Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of our men and

women in uniform. I cannot however, in full confidence, rise in support

of statements that the world is a safer place for the removal of Saddam

Hussein from power. The human and financial costs of war are colossal.

This action has been no exception. With the details of the tragic

bombing of a hotel in Baghdad still developing as we debate this

resolution, we are once again reminded of the horrors of war--and the

long road ahead. Based on today's events, and the recent bombing in

Spain, how can the authors of this resolution say that we are safer?

No one has borne the costs of this military action more than our

soldiers and their families. No one understands these sacrifices

greater than the spouses and children of soldiers who spend month after

month, deployment after deployment, in faraway lands. No one

understands sacrifices greater than the soldiers themselves who

volunteer their time, but must sometimes pay with their health, their

jobs, or even their lives.

All of us in this Congress want to honor these men and women in

uniform. I am sure that we all want to minimize their hardships and

that of their families. A bipartisan piece of legislation that I

recently introduced, H.R. 3779, the Safeguarding Schoolchildren of

Deployed Soldiers Act, would seek to bring us one step closer to this

goal. At a time when Reservists and members of the National Guard are

being used at unprecedented levels, many of them are experiencing new

problems when they leave home.

According to the Department of Defense, there are currently 1.2

million children with military parents in the United States. This

number is only slightly less than the total number of adults currently

serving in the Armed Forces.

I learned firsthand how deployments can cause significant upheaval in

a child's life when the brother of a deployed soldier recently

contacted my office. He explained that his niece had moved to live with

her mother while her father was away fighting in Iraq. As a result, she

was prevented from attending her normal high school because she no

longer resided within the school district.

The Safeguarding Schoolchildren of Deployed Soldiers Act would ensure

some measure of continuity for children who change residence as a

result of their parent's military service by allowing them to continue

to receive an education at their schools, even if they are temporarily

residing outside the school district.

While I will vote yes on today's resolution, Mr. Speaker, make no

mistake that it is a vote of support for our troops and their families;

troops such as Sgt. Christopher Kreiger from the 105th Military Police

Company, who was informed this week that his unit's tour of duty has

been extended indefinitely. It is my hope that he will come home

quickly and safely to see his one-year-old daughter for the first time.