Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Massachusetts for

yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, today's debate is not about political calculation. It is

not about public appearance or ready-made slogans. It is not about

approval ratings or polls.

Today's debate is about the very future of this country that each one

of us loves so dearly. It is a fork in the road. It is a rare

opportunity for each of us to chart the course of the Nation we serve

by casting a single vote.

Today we can vote for the status quo in Iraq or we can vote for

change. For me, this choice is simple. I will vote for change.

The war in Iraq has divided our country for nearly 5 years, longer

than our participation in World War II. Its monetary cost has already

reached dizzying heights. Measured in casualties lost, lives forever

altered, the toll of this war is truly staggering.

That is why we must transcend politics and party loyalty when we vote

today. An issue of this magnitude requires each one of us as Members of

Congress to vote based on our conscience and obligation to represent

our constituents.

Mr. Speaker, on this issue my conscience and my constituents speak

loud and clear. They say, We must end this war. Bring our troops home

and work to restore our international reputation.

I stand here today in support of this rule and the underlying

legislation because it accomplishes each of these three goals:

Within 30 days of enactment, it requires an immediate and orderly

redeployment of our military from Iraq. No more delays, Mr. Speaker.

With today's bill, Congress stands with the American people in

demanding a swift and responsible conclusion to military engagement in

Iraq.

I also support this legislation because of what it does in the long

term. It recognizes that we have a moral and strategic obligation to

help rebuild Iraq, to avoid leaving a country in shambles.

The legislation before us today requires a comprehensive, diplomatic,

political, and economic strategy for Iraq. We must work with our

international partners to bring stability to Iraq, and this legislation

does so. A renewed commitment to diplomacy is not only the right thing

to do to fulfill our commitment to the Iraqi people, it also begins

restoring our Nation's standing in the world.

I urge all of my colleagues to stand with the American people by

voting for the bill before us today. This legislation takes a strong

step forward in ending this long and costly war. In doing so, it is

worthy of this House, worthy of the constituents we all serve, and

worthy of the sacrifices of our soldiers and their families.