Mr. Speaker, we will have appropriated in one year, $1.2

trillion. This bill that we are voting on today is called the Iraq

Accountability Act.

Now, it's fine to have loyalty to the President of the United States.

All of us know how important loyalty is; all of us know how important

it is to be loyal to our friends, but there comes a time when this

independent Congress has to stand up to the President of the United

States.

We will have appropriated $95.5 billion. And if you vote against this

bill, you're voting against that which is $4 billion more. You're

voting for loyalty to the President, but you're voting against $4

billion more, $95.5 billion for the amount for the Department of

Defense programs.

If you vote for President Bush, you're voting against $12.3 billion

for military personnel pay and benefits, everything the President asked

for. If you vote for loyalty to President Bush, you're voting against

$1.2 billion, mostly to cover housing allowances which were left out of

the last bill. The total amount provided is $13.5 billion. If you vote

for President Bush and loyalty to President Bush, the conference

committee has added $1.15 billion to cover the full cost of housing

allowances. The committee has also added $2.3 billion to cover the full

cost of 36,000 Army troops and 9,000 Marines. If you vote to be loyal

to the President, you're voting against those troops.

When you talk about support the troops, I am talking about supporting

the troops. Conferees recommend $50.4 billion for military operations

even more than the President requested. We are adding $2 billion to

address training and equipment shortfall.

The chairman of the Armed Services Committee talked about readiness.

Right now, we have a tremendous shortfall of equipment. We have no

strategic Active Duty Reserve in this country. And we put extra money,

we put $2 billion in to start to replenish the strategic reserve.

This conference proposes to fully fund the President's request to

train and equip Iraqi and Afghanistan troops. If you vote against this

bill, if you vote for the President and to be loyal to the President,

you're voting not to include $25.6 billion in equipment purchases, $800

million above the President's request.

If you vote against this bill, you're voting not to allocate $3

billion to purchase the mine resistant, new vehicle with the V-shape

which resists the IED, one of the most important pieces of equipment

that we will send to Iraq. We put $400 million for Abrams vehicles,

Abrams tank, and we put $768 million for the Strykers.

Now, let me talk about defense health. Today, the Subcommittee on

Defense just had a hearing on defense health. Every single year, Dr.

Chu, the Defense Department shorts the health care system of $2

billion. Every year. Every year, the Congress has to make it up.

We have extra money, we have $3.3 billion for the defense health care

programs; $2.1 billion above the budget request. If you vote against

this bill, you're voting against those requests. $450 million for

traumatic stress brain disorders; $450 million for traumatic brain

injuries and post traumatic stress; $661 million to cover funding

shortfalls created by the Congress in having disapproved the

Department's proposed increase in health insurance premiums; fees for

military beneficiaries; $62 million for amputee care; $12 million for

caregivers. This is an important point. For caregivers. We heard from

the Department of Health, from the Defense Department about the problem

caregivers have.

All of us go to the hospitals as often as we can. I get post

traumatic stress seeing these young wounded people. I am inspired by

them. I see the families when I went to Fort Bragg and Fort Stewart and

Fort Hood. I admire them. I admire their discipline, I admire their

courage. I admire their patriotism. But let me tell you something:

They're burned out. They're hurting.

If you vote against this bill, you're voting not to give them the

money that they need. If you vote against this, you're voting against

the provision that says no permanent bases in Iraq. If you vote against

this, you're voting against 15 percent that comes out of Defense for

the contractors. We have 125,000 contractors in Iraq and there has been

no oversight, and we had 2 months before we could even find out about

the contractors.

One of the provisions we put in this bill was a provision that said

you can't deploy troops unless they are trained and equipped. You can't

deploy troops unless they've had at least a year at home. Now, more and

more I am seeing, they are saying that's the most important provision

in this bill. They need a year at home to recuperate from their

deployment; they need a year at home to retrain and to get ready to

make another deployment. The Secretary of Defense made that decision,

and we appreciate him making that decision. But at the same time,

because of the policy of the White House, he had to make the decision,

in order to sustain this deployment he had to make the decision to

extend them to 15 months. I hear rumors that he is going to extend them

for 18 months.

The troops that I talked to, the troops that I talked to just

recently, were very frank with me. I said, ``Look, we want to help in

any way we can. Tell us what the problems are.'' And they went through

the myriad of problems they have with these deployments.

These are individuals. These are individual people. They've got

families. They have loved ones. One first sergeant said to me, ``I hate

to tell my kids I have to go overseas again. I hate to tell the kids.''

One woman in Iraq, and this is in an article in The Washington Post,

she sighed and she says, ``This war is a war between the Iraqis,'' she

said. Another soldier said, ``We're just interfering and letting our

soldiers die.''

I have to say that when you say there is some success in Iraq, we had

four of the deadliest months in the history of this 4-year war in Iraq.

We had more people killed in the last 4 months than any other period of

time during this war. We have had 330 killed since the surge started.

And these are individuals. These are not numbers, these are

individuals.

We have less electricity than we had before the war started, less oil

production than we had before the war started, less potable water,

higher unemployment.

We have a provision in this bill that says the Iraqis have to take

over this fight themselves. The Iraqis just maybe killed one of the

highest leaders. That's what we want. We want to give them the

incentive to take over the security themselves.

And let me say what's important on this floor of the United States

Congress and what's important to the President of the United States: It

is the national security of the United States. That's what's important.

It is important that Iraq take over their national security, but our

own need concerns me. Our strategic reserve is depleted completely, our

troops are burned out, and we need to find a way to do a diplomatic

effort, to put an all-out surge in diplomatic efforts in order to bring

our troops home as soon as practicable.

So I urge the Members to override this veto, and start to bring our

troops home as soon as practical.