencies that we have with our

people here at home.