Mr. Speaker, after 4 years, billions of dollars and

thousands of lives lost, we simply cannot reward failure with a blank

check in the war in Iraq. I refuse to rubber-stamp more failed

policies.

In the weeks ahead, we have the opportunity as representatives of the

people to change the direction in Iraq without jeopardizing the safety

and well-being of our troops. We must finally require Iraqis to take

control of their own country and their own destiny.

The President has threatened to veto legislation that contains his

own benchmarks for success in Iraq; provides our troops with the

training and equipment they need; and ensures that when our brave

soldiers return home, they get the kind of care that they deserve. Our

legislation also commits additional funds to fight the forgotten war in

Afghanistan and against al Qaeda, strengthening our national security.

Mr. Speaker, the people of New York's 24th District sent me here to

address the war in Iraq and to start this country on a long overdue new

direction for America.