Mr. Chairman, I join my friend from California (Mr.

Garamendi).

The President has said, with the advice from the military, it is time

to bring the war in Afghanistan to an end and to bring our troops home.

I have the greatest respect for the gentleman who is the chairman and

who was just here, Mr. Young.

I've signed over 10,474 letters for those who have given their lives

for this country. Many families are divorced. And I take the pain home

every weekend. No, it's not like being in Afghanistan, but I don't

forget the war. I don't think many of my colleagues here forget the

war. I want to make that clear.

I go to Walter Reed and Bethesda--now that they've been

consolidated--and I've seen four kids that have no body parts below the

waist. One of them is from Florida. He is Corey Kent. I never will

forget him. He is the first one I ever met who had no body parts below

his waist. He is 23 years of age, and he is a private in the United

States Army.

I look at all the waste in Afghanistan. It is a country that will

never change, no matter what you do. History has proven that. What Mr.

Garamendi's amendment says is let's stick to the plan that's been laid

out by the President with the advice of the military.

I worry about the wounded. The $12 billion that Mr. Garamendi is

talking about saving could be spent to take care of the wounded.

Mr. Chairman, there is a book called ``The Three Trillion Dollar

War,'' written by Dr. Joe Stiglitz and coauthored by Professor Linda

Bilmes at Harvard University. Dr. Stiglitz is now saying, no, it's not

the three trillion dollar war when you factor in all the pain and the

wounded from Afghanistan. I would rewrite the title of the book to be

``The Five Trillion Dollar War.''

Are we prepared for that tsunami that is coming? No. We are a country

that is financially broke, but we owe those who have given so much.

That's all this amendment is doing. It's saying let's follow the plan

by the President and advice from the generals. Let's save $12 billion,

spend it on the wounded and take care of their pain for the next 25 or

30 years.

I hope that my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will look

seriously at this amendment. Let's do what is right first for the

wounded and their families; and, secondly, let's do what's right for

the taxpayers and their families and bring this war to an end. If we

don't do it here in Congress, there will be no end. It will be 2014,

2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018.

Let's pass this amendment. Let's say to the President, Sir, we trust

you. You listened to the generals, and this is the plan to bring an end

to Afghanistan because it is a corrupt country, and nothing will change

no matter what we do or how many lives we expend or how much money we

expend. It will never change.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

Thank you very much.

Even though the chairman has a point of order, I want to explain why

I think this amendment is important. I am working with Rosa DeLauro on

this amendment.

This amendment simply says that any long-term security agreement with

Afghanistan must be conducted as a treaty or authorized by Congress.

In 2008, this Congress was outraged that a long-term security

agreement would be concluded without input from Congress. I wonder

where the outrage is today? We're in worse financial shape than we were

in 2008, and I would hope that Congress would see that we have a need

and a responsibility.

This agreement, signed last month, was submitted to the Afghan

Parliament, but not to the United States Congress. Where is the

outrage?

My colleague, Ms. DeLauro, led the effort in the House in 2008 to

return Congress to its constitutional responsibility. We must decide

when and where our men and women go to fight.

I would like to commend Ms. DeLauro for having the courage to help

lead this effort again today. No matter who is the President, it is the

responsibility of Congress to commit U.S. troops and fund this

agreement.

Mr. Chairman, there are estimates that say we will be up to 30,000

U.S. troops in Afghanistan until 2024. This will cost over $500

billion.

Yet, if we don't support legislation like we are talking about today,

we will have no say, no say at all. I don't know why the taxpayers

aren't outraged by what is happening with this national security

agreement with Afghanistan. The fact remains we simply don't have what

the numbers are going to be and what the cost is going to be with this

national security agreement with Afghanistan.

We in Congress have a responsibility. Our responsibility is to make

sure that we have checks and balances with any administration. When our

country is in such a bad financial situation, hopefully we will not

allow a 10-year agreement to just slide by Congress with $500 billion

at stake and with maybe even more of our young men and women being

killed.

Mr. Chairman, just a couple of more minutes.

I have a very dear friend who is the former Commandant of the Marine

Corps. I have an arrangement with him that I will not use his name in a

public forum, but if any of my friends here today--the chairman or the

ranking member--asks me his name, I'll come up and tell you. I sent him

an email after we signed this security agreement with Afghanistan.

I said to the former Commandant: What do you think about this

agreement?

I got three paragraphs back, but I will read just a couple of

sentences. He wrote:

Simply put, I am not in favor of the agreement signed. It basically

keeps the United States in Afghanistan to prop up a corrupt regime. It

continues to place our troops at risk.

I know that my friend from Connecticut will speak in just a moment,

and I look forward to her words.

I hope that the Congress in 2013, no matter who the President is,

will bring this issue back. Let's have a debate in the House of

Representatives, and let's say to the American people that we will meet

our responsibility: that we will not send troops, that we will not send

money to Afghanistan unless the Congress, itself, approves it.

Again, Mr. Chairman, I have great respect for you and for the ranking

member. I am sorry he is leaving. He has been a great Member of the

Congress. I hope, Mr. Chairman, if we all get back in 2013 that we will

have an opportunity to bring this issue to the floor of the Congress

and to debate the role of Congress when any President, Democrat or

Republican, reaches a security agreement that obligates our troops and

the taxpayers. We must meet our constitutional responsibility.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.