Mr. Speaker, since Democrats took over Congress, we have

tried to establish a process to responsibly end our involvement in

Iraq. We, like all Americans, have watched in sadness as 3,422 of our

brave soldiers have lost their lives, including 57 of those who came

from the State of New Jersey.

That is why Congressman Pascrell and Congressman Pallone, Congressman

Holt, Congressman Rothman and Congressman Sires and myself voted

against this resolution.

As we said, we have asked the President to have a responsible end to

our involvement, but 3,422 deaths later, the lives of 57 Americans from

New Jersey have been lost. Already we have passed and sent to the

President a plan that would include a timeline for troop withdrawal.

Our best efforts, however, have been consistently met with a veto.

Indeed, President Bush continues to stubbornly, recklessly insist that

his failed Iraqi policy continues without any reasonable compromise.

We, along with the great majority of Americans, strongly disagree with

the President. He has been wrong every step of the way, and it is long

past time to bring U.S. involvement in Iraq to a conclusion.

The Democratic leadership has tried repeatedly to bring finality to

the war. But because of a lack of a veto-proof majority, today they

have relented on key requirements to help bring about the end.

While we understand why the proposal before us was crafted in such a

way, that we believe we must continue to forcibly stand up to the

President.

We voted against spending even more money in Iraq because there were

no timelines or real accountability on an administration that has

proven to be utterly incompetent on the most important issue of our

time.

As late as yesterday at a major address, the President continues to

try to directly implicate Iraq in 9/11. It was Osama bin Laden, al

Qaeda, who made it very clear on that dastardly, cowardly act on

September 11 to our World Trade Center that it was done by al Qaeda,

done by the Saudi who led this and still continues to lead this

terrorist organization.

So why do we continue to try to stretch the reason for going in and

having an attack on Iraq that it was because of 9/11. We know that

there is the continued attempt to connect the two when they are not

connected. Now we hear al Qaeda is strong and doing well in Iraq.

However, before 9/11, there were no al Qaeda operatives in Iraq.

So we have now a country that is no better off, really. More people

die there. We have a world that is really not any safer. Yet, and

still, we have a President who refuses to see the light, continues to

go down a path of destruction. So, for that reason, I am proud of my

colleagues, Pascrell, Pallone, Holt, Rothman, Sires and myself who

stood up and said, enough is enough, the time is now.