Mr. Speaker, I just recently sent 850 Oregonians off to

Afghanistan to fight the resurgent Taliban and Osama bin Laden, the

perpetrators of 9/11. September 14, this House, on a proud day, with

one exception, voted to authorize the war in Afghanistan to take out

the Taliban, take out the perpetrators of 9/11, al Qaeda. That was

nearly unanimous.

But sadly, the Bush administration and the Republicans in Congress

distracted us onto a path of a war in Iraq 1,143 days ago. 2,497

servicemen killed, 18,490 wounded. First it was weapons of mass

destruction. Then it was about 9/11. Then it was about building

democracy.

But now the Republicans want to pretend that it has to do all about

the war on terrorism. They mentioned al Zarqawi. The Pentagon wanted to

take out al Zarqawi. They had him in their sights before the war in

Iraq, and the Bush White House and Dick Cheney wouldn't let them

because it would hurt recruitment for the coalition of the willing to

invade Iraq, where al Qaeda did not exist.

If you strip out the rhetoric from this nonbinding resolution, with

no Democratic alternative, no amendments allowed, it is a stay the

course resolution with an open-ended commitment. As the President said,

a future President will decide when U.S. troops will leave.