Mr. Speaker, I vigorously opposed the war in

Iraq before it began, and now, well into its fifth year, the need for a

new policy has never been clearer. The toll of this war has been

devastating: more than 3,600 of our most courageous men and women

killed, tens of thousands seriously wounded; the toll on civilians much

higher still. And while we struggle to fund domestic priorities in

Vermont, in all our States across this Nation, health care, a crumbling

infrastructure, transportation, the cost of education, we now spend $12

billion every single month on this war.

From last November's elections, to public opinion polls, to the

comments I hear from Vermonters every single day, the voice of the

American people is loud and it is clear: we must end this war. And

since the President refuses, absolutely refuses, to act, Congress must.

Since the President refuses, Congress must make it clear that the

United States will not maintain permanent military bases in Iraq. Since

the President refuses, Congress must denounce the use of torture. It

must finally close Guantanamo Bay. And since the President refuses,

Congress must bring our troops home and ensure they receive the care

they deserve when they return.

Mr. Speaker, 7 months ago, under the leadership of the previous

Congress, a bill like this never would have been allowed to come to the

floor. Now, 7 months later, today, there is an emerging bipartisan

consensus that the President must be forced to change his course.

By passing this bill today, Congress will demonstrate with the force

of law what the American people well know: it is time to end the war in

Iraq.

I cosponsored and voted in favor of legislation offered by my

colleague Mr. McGovern of Massachusetts that called for redeployment of

our troops from Iraq within 6 months. I voted against additional funds

for the war without a timeline. And I cosponsored legislation that

would close Guantanamo Bay, outlaw torture, defend the right of habeas

corpus, and prohibit the establishment of permanent military bases.

At the end of the day, Americans know that no action in the House of

Representatives is not enough until all of our troops are returned

home. This bill provides a starting point for progress towards

realizing that goal. Until our troops are home, I will not stop, and

Congress must not stop in its efforts to compel the President to end

this war.