I want to thank the gentleman for yielding. And I also

want to associate myself with the words of the lady from Texas who just

spoke.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the rule and the bill. To

date, President Bush has asked us for a total of $804 billion for

fighting the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Yesterday, the Joint

Economic Committee, the committee on which I sit, concluded in a report

that the real economic cost of these wars is $1.6 trillion. However,

there are numerous hidden costs that could potentially bring the grand

total to $3.5 trillion.

In response to the President's failing new strategy in Iraq and

wasteful spending, Congress has chosen instead to ensure strict

accountability. We have heard the American people and have chosen to

exercise fiscal responsibility by considering this vitally important

legislation.

Namely, the bill limits funding in the amount of $50 billion, in

comparison to the President's original supplemental request of $196.4

billion, to continue our military operations in Iraq, while ensuring

that the responsible and strategic redeployment of our forces begins no

later than 30 days from the date of enactment.

It also provides troops with the resources needed for continued

protection from improvised explosive devices.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to exercise their

responsibility to the American people, to over 3,800 brave soldiers, 71

from Maryland who have died and who have paid the ultimate price, and

to more than 2.3 million Iraqis who have fled their homes, by

supporting the rule and voting in favor of this legislation.