Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, first, my respect for the Senator from Virginia is

immense. I have always admired what he does, and I wish we were voting

on his resolution. I think it should be up for debate and up for a

vote. He is a significant force in this institution for many things

which are right. I may have some disagreements with him over time, but

I certainly have never questioned anything. I hope no one would. No one

should question anybody on anything around here on what our purposes

are. Our purposes are the same: to make our country a better and safer

place and to make sure we assure a good future for our children.

Let me set the table as to where we are in this debate, however,

because one of the essences of this institution has always been it has

been a forum where if you have a different idea or a different thought

on an issue of substance, you usually get to air it, and you most often

get to vote on it. That, of course, is what our Founding Fathers

structured this institution for.

Ironically, it was George Washington--not ironically but

appropriately--it was George Washington who immediately ascertained the

significance of the Senate's role when he said the Senate is the saucer

into which the hot coffee is poured. It is the spot where ideas of the

day get an airing to make sure they survive the light of day.

Over time, we have developed an institutional understanding in the

Senate that unless 60 percent--a majority of the Senate--agrees on an

issue of major importance, that issue does not move forward. And

equally importantly, we have developed an attitude in the Senate that

if there is more than one legitimate view on an issue of significance--

and this is, obviously, an issue of dramatic significance--there will

be different views brought to the floor in the form of amendments or

resolutions, and they will be debated and they will be voted on.

So what I suggested was an amendment which was not, I felt, all that

controversial. In fact, I thought it was in the mainstream of American

thought and certainly, hopefully, in the mainstream of the Senate

positions. The resolution which I suggested--and I will read it again--

simply states:

This should not be controversial. This should be a statement which we

as a Congress are willing to make, that when we send a soldier onto the

streets of Baghdad or anywhere else where that soldier may incur or be

in the way of harm, that soldier will have the support of the American

people and the Congress--with the financing, with the equipment, with

the logistics they need to do their job well. And it should be a

definitive, uncontroversial, un-

controverted statement.

Yet in offering this resolution, the Democratic leadership has said

they will not entertain it. They will not allow us to vote on it. In

fact, they have taken this whole process to a whole new level of trying

to manage the activities of the floor of the Senate in a way that the

Senate has never been managed in its historical past or should be

managed in the context of what the purposes of the Senate are.

The Democratic leader has essentially said we will vote on his

amendment--his amendment--and his amendment alone. And, by the way, his

amendment has changed three times now. There have been major,

substantive changes to his amendment three times. And each time he has

said or the leadership on the Democratic side of the aisle has said:

That is the amendment we are going to vote on, that is the one that is

locked in stone. It shall not be changed. You shall vote on it as a

Senate. You shall not be allowed to amend it. You shall not be allowed

to put up resolutions that in any other way address the issue.

Well, the first proposal they came out with was not good enough to

get enough votes to get to 40 probably, so they changed it. Then they

said: This amendment shall be the amendment you will vote on. This

amendment shall not be changed. This amendment shall not be amended on

the floor of the Senate. There shall not be an amendment

that I have proposed or that the Republican membership wants to propose

to go up and be debated and voted on also. Then that amendment, it

turned out, was not good enough. That happened to be the Warner

amendment.

Then the House passed an amendment, and they decided to take the

House amendment and say: Now this amendment shall be the amendment

which is frozen in stone and which cannot be contravened, cannot be

amended, and it shall not have any other amendment offered by the

minority, by the Republican side of the aisle that the Republican side

of the aisle wishes to propose.

There was one caveat to that, the Senate Democratic leader said: I

will be willing to choose an amendment for the Republican side of the

aisle to propose. I, as Democratic leader, shall choose the Republican

amendment that is brought to the floor to be debated.

Well, obviously that, on the face of it, does not pass the test of

fairness or even the test of how the Senate should run, even under a

confined system as this is. The actual way we should proceed in this

manner, in this situation, is that there should be at least four

amendments on the floor because there are four major ideas floating

around here.

There is the idea that came over from the House. There is Senator

Warner's proposal. There is Senator McCain's proposal. Then there is my

proposal. Every one of these is substantive, thoughtful, I believe.

Maybe I am assuming too much for mine. But for everybody else's, there

are substantive, thoughtful ideas that should be debated on the floor

of the Senate, and they should each be allowed a vote.

But the Democratic leadership has said no, there shall be no vote on

anything other than their new proposal--which is now the House

proposal, their third machination of what they are going to do--and

another proposal which they will choose from the Republican side of the

aisle.

Well, that clearly fails on all levels. Substantively it fails the

rules of the Senate as they have traditionally been used. And as a

matter of fairness, it fails the issue of being fair to people who have

a legitimate viewpoint. More importantly, it fails the American people

and the troops who are in the field because it does not allow us as a

Senate to effectively debate and vote on proposals which would address

the various issues raised by the situation in Iraq.

So we on our side are saying we shall assert our rights. There are,

after all, at least 40 Members of the Republican Party--and I suspect

quite a few more--who believe that we, as Members of the Republican

party, as Members of the minority, have a right to offer an amendment

of our choosing, and that it should be voted on, especially since we

are debating nonbinding amendments.

Equally important, I think it is probably appropriate to analyze: Why

would the Democratic leadership not want to vote on the resolution I

just outlined? Why would they not want to do something such as that?

Why would they not want a vote on a resolution which states

unequivocally that when we send our soldiers--our men and women--into

harm's way, we are going to give them the support they need to do the

mission they are assigned to do and to remain safe?

I suspect it is because that amendment which I have propounded, that

proposal, that resolution would actually get significantly more than a

supermajority in this body, significantly more than any other of the

three items that have been discussed--the McCain proposal, the Warner

proposal, or the House proposal--and that they would perceive that as

an embarrassment on their side, which I believe shows this is not about

the substance of the issue of how you address the war in Iraq, this is

about the politics of how the amendment brought to the floor is

perceived in the New York Times, the Washington Post, and the other

panoply of national press groups that are basically trying to claim a

victory over not our efforts in Iraq but over the President.

The fact that they would not allow us to bring forward an amendment

which they know will receive a supermajority and more votes than their

amendment--and which is so forthright in its statement of what it does,

and which is so appropriate to the issue of what we are doing in Iraq,

which is that we should be supporting our troops who have been sent

into harm's way--is a reflection of the politicalness of this process,

not the substance of the process. It is regrettable.

We will continue to insist that this amendment, which is reasonable,

be voted on. We should not allow the frustration--and I recognize there

is a tremendous amount of frustration about the war in Iraq. I have a

lot of frustration about the war in Iraq. Everybody does around here.

You could not but have that about what is happening there. But we

should not allow that frustration to be taken out on our troops in the

field. There will be endless claims that the House language that has

come over to us----

The House language is totally inconsistent on the issue of

whether it supports the troops. It says on the one hand that it does,

and it says on the other hand that it doesn't support their mission.

You can't do both of those things together.

I will submit for the Record an editorial from the Wall Street

Journal which reflects that fact. I appreciate the courtesy from the

Senator from Idaho in granting me another minute. It truly is San

Francisco sophistry, the language in the House resolution. In my

opinion, it cannot be claimed to be consistent. The only consistent

statement of support for the troops is the language of my amendment.

That is why I believe it should be voted on.

I ask unanimous consent to print the editorial to which I referred in

the Record.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in

the Record, as follows: