Madam President, the vast, vast, vast majority of

legislation passed out of this Senate is done by a simple majority.

That is a fact. All one has to do is look at the Congressional Record.

So with this new direction of the minority, it is very clear what is

happening. They are trying to avoid debate on this matter. They want a

new set of rules.

We have offered them votes, up-or-down votes on McCain, Warner,

Gregg, and they turned that down. I said: OK, fine, we will have 60-

vote margins on McCain, Warner. They turned that down. So I object,

Madam President, and I will continue.

Madam President, it is also very interesting--and I have

the greatest respect for my friend from Virginia and my friend from

Nebraska--but with all due respect to them, how could they vote against

a motion to proceed? How could they vote against a motion to proceed

saying let the two leaders work this out? What more could we give them

than what they asked for last week? But now they want to throw in the

Gregg amendment with a 60-vote margin.

Earlier today, the minority leader said: This vote is ``about getting

fair treatment for the minority here in the Senate.'' He was half

right. This vote is about fairness but has little to do with being fair

to the minority. The vote is about being fair to 132,000 troops already

in Iraq by making sure they have the strategy they need to complete

their mission so they can come home.

This vote is about being fair to the 48,000 American men and women

who would be sent to Iraq should President Bush be permitted to

escalate this war.

This vote is about being fair to the bipartisan majority of Senators

who seek to voice their opposition to the President's plan to escalate

the war.

This vote is about being fair to the American people and the millions

of voters who chose a new direction last November.

As Senators, we owe it to our troops and our people to have a real

debate about the way forward in Iraq. For 4 years, this body, under the

control of the Republicans, sat silent on the most pressing issue

facing our country--Iraq. As thousands of our soldiers were killed and

tens of thousands wounded, the Senate, directed by the Republicans, sat

silent, no debate on Iraq. As hundreds of billions of dollars were

spent, the Senate sat silent. Republicans were in charge--no debate.

They said no.

As Iraq fell into chaos and civil war, it became increasingly clear

that the President's plan was flawed and failing. The Senate sat

silent. The Republicans who were in control of the Senate said: No, no

debate on Iraq.

As Senators and Americans, we cannot permit the silence to continue.

This Democratic majority will not allow it to continue.

The administration's failures have dug us into a deep hole in Iraq--

we all know that--and we have an obligation to find a way out. Our

troops, most of all, need our help. They need a policy that is as

worthy as their heroic sacrifice. They need a legislative branch that

will finally exercise its constitutional responsibilities.

Madam President, I say to my friend from Connecticut, I wasn't able

to hear all of his speech, but I did hear this that caused me to take

note: He said words to the effect: What are the Shia politicians going

to think? What are the Sunni politicians going to think if, in fact,

Warner passed? I wonder what the Sunni politicians thought, and I

wonder what the Shia politicians thought when the Iraqi Prime Minister,

duly elected, told the President of the United States that he wanted

American troops out of Baghdad. So let's not direct this to Senator

Warner.

A ``no'' vote on the motion to proceed is a green light to George

Bush to continue down the same failed course of almost 4 years.

A ``no'' vote is an endorsement of escalation, sending 48,000 more

troops to Iraq and spending at least an extra $27 billion--$27 billion

extra--when this war has already cost almost a half a trillion dollars.

A ``no'' vote is a vote in support of this President continuing the

same policy of failure in Iraq.

We have been told by our intelligence experts that the war is not

going to be won by the military; it is only going to be won

politically. That is what the

Iraq Study Group said. That is what all people say, with rare

exception. Those are the people holding hands with the President.

We must heed the results of the November elections and the wishes of

the American people. We must change course, and this change starts with

this next vote.

This side--Democrats--have offered the minority everything they have

asked for. Remember: Vote on Warner, vote on McCain; you want a simple

majority; you want a supermajority; we will go along with that. We have

been fair to them. Now the Senate must be fair to our troops, their

families, and the American people. We must proceed with a debate about

Iraq and send a clear message to President Bush that escalation is not

the answer.

Some say let the leaders work it out. Part of this stall has been a

stall for obvious reasons. If not tonight, tomorrow? I must file a

motion to invoke cloture on the continuing resolution because the

Republicans said they are going to filibuster it. I have gotten letters

to that effect. We should have been debating the Warner, McCain

resolutions today, but they have not allowed us. They wouldn't allow us

to proceed on this matter.

I am telling everyone within the sound of my voice, a decision will

have to be made whether to go further than tonight, but the time is

very tenuous--very tenuous. If they stop us from going forward on this

debate, this does not end the debate on Iraq. It may end the debate for

a few days or a few weeks, but, remember, we have the 9/11 Commission

recommendations coming and that is open to amendment and I can

guarantee everybody there will be Iraq amendments involved in that

debate.

The supplemental bill is coming. This is to fund the war in Iraq

basically more than $100 billion. I think there will probably very

likely be a number of amendments dealing with Iraq.

They can run, but they can't hide. We are going to debate Iraq, and

they may have gotten all their folks to vote against the motion to

proceed, they may stop us temporarily from debating the escalation, but

they are not going to stop us from debating Iraq.

We have lost 3,100 soldiers, sailors, and marines. They are dead,

Madam President. We don't know the exact number of how many have been

wounded--24,000, 25,000.

We are not going to allow the situation in Iraq to continue. It is

wrong. There can be no military solution. The President has been told

that. I think it speaks volumes when he meets with the Iraqi Prime

Minister who is elected, and the Iraqi Prime Minister says: Mr.

President of the United States, get all American soldiers out of

Baghdad.

That's what he said. I think it speaks volumes when military

commanders say that it is not the way to go. We know what Casey said.

His tune has changed a little bit since he was relieved of duty over

there.

The families of the 3,100 soldiers who have been killed, the families

of the 24,000, 25,000 who have been wounded demand we go forward with

this debate.

We are going to start voting momentarily, and remember what the vote

is. The vote is whether we can proceed to debate the escalation of the

war in Iraq. And the Republicans have told everybody they are all going

to vote no. If they think this can pop up real easily again, I think

they may have another thing coming.

I repeat, the Republicans left town and left the Government without

adequate resources to go ahead and complete funding of the Federal

Government for this year. We have to take up the work they did not

complete. They funded the Government until February 15, and now it is

up to us to make sure the Government continues to run.

If they want to pull a Newt Gingrich and close down the Government,

that is their responsibility. But I believe we should move forward and

make sure the Government is funded, and there is not a lot of time for

Iraq. That is a sad commentary on the situation because we lost days as

a result of these parliamentary delays.

I ask unanimous consent that if we get to third reading of S. 470 it

then be turned into a concurrent resolution and passage occur on the

concurrent resolution and not S. 470. Before hearing how anybody feels

about this, I said last week that we would be happy to consider this

bill as a resolution. Everybody heard me say that. The American people

heard me say that. So anybody who tries to hide under a procedural vote

because this is a bill and not a resolution is not being fair because

simply I have stated--and I know that everyone in this Chamber heard me

say this, and I have said it many times--I ask unanimous consent that

if we get to third reading of S. 470, that it be turned into a

concurrent resolution and that passage occur on the concurrent

resolution and not S. 470.

I add another unanimous consent request to this. I am willing to

change it to a concurrent resolution right now, as I was willing to do

last week.