Madam President, recently we learned the Ohio National

Guard could face early redeployment. We learned the National Guard is

being asked to train without the proper equipment. Our Guard will do

the job well regardless of the circumstances, but it is wrong to send

them to Iraq with incomplete training and inadequate equipment and with

insufficient downtime.

The supplemental passed today echoes what many of us in Congress and

military families across the country have been saying: We need a new

direction for Iraq. Make no mistake, we take a backseat to no one in

supporting the brave men and women fighting in Iraq. We absolutely

support their families. However, more of the same is not a plan for our

troops and will not end this war in Iraq. This war has made our world

and our country less safe. The Iraq war has cost 142 Ohioans their

lives. It has wounded another 1,000 Ohioans.

Congress will continue to fight for our Nation's military by working

to see they have the resources and support they need and leadership

they deserve. The supplemental did that today. The supplemental fully

funds and fully supports our troops, while establishing conditions that

will bring our troops home. It provides desperately needed funding to

the VA, something the President simply has not asked for, to help care

for the hundreds of thousands of new veterans created by this war.

In the Veterans' Committee yesterday, we heard from families about

tragedy after tragedy, from families who have lost loved ones in this

war, who didn't get the proper care from the VA because of

underfunding, who didn't get the proper direction when they returned

home from Iraq because the White House simply did not schedule in the

way they should have the kind of help for returning Iraqi veterans. If

the President won't take responsibility for those failures and lead our

troops home, then Congress must. We owe it to our soldiers, sailors,

air men and women, our marines, and especially to their families.

The President should listen to the military leaders and listen to the

American people and work with Congress to change course in Iraq instead

of threatening vetoes. I hope the President reads this legislation

before he makes his final determination whether to sign it or whether

to veto it. Vetoing this legislation would deny funding that our

military needs and that our veterans desperately need, such as $99

billion in emergency Department of Defense spending--$4 billion more

than the President requested; $3 billion for mine-resistant, ambush-

protected vehicles; $4.8 billion in military construction in part to

fund BRAC--$3.1 billion will go to funding the BRAC 2005 account, and

we know all over the country how important that is; and $1.6 billion

for individual body armor.

The President and the Pentagon and civilian leaders of this country

have fallen shamefully short in their failures to provide the body

armor for our troops. We have all heard too many stories. I have heard

them in Steubenville and Toledo and Dayton about soldiers' families

telling us they didn't have the proper body armor they needed.

The VA would get $1.7 billion more than the President's VA proposal.

We know the VA is underfunded at least that much. They have increased

only about 10 percent in terms of employees but have a workload of

returning Iraqi war veterans of at least 2.5 times that number. There

is $39 million in our supplemental budget for polytrauma-related

funding. There is $10 million for blind veterans programs. There is

$100 million--and this is essential--for VA mental health services and

$25 million for prosthetics. None of those did the President include in

his request, and none of those have we prepared for properly in the

previous Congress and in the White House.

When we add up the numbers and we see 3,300 soldiers and marines in

our country have lost their lives in the Iraq war, when you understand

the tens of thousands of injuries, we see that our VA is simply not

prepared. They are not prepared for this year and next year, let alone

for the 50 years down the road when taxpayers are going to be taking

care of these deserving veterans, giving the kind of care that we

should be providing. We are going to see we are not prepared over the

next 50 years to do that, either for health treatment or for treatment

of mental health injuries.

In addition to the Iraq spending and the spending for our Nation's

returning veterans, there are other things in this emergency spending

bill, as there were in Republican bills in the past, drafted by the

White House, passed by the Republican House and Senate. There is other

crucial emergency spending that needs to be dealt with: $1.3 billion

for Katrina relief, $100 million for FEMA and emergency management

performance grants, $425 million for securing rural schools, $13

million for mine safety. We have seen some of the most dangerous times

in our Nation's mines in the last couple of years. There is $625

million for pandemic flu response, something public health authorities

warn us about every week or so here. There is $400 million for LIHEAP

to take care of deserving elderly and indigent who simply cannot afford

their heating and cooling bills and another $683 million for emergency

relief grants--all that this Congress needs to do.

The President has set our Nation on a path that leads in the wrong

direction in Iraq and fails to meet the needs of our returning

veterans. It is time to change paths. I ask again that the President of

the United States read this bill, understand this bill, and understand

how the supplemental bill addresses the needs our country faces in the

years ahead.