I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, at the outset, let me comment on the ranking member's

observation about political posturing.

First, let me say I wonder what the President was doing standing in

front of that sign saying ``Mission Accomplished'' on that aircraft

carrier with taxpayers' dollars. Let me suggest to you that he was

politically posturing, trying to take credit for a great victory that

occurred 4 years ago. No one in America believes that the mission has

been accomplished. No one in America thinks we have had a success.

Let me say that it was totally appropriate for the Speaker and for

the majority leader in the United States Senate to sign a bill and let

the public know that this is what the Congress believes.

My friend may think political posturing is taking responsibility,

which is our constitutional duty, as opposed to simply rubber-stamping

what the President wants done. There has not been any question asked

for the last 4 years by this Congress. There has not been any

interposition of a correct policy as opposed to the President's failed

policy.

We don't see that as political posturing, I tell my friend--we see it

as exercising the constitutional duty that the American public expects

us to do as their independent representative.

This is only the second veto. Why is it only the second veto? Because

you wouldn't pass anything the President didn't want. That is not the

role of the Congress of the United States. The role of the Congress of

the United States is to make policy. That is what article I says. That

is what we are doing.

Mr. Speaker, regrettably, the President has chosen not to follow the

will of the American people and bipartisan majorities in the House and

Senate by vetoing legislation that fully funds our troops in Iraq and

Afghanistan, that holds the Iraqis accountable for making progress, and

that calls for a responsible redeployment of American forces who are

mired in a civil war.

It is our duty now as the elected representatives of the people to

try to override the President's veto even though we may not succeed,

and even as we prepare to meet with the President today to discuss next

steps. That is our responsibility. We intend to do it.

Mr. Speaker, I believe our President, who was wrong 4 years ago when

he stood under a banner announcing ``Mission Accomplished,'' is wrong

again. The escalation of American troops in Iraq does not represent a

change in this administration's failed policy. In fact, it is the

fourth time we have escalated troops. In fact, it has been tried,

unsuccessfully.

The President's claim last night that ``We've begun to see some

important results'' is unfortunately contradicted by the facts. I wish

it were true. I want to succeed in this effort, although what success

is is ill-defined or not defined by the President.

In fact, Iraq is wracked by violence, including massive car bombs,

almost daily. The U.S. death toll in April of 104 made last month the

deadliest of the year and the sixth most lethal month since the war

started, notwithstanding this increase in troop presence.

Senator Hagel, who recently returned from Iraq, stated: ``This thing

is coming undone quickly, and the Maliki government is weaker by the

day.''

And the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction just

reported: ``The U.S. project to rebuild Iraq remains far short of its

targets, leaving the country plagued by power outages, inadequate oil

production and shortages of clean water and health care.''

I suggest to my friend, in that context, the Congress ought to be

impacting on the policies that are being pursued that are not

succeeding.

Finally, let me say, and I call the attention of my friend, the

ranking member, to this because he referenced this. The President's

claim last night that this legislation ``substitutes the opinions of

politicians for the judgment of our military commanders'' is totally

inaccurate.

But let me tell you what is not inaccurate is that our military

commanders have made none of the decisions on the policies we have been

pursuing in Iraq, and that is the tragedy. The decisions have been made

not by military men and women, but by the President, by Mr. Cheney, by

Mr. Rumsfeld, by Mr. Wolfowitz, and, yes, by Mr. Bremer.

We have seen nothing, I tell my friend, but a series of political

decisions made on this war over the last 4-plus years; would that it

have been otherwise. We do not seek to micromanage our military, which

has done everything we have asked of them. Rather, we do continue to

question the decisions of top administration officials, including, yes,

the President,

whose judgments regarding this war have proved repeatedly, almost

without exception, wrong.

Indeed, it is ironic that the President makes this claim when, in

fact, we are mired in Iraq, because politicians who I have just

referenced made decisions that prove to be wrong and did not lead to

success.

Mr. Speaker, this Congress must not continue to simply rubber-stamp

this administration's request. Our Founding Fathers did not think that

was our role. They thought our role was to make independent judgments

on the people's behalf and have the courage to pass legislation

reflecting that judgment.

This legislation responds to the will of the American people and sets

forth a policy to take us in a new direction that requires Iraqi

responsibility and the pursuit of the political solution that General

Petraeus and the Iraq Study Group say was essential if we were going to

succeed.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues from both sides of the aisle:

Listen to the American people, fully fund our troops, hold the Iraqis

accountable, support responsible redeployment of American troops. Vote

to override this veto.