Mr. Speaker, the President's Iraq policy has

been a complete catastrophe. It must be challenged. It must be changed.

We must end this war.

The question we face is clear: Will Congress rubber-stamp a fifth

year of a failed policy, or will Congress finally, after 4 straight

years of lock-step compliance with an incompetent administration,

compel a new direction that ends the war?

The President has arrogantly asserted that he will veto any measure

with a timetable. Mr. Speaker, I will not support any bill without a

timetable. If I had a chance to write this bill, like my colleague from

Massachusetts (Mr. McGovern), I would bring our troops home yesterday.

But I did not write this bill, so I must measure it based on three

criteria: Does it impose accountability on the President and Iraqis?

Does it revoke the President's blank check? Does it establish a date

certain with the force of law that will end this war?

This bill meets each of these objectives. Regrettably if this bill

fails, the war will continue, unchecked and unabated.

It is time for the Iraqis to accept responsibility for shaping their

own future. Even President Bush has acknowledged the importance of

imposing measurable benchmarks of success on the Iraqi Government. This

legislation replaces Presidential lip service with congressional force

of law.

There is a reason the President threatens to veto this bill: It is

because Congress is finally revoking his blank check.

Mr. Speaker, there is no easy way to clean up the mess in Iraq or to

avert further suffering. Our obligation remains to decide, at this time

and place, whether to stay the President's course or to end this war as

soon as possible.

I will support this bill because it finally puts us on the path to

end the unconscionable war.