Mr. Speaker, Members of the Congress and Americans

across the world, thank you. Thank you very much, Congresswoman Madam

Chair Stephanie Tubbs Jones, for accepting the responsibility for

leading the Special Order. Thank you very much.

We need a new direction in America. We need a plan, one we never had

4 years, 5 months ago as this country struck a sovereign nation, Iraq.

We need a plan. I would say a new plan, but we never had an old plan.

So a plan is what this country must have. President Bush wants the same

``no plan'' to go forward. It is time for change: over 3,800 Americans

dead, over 28,000 Americans wounded in battle. Members of the

Congressional Black Caucus, 43 members from 21 States, we represent

over 40 million Americans. And to a person, all over our districts,

they want a change. They want a new direction with this war in Iraq.

Eighteen of our members represent less than 50 percent African

Americans. Several of our members represent less than 15 percent

African American. We represent the American people, almost 300 million

in our country, 40 million represented by the members of our caucus. We

represent Latino Americans, Native Americans, Asian Americans, European

Americans, Indian Americans, and African Americans. The entire multi-

ethnic society are represented by members of the Congressional Black

Caucus.

So when we start our Special Order tonight to talk about the war in

Iraq, a war we never should have fought, a war that has lasted longer

than World War I, World War II, the Civil War, and the war continues,

you might remember, America, last spring they were all saying wait

until September. We sent a bill with benchmarks to the Senate, to the

House, passed the House, went to the Senate. The President vetoed it.

We sent him another one. They say, okay, we won't do another one; we

will wait until September. Well, now General Petraeus is saying not

September 2007; let's now give them until March 2008. No new plan.

They are going to ask for $200 billion in the next several weeks.

Already have spent $565.4 trillion of your tax dollars on a war we

never should have fought.

America wants a change; we want a new direction, Mr. President. We

want to bring our troops home in the most orderly possible plan that we

can put together. And I hope and the American people hope this

administration as well as our military leaders will come up with a

plan. It is your responsibility to do that.

We support our troops. We support the veterans all over this country

as well as those veterans who are fighting this war. The mental health

needs that our country will have as a result of this war, we yet do not

know. There will be significant needs for mental health services. This

supplemental has very little money that is coming through. And this is

a supplemental that we spent this year, 2007 and 2008. Understanding,

again, we have already spent $565.4 trillion. Repeat that: $565

trillion in this war.

We must bring our troops home. We must have a new direction. And as

members of the Congressional Black Caucus, we will say it over and over

again: set a plan in motion. Change direction for our country.

Benchmarks. You heard also, benchmarks. What about these benchmarks

that Congress, the President, and President Maliki put together earlier

this year? It is really between President Bush's administration and the

administration in Iraq, 18 benchmarks that they said they would meet by

September. The General Accounting Office reported to this Congress last

week they have met three of them. They are not sustaining their own

government. They go on vacation, and they want us to fight their war.

Our people tell us to bring our soldiers home. We hear it across the

country, Republicans and Democrats as well as independents: bring our

troops home. It is unconscionable that this Congress would consider as

an appropriator and as a Member of this body as well as a citizen of

this country 200 billion new dollars for this ill-advised war in the

next several months.

Rise up, America. Thank you for protesting over this last week. Keep

the protests up. If you can't come to Washington, have them in your own

State, in your own city. Let us hear your voices. It is too silent out

there. This is a better country than that.

So as we come to you tonight as Members of this United States House

of Representatives, 110th Congress, where there have been 110 African

Americans elected and voting in this Chamber over these many years, we

are proud to have that responsibility and we will remain the conscience

of the Congress. Bring our troops home. End this ill-advised war.

Rebuild America from the ground up. Our children deserve more. Our

seniors who built this country need more.

There is no reason why we can't have top-quality education, good

health centers, good environment, good infrastructure, bridges that

don't collapse. But, you see, you can't spend $565 trillion of your

money in a war that we should not be fighting and at the same time

invest in America's future.

So as one of 43 members of the Congressional Black Caucus, we say to

you, America, become engaged. Speak out. Ask that we bring our troops

home. Ask for a new plan. Ask for a change of direction. Our theme for

2007 and 2008 is change course, do something different. Join.

Volunteer. Work for a better America. Confront the crisis of the war,

of education, of health care, of infrastructure needs. And then for us

to continue the legacy, not just members of the caucus but all

Americans, continue the legacy of people who have built this country,

who have laid down their lives. And, for us, so many of our ancestors

and forebears who fought the

civil rights movement who speak out today for a just America.

So my brothers and sisters, American citizens, rise up, change

course. Fight to end this war today so that your grandchildren will

have a better America tomorrow

Mr. Speaker: One of the costs of the war in Iraq that is often

overlooked is the waste of tax dollars that could be used to fund

programs and facilities that would improve our quality of life.

America's families want access to well-paying jobs, affordable health

care, and quality education. The War in Iraq presents a threat to our

military readiness and the development of communities across our

country. We must reinvest in programs that address the priorities of

America's families to preserve the safety, security and stability of

Americans everywhere.

I was against the War in Iraq from the beginning I will continue to

stand strong for the citizens of the 13th Congressional District of

Michigan and America. We must take America in a new direction. Let us

work together to ``Change Course, Confront Crises, and Continue the

Legacy.''

The citizens of the 13th Congressional District of Michigan have

collectively spent $555.4 million in Iraq. For this much money, we

could have provided, right here to citizens in the 13th Congressional

District: 190,892 people with health care; 7,747 more elementary school

teachers; 83,268 more places with Head Start; 379,635 children with

health care; 4,477 more affordable housing units for working class

people and senior citizens; 50 new elementary schools; 60,288

scholarships for college students; 7,670 music and arts teachers;

12,009 police officers, fire fighters and emergency medical

technicians; 780,628 homes with renewable energy options; or 8,403 port

container inspectors. [Progressive Congressional Caucus, 9/10/07]

On September 7, 2007, the non-partisan General Accounting Office

concluded that the Iraqi government ``met three, partially met four,

and did not meet 11 out of 18 benchmarks. Overall, key legislation has

not been passed, and it is unclear whether the Iraqi government will

spend $10 billion in reconstruction funds.'' [GAO-07-1230T]

As of September 10, 2007, 3,759 U.S. troops have been killed and more

than 27,770 have been wounded in the Iraq war since it began in March

2003. [Department of Defense, 9/10/07]

The Iraq Study Group stated that the use of the military in Iraq has

passed; it is time for diplomacy to take place. Regrettably, diplomacy

has not been seriously considered by the President, and internecine

warfare and outright civil war has filled the vacuum of this viable

option in Iraq. [Iraq Study Group, December 6, 2006].

Out of four million Iraqis who are refugees, the United States has

taken in a total of 687 between April 1, 2003, and February 28, 2007.

[Congressional Research Service, March 23, 2007]. 78 percent of

Americans believe the U.S. should withdraw some or all of our troops

from Iraq. [New York Times, 9/10/07]. 60 percent of Americans say the

U.S. should set a timetable to withdraw our forces from Iraq and should

``stick to that timetable regardless of what is going on in Iraq.''

[USA Today. 9/10/07].

As of September 2007, U.S. troops have been in Iraq for four years

and six months. The Revolutionary War lasted eight years and two

months. The American Civil War lasted four years. The Spanish-American

War lasted five months in 1898. World War I lasted four years and just

under five months. The U.S. role in World War II started in December of

1941; it ended in 1945. U.S. involvement in Vietnam lasted more than a

decade; until Saigon fell to North Vietnam in April 1975.

We have spent, as Americans, more than half a billion dollars in Iraq

since March 2003. The President is expected to request another $200

billion. FY 2003--$53 billion; FY 2004--$75.6 billion; FY 2005--$84.7

billion; FY 2006--$101.7 billion; FY 2007--$135.2 billion; FY 2008--

$116.3 billion; TOTAL--$566.8 billion.

According to the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office, the U.S.

spends about $10 billion per month in Iraq. That's $3,816 per second;

$228,938 per minute; $329,670,330 per day, or $2,307,692,380 per week.

Amount, in billions of dollars, that has been spent in Iraq--$565;

Amount, in billions of dollars, that the war has cost the State of

Michigan--$11.9; Number of wounded U.S. troops--27,770; Number of U.S.

troops that have lost their lives--3,759; Percent of Americans who

believe we should withdraw some or all of our troops from Iraq--78;

Percent of Iraqis that want U.S. forces and our coalition allies to

leave their country immediately--47; Years we have been at war in

Iraq--4.5; Number of the 18 benchmarks the Iraqi government has met--3.