Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished gentlewoman for

yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, for 4 long years our country has endured a tragic war, a

treacherous journey down a dark and winding path, with no clear routes,

no clear destination and fatal hazards lurking around every blind

corner.

Today I rise again with Chairman Skelton and my colleagues to act to

clear the road ahead, to bring its end into the light. I rise again to

push, to prod, to urge my colleagues to help us end the President's

failed policy; to help us change the mission to a mission based in

reality; to help us end the ravages that our brave soldiers who have

performed so heroically, remove them from the crossfire in which they

are caught, to remove them from the snipers' bullets and the life-

ending IEDs.

I rise with the hope that those who have stood with the President and

have given his Iraq policy a chance to succeed and another chance to

succeed and another chance to succeed, that they will today choose a

responsible change in direction based in reality that will establish a

comprehensive and clear strategy for our role in Iraq.

Congress has allowed the President to lead our troops down this path

for too long. It is time to demand accountability, to demand an exit

strategy that is clear, and to demand an end to the injury and death

that our brave soldiers face every day as they courageously proceed

down this undefined road on which the President has placed them and

they have dutifully traveled.

The President's ambling course has led our troops through the

deadliest 3 months of the war in April, May and June of this year.

During those three deadly months, 329 American soldiers died in Iraq.

The cost of continuing down this path is too great. We must act to

bring direction and accountability to the United States' mission for

the sake of our troops and the families that love and support them.

It brings me great sadness to report that, since the war began in the

spring of 2003, 163 brave men and women from Ohio have been killed. And

25 of those precious lives have been lost since the surge. The

President's escalation of this war means six more grieving families in

Ohio since when I last spoke in favor of the redeployment bill in May

of this year. How many more times will we come to this floor to demand

responsibility and accountability from our President? How many more

families will be devastated by the loss of a loved one? How many more

times will we hear the administration continue to argue that we are,

quote, ``just about to make progress''?

Last November, the people of the 13th District of Ohio made their

voices heard when they went to the polls. Their voices joined with the

voices of people across this Nation. They voted for a change in

direction, and today we act to give it to them.