I thank the chairman for yielding.

As a member of the International Relations Committee, I rise in

strong support of this resolution and take a moment to express our

prayers and good wishes to the author of this resolution, who labors at

the side of his namesake at this very hour in a hospice in Illinois.

It is extraordinary day today, Mr. Speaker, as a Member of Congress

that has had the privilege to travel to Operation Iraqi Freedom on

three different occasions, the news that 11 million Iraqis, with Iraqis

on point handling the security during these elections, 70 percent of

Iraqis turned out. It was, in no uncertain terms, a victory for

democracy in Iraq. And it is my privilege and honor to rise this

morning on this floor in support of the rule and the underlying

resolution that confirms this great day in the history of freedom,

December 15, 2005, when millions of Iraqis defied terrorists to say

``yes'' to democracy.

I stand also in support of the affirmative statements in this

resolution that this House of Representatives is committed to achieving

victory in Iraq and sees this election as a crucial victory for the

Iraqi people and a defeat for the terrorists in that country. It is

also in this resolution an effort to state emphatically the rejection

of the wisdom of an artificial time line and also to recognize the

extraordinary sacrifices made by members of the United States Armed

Forces and their families. It is about them that I rise especially

today, Mr. Speaker.

This week at my office in Muncie, Indiana, a group of the citizens

that I

have the privilege of serving came to protest our military presence in

Iraq, to urge the withdrawal, as some have done and continue to do, of

our forces from this nation. And while it is their right to do so, let

me say emphatically, it is my duty to stand with our Commander in

Chief, to stand with our soldiers in the field, and to stand with the

good people of Iraq until we achieve a total victory for freedom in

this nation.

I derive that sense of duty from seven names that I felt obligated to

mention today. They are the names of the soldiers that I represented

until they stepped into eternity, who fell in Operation Iraqi Freedom,

from eastern Indiana.

These seven men didn't leave their post, and this Congressman won't,

either. It is them and to their credit and to their grieving families

that I rise in support of this resolution today. It is the sacrifices

of over 2,000 American soldiers who laid down their lives for the

freedom that we saw demonstrated in the streets of every corner of Iraq

yesterday that I support this resolution.