Mr. President, yesterday, the Senate held two important

votes: one on the Feingold amendment, which called for transitioning

the mission; and on the Warner amendment, which would require the

President to certify the Iraqi Government is meeting benchmarks in

order to receive United States aid.

I supported the Feingold amendment, which provides a real change of

direction and course out of the war. I opposed the Warner amendment

because, after more than 4 years of war, 3,400 American deaths, almost

30,000 wounded, and more than $500 billion--almost arriving at $1

trillion dollars in taxpayer dollars spent--we need action, not more

reports, especially those without consequences.

Yet, while I supported one vote and opposed the other, I am

encouraged by both. They show real and growing momentum on both sides

of the aisle to move away from this tragic, endless war. As the Los

Angeles Times reported this morning:

As CNN's Dana Bash said:

It is no wonder a broad bipartisan consensus for change is emerging.

We are well into the fourth surge of U.S. forces since the start of the

war, yet April was one of the deadliest months in the entire war, and

attacks on our troops show no sign of decreasing. The Iraqi Government

has failed to adopt an oil law, a law on de-Baathification, or any

further constitutional amendments they are required to implement.

Iraqi Prime Minister Maliki is accused of sabotaging efforts of peace

and stability by firing some of the top law enforcement officials for

doing too good a job of combating violent Shiite militias.

Conditions are so chaotic, according to a report this morning by the

Chatham House Research Institute--which is a respected institute in

England--they say the Iraqi Government is:

The U.S. mission grows further and further disconnected from our

strategic national interests. Instead of focusing on force protection,

hunting down al-Qaida and other terrorists, and training the Iraqi

military--missions that will make us more secure, help the Iraqi

people, and reduce our troops' exposure to sectarian violence--United

States forces, as we speak, are patrolling Baghdad streets, extremely

vulnerable to snipers, kidnappers, and these explosive devices which

have become so well-known over there.

Our brave fighting forces have done everything we have asked of them,

and even more. Every day we debate the war, our troops remain in harm's

way. The overwhelming veto-proof bipartisan majority of the Senate is

now on record saying the status quo is unacceptable.

With that reality as a backdrop, this morning we will vote for

cloture on Senator Murray's sense-of-the-Senate resolution that will

move us to conference on the emergency supplemental bill and the

important negotiations that will take place in the near future on the

Iraq situation.

Last evening, I spoke to the father of one of the hostages in Iraq.

He lives in Reno, NV. We talked, and it was difficult. He loves his

son, he prays for his son's return, as we all do. We talked about how

we have hope that he is alive.

I urge all my colleagues to support the resolution we are going to

vote on. We can all agree we need to move swiftly to the supplemental

bill that fully funds our troops. We all agree we can't ``stay the

course.'' That is not an option, as President Bush has done for more

than 4 years.

As we move this debate to conference, the American people deserve to

know that the Democrats' commitment to bring this war to a responsible

end has never been stronger. If enough of our Republican colleagues

decide to join with us, even the President will have to listen.