I thank the gentleman from California.

Mr. Speaker, I think that we have to sustain this veto today. I think

it's the right thing to do, because I think we need to go back to the

drawing board on this. Number one, the President does have the

constitutionally defined duty to fight wars, to direct the militia,

particularly in a time of war, and I think that we are getting into a

position where we have a lot of folks on Capitol Hill, perhaps as high

as 535 of us, who think we can run the war more than the Commander in

Chief.

I think we have to recognize that constitutionally the President has

to do that. I think the President really has to veto this bill. It's as

much for the preservation of the office as it is for his own personal

views today.

I think, secondly, while the benchmarks themselves make sense, and

there is a lot of bipartisan agreement on the benchmarks, there is also

great division as to can these benchmarks be achieved by the dates

outlined in the bill.

One of the things General Petraeus said to Congress last week is that

the

new Government of Iraq, and keep in mind, this is the fourth election

that they have had and the first permanent government, but one of the

things they need, as much as anything, is our push. This bill serves to

push them. But it also needs our assurance, our assurance that we will

be with them through this process.

If you pointed out in 1870 would America be in a position to pass

major civil rights legislation, we would not be at that point. The

Government of Iraq might not be ready to bring in all the Baathists or

to the level in which we would like to see it done by July or by

October, and so I think that we have to give them a little more

assurance that we're going to push you, but we're not going to pull the

rug out from under you.

I think that we, on this committee, the defense committee, the

Appropriations Committee, which historically is known for getting

things done at the end of the day, often have friends say to me, as a

Republican, but I often have the question asked to me, we know you're a

Republican, and we know you can be partisan, but do you do things

bipartisanly?

I am always proud to say, you know, the number one committee that I

serve on, which I also think is the number one committee in the House,

is a very bipartisan committee. Now, we will debate things, gun

control, abortion, things, always are putting riders, environmental

stuff, on our bill. Yet we clash about it in committee time and time

again on ideological, principle-based positions. Yet at the end of the

day, we know that the bill has to be passed, because if you don't get

the appropriations train to the station, the government shuts down.

I think at this point, the Appropriations Committee can go back to

the drawing board and come up with something that is still based in

principle that both sides can respect. But it does put the troops

forward, as we do have strong bipartisan basis to want to do right now,

but it would also take care of some of the politics of Iraq and the

diplomacy. For that reason, I think we have to vote to sustain the

veto.