Mr. Speaker, H.R. 4156, the Orderly Responsible Iraq

Redeployment Appropriations Act, just passed.

Let me be clear about why I voted for it. This legislation is a

compromise that I hate, but it's the only way to move the agenda of the

American people forward. This legislation is anything but perfect, but

it does make important strides.

It requires the President to use funding to begin to redeploy U.S.

soldiers out of Iraq within 30 days of enactment and sets a goal for

complete redeployment by December 15, 2008.

It requires the President to implement a comprehensive diplomatic

political and economic strategy to bring stability to Iraq. For the

first time, the President will actually have a plan in Iraq.

It requires the President to report to Congress. It will end the

secrecy that has surrounded everything about this war.

And it requires the President to accept what the rest of us know,

that waterboarding is torture. It is a crime, and this bill says it's

not going to be used in the interrogation of prisoners.

After World War II, we prosecuted Japanese soldiers for waterboarding

U.S. prisoners of war. But the President's new Attorney General is

walking around wondering about whether waterboarding is a crime.

House Republicans who voted said they're willing to sacrifice

the will of the American people at the altar of blind political

obedience to the White House.

If Republicans in the Senate filibuster this bill, they'll be telling

the American people to go away because

they intend to follow the President over the cliff.

If this legislation should reach the President's desk, it just might

finally force him to confront reality. But I don't expect any of that

to happen.

The President intends to hand Iraq over to the next President. In the

meantime, this President is waging an Iraq veto war relying on

Republicans to act as mechanical robots and rubber-stamp his vote on

every single Iraq policy the Democratic majority has brought forward.

The American people may not understand how badly they've been

deceived and misled by this administration, but it's going to continue.

Sometime next spring, the President will announce things in Iraq are

going so well he'll bring home a few thousand of our troops. He'll have

them arrive in the fall during the election, when Republicans are

desperate to explain why they ignored the American people. He will not

tell us that 100,000 soldiers will be permanently stationed in Iraq at

14 military bases the administration has so artfully called enduring

bases. Of these, five are superbases: Camp Victory North, al Asad Air

Base, Balad Air Base, Camp Taji, and Tallil Air Base. These are huge

bases with everything from video stores to supermarkets and rental

cars. They are so big that one of them, Balad, 40 miles north of

Baghdad, is the second busiest airport in the world, second only to

Heathrow in the amount of air traffic.

Building enduring bases stands for indefinite U.S. military

involvement in Iraq, which is not something the Congress or the

American people want or will stand for.

The President is running a war by veto. If we could have a vote on a

no confidence motion, this war would be over. But in our democracy, the

ballot box is the only vote of no confidence and, regrettably, we have

another year to wait to get rid of the President.

That only reinforces the need for today's vote. If Republicans won't

support something as mild as this, then the American people need to

know the Republicans are stonewalling. Every time we force the debate

out in the open, the American people see it for what it is.

If Republicans continue to prolong the war, the American people will

take charge next November and unelect even more Republicans.

We call this legislation a bridge fund, meaning to build a way to

bring our soldiers out of Iraq and home where they belong. We're

trying, and we're not going to stop until the American people can

declare the mission accomplished and the men and women of our Armed

Forces are home.