Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. I want

to acknowledge the exceptional leadership of Chairman Obey, Chairman

Murtha and Chairman Skelton in putting together this important piece of

legislation.

Mr. Speaker, Congress passed this bill, and yesterday we sent it to

the President of the United States. We did so with great pride, because

it is a bill that supports our troops, honors our promises to our

veterans, holds the Iraqi government accountable and winds down this

war. It is a bill that honors the sacrifice of our men and women in

uniform. Thank you, Chairmen Obey, Murtha and Skelton.

The President had an historic opportunity. He had an opportunity to

take yes for an answer, because the bill contained what the President

had proposed. The President proposed benchmarks. His very own

benchmarks were contained in this bill. The Department of Defense has

guidelines for readiness for our troops, for their training, their

equipment and the time they can spend at home and overseas. They are in

the bill, even with a waiver for the President, giving the President

more latitude. The President said no. The President said no.

I had hoped that the President would see the light, instead of

turning a tin ear to the wishes of the American people and a blind eye

to what is happening on the ground in Iraq.

The President, in signing the veto, is reporting that progress is

being made in Iraq. Well, I don't know what his definition of

``progress'' is, but, sadly, April was the deadliest month this year,

with over 100 of our troops killed there.

The President, in his statement on vetoing the bill, said that he

vetoes the bill because, in his words, ``It makes no sense to tell the

enemy when you start to plan withdrawing.''

In criticizing these timelines, of course, the President is wrong.

But when he was a candidate for President, it made sense to him to say

to President Clinton, ``I think it's also important for the President

to lay out a timetable as to how long our troops will be involved and

when they will be withdrawn.'' This is candidate Bush on the war in

Kosovo, where we did not lose one single American soldier; this from a

President whose initiative has lost over 3,000 Americans and countless,

countless, countless Iraqis.

Bipartisan congressional majorities approved of using timelines for

redeployment to instill urgency into benchmarks that have already again

been endorsed by the President and the Iraqi leaders. They have agreed

to this, except they reject them in this bill.

A wide range of people have noted the value of timelines in

persuading the Iraqis to make the political compromises needed to end

the violence, including Secretary of Defense Gates, who said, ``The

strong feelings expressed in the Congress about the timetable probably

have had a positive impact in terms of communicating to the Iraqis that

this is not an open-ended commitment.''

The Congress will not support an open-ended commitment to a war

without end. He wants a blank check. The Congress will not give it to

him.

Next the President said that Congress is substituting our judgment

for the judgments of commanders in the field 6,000 miles away. Wrong

again, Mr. President. We are substituting our judgment for your

judgment 16 blocks down Pennsylvania Avenue in the White House. We are

substituting the judgment of this Congress for your failed judgment.

The American people have lost faith in the President's conduct of the

war. They have said that they want accountability and a new direction.

This bill gives them both.

Next the President claimed, and Mr. Obey again referenced this, that

this bill is loaded with non-emergency spending. Well, it may be a non-

emergency to the President, but it certainly is an emergency to the

people affected. Once again, the President is wrong.

The needs of the survivors of Hurricane Katrina think it is an

emergency, and so does any person of conscience in our country who

cares about the victims of Katrina. That millions of children are about

to lose their health insurance is an emergency for them and for our

country. America's farmers, devastated by natural disasters, think it

is an emergency.

These situations remain emergencies because the President and the

last Congress, the Republican Congress, refused to act. So now we must.

So they have made it even more of an emergency.

Today, the President faces consequences of his own making. This is

the seventh supplemental for the war in Iraq. Certainly somebody was

planning something at the White House and could have put over the years

the funding necessary for this war into the budget. Instead, the

President did not do that. I don't know why. Maybe they didn't want the

American people to see the real cost of this war in dollars. Certainly

we know the price that we have paid more seriously in lives, in health,

in reputation, in the readiness of our military and in probably $2

trillion now for this war.

The President claims that this legislation infringes upon the powers

vested in the President by the Constitution. The President is wrong.

Congress is exercising its right as a coequal branch of government to

work cooperatively with the President to end this war.

By voting ``yes'' to override, Congress sends a strong message:

To support our troops. They have done everything that has been asked

of them, and excellently. They deserve better.

To rebuild our military, which has been seriously strained by this

war in Iraq.

To honor our commitment to our veterans, our heroes.

And to demand accountability.

With passage of this bill, we then can refocus our energy on the

efforts against terrorism by bringing the war in Iraq to an end,

bringing this war in Iraq to an end.

The President said there are real enemies out there. Yes, we know

that, Mr. President, and we are prepared to make that fight. We will do

whatever is necessary to protect the American people.

The war on terrorism was in Afghanistan. We took our fullest

attention from Afghanistan to go into Iraq, and now Iraq is a magnet

for terrorists. The war in Iraq has made matters worse in the war on

terrorism.

What we have to do is work together, Democrats and Republicans, with

the President of the United States, to bring stability to that region.

Now into the fifth year of a failed policy, this administration

should get a clue. It is not working. This is the fourth surge they

have proposed. When they proposed it in January, they said in 60 to 90

days we will know. It is 120 days, and now they are saying September.

And then they say maybe by the end of the year. So what is this? We

will be into another whole year of this war, far longer than World War

II.

Nobody who serves in this body, who takes the oath of office to

protect and defend the Constitution, needs anybody to tell them,

whether you are a Democrat or Republican, what our responsibility is to

protect the American people. Nobody needs a reminder of what the threat

of terrorism is to our country. But we do need to work together to keep

our focus on where the war on terror really is. If we clear up this

matter, bring this war to an end in Iraq, we can give the war on terror

our fullest attention.

Let us stop this war without end. I urge a ``yes'' vote.