Madam President, this is billed as an unusual Saturday

session where the Senate is working on Saturday. I argue we are not

working, we are having a political, theatrical debate that does more

harm than good. There are a lot of people working on Saturday; not us.

We are trying to jockey for political positioning among ourselves and

for 2008. Yet there are people working in Baghdad and Iraq, trying to

secure our future against the most violent extremists on the face of

the Earth.

To my good friend Senator Nelson, if you think we are in the middle

of a civil war, cut off funding. If you believe half of what you are

saying in these resolutions, then have the courage of your convictions

to stop this war by cutting off funding. But, no, no one wants to do

that because they do not know how that will play out at home. Everybody

is trying to hedge their bets a little bit, bashing this new effort to

secure victory, wanting to be seen in history, I guess, or for the next

election, that this was not my idea, this was Bush's fault. Bush is not

going to

Iraq; 21,500 brave young men and women are going to Iraq behind a

general who believes he can win.

This is a low point in my time in the Senate.

Senator Reid said a few weeks ago, Republicans can't run and hide

from this debate. Well, I am here. I am not running and hiding from any

idea any Senator has. I am not running and hiding from Senator Warner's

resolution. I look forward to voting against it and talking about how

ill-conceived it is. All I am asking for is a chance for the Senate to

play its role in our democracy and not become the House. All I am

asking of my fellow colleagues who are certain they are right and want

to send a message to our President is they give the courtesy to the

others, such as myself, who believe they are dead wrong. And let's have

a vote that reflects where the Senate is and not become the House.

What is the Senate? In the Senate you have to get 60 votes to move an

idea forward. Do you want to abandon that because of the political

moment? I don't. Do you want to abandon your colleagues who have a

different view of what we should do? I don't. I have been there on an

emotional issue called immigration. There was an effort to shut down

debate. I, along with Senator John McCain and several other Senators

who were very much for a comprehensive immigration reform, told critics

within our caucus, we will not leave you behind.

I am extremely disappointed in our colleagues who want to shut off

debate, not understanding whether people such as myself and Senator

Gregg will be left behind. I am not afraid of your ideas. I respect the

differences we have. I am extremely disappointed you will throw us

over. That is not what the Senate is about. The Senate is about a

debate on a full range of ideas that shows a difference from the House.

Here is the crux of the matter: The reason we are here on a Saturday

playing stupid political games while people are over in Iraq trying to

win this war is because our colleagues on the other side of the aisle

are afraid to take a vote on cutting off funding. I believe what

happened in the House in a nonbinding fashion is the worst possible

situation for this Congress, but it is a precursor to a movement toward

bleeding this war dry in terms of funds and cutting off funding. If I

am wrong, then let's have a vote on cutting off funding.

The reason we are not going to have a vote on the Judd Gregg

resolution, which is a legitimate position, is because 70-plus Senators

will vote for it. The overwhelming majority of this Senate understands

that cutting off funding at this crucial time in the war on terror in

Iraq is ill-advised, but they don't want to be on the record. The

reason they don't want to be on the record is because the radical left

will eat Democrat 2008 hopefuls' lunch. They will create a fight on

that side of monumental proportions between the radical left and the

bloggers of the left who want to get out yesterday. That is why we are

having a truncated debate.

If Members do believe we are in the middle of a civil war, take the

floor and get people out of the middle of the civil war.

This is the politics of abandonment. This is abandoning the role the

Senate has played for generations, to make our country stronger, not

weaker. This is abandoning colleagues with contrary ideas who are going

to be cut off. Unfortunately, these nonbinding resolutions abandon

those who are going to the fight voluntarily.

This is a very sad Saturday for the Senate, on the heels of a

disaster in the House where a majority, a bare majority of the House,

wants to send a political message at a time of war that does not keep

one person from being shot at.

I don't know where this thing is going to go. I don't know how it is

going to end, but I can promise this: As long as I am in the Senate, I

am going to take this Senate and make sure the Senate acts like the

Senate. I came to the Senate for a reason. I want to be part of great

debates. The way this process will be structured is Members will get

cut out. Judd Gregg will get cut out because of the politics of the

moment. The 60-vote rule will have meaning in this debate as long as I

am here. I hope my colleagues will understand whatever differences we

have, no matter how sincere they are, please don't throw us over.

At this moment in time, I will read another resolution of sorts. This

is from General Petraeus. He is addressing the coalition forces:

Do we have those qualities in Congress?

I end with this thought: If Members believe this is a lost cause and

victory cannot be achieved, that our people are in the middle of a

mess, a civil war, and not one person should get injured or killed

because we have made huge mistakes that cannot be turned around, then

cut off funding. Have a vote on something that matters. This political

theater empowers our enemy, disheartens our own troops, is not worthy

of the Senate time, and it has never been done in history for a reason.

I yield the floor.