Mr. President, I rise

today as the Mother of two sons as well

as a proud member of this body.

I have come to my decision on this

grave matter after going to every

length to gather as much information

as I could, then weighing it carefully

with the general sentiment in my state

that we should be very thoughtful. My

constituents want us to consider the

consequences of war.

I have asked the same questions of

the President and his national security

team that my constituents asked me. I

understand that there are no easy

choices when confronting a menace

like Saddam Hussein. I have decided to

support the Lieberman-Bayh resolution

because I believe it gives the President

the authority to act with military

force if necessary while holding him

accountable for a preferred, peaceful

solution.

I look at my sons every day and wonder

what kind of a world we are creating

for them. I am sad that September

11, 2001 has forever changed our

perspective on their future and ours. I

regret that I cannot be sure that my

boys will always be safe from terrorism.

But, I am ever more resolved

that we have a responsibility to eliminate

the Saddam Husseins and Osama

bin Ladens of the world. These are people

who bear an irrational hatred toward

America and the liberty and justice

that we stand for. They have converted

that hatred into weapons stockpiles

and terrorist networks that

threaten our way of life. We cannot

stand idly by while they gain strength

and underestimate our resolve.

Today, I make a difficult choice. I

choose to give our President the authority

to take military action against

Iraq if necessary because I believe him

when he says he does not want to go to

war. I take our President at his word

that disarming Saddam Hussein peacefully

is his first choice. I support the

notion that a unified Congress sends a

strong message to our allies and gives

our Secretary of State more leverage

as he negotiates a new and tougher

U.N. resolution that mandates weapons

inspections in Iraq with military consequences

if Saddam resists.

Saddam Hussein is a ruthless dictator.

He has set himself apart from

dictators of the past by using biological

weapons against his own people. He

has used them before and I don’t want

to be left with regret if he were to use

them against our military or diplomatic

personnel overseas, or even our

allies. Our objective must be to disarm

him before he can unleash his arsenal

of chemical and biological weapons or

before he can complete work on a nuclear

weapon.

The time has come to no longer abide

the threat that Saddam Hussein brings

to everything that is good in this

world. The time has come to eliminate

his tools of destruction. Whether we do

it alone or with the support of our allies,

there can be no question that disarmament

of Iraq cannot happen without

the significant involvement, in fact

the leadership, of the United States.

So I have concluded that Saddam

Hussein understands only one kind of

communication. A strongly worded

U.N. resolution with the solid military

backing of the Security Council may

change his mind about cooperating. If

it doesn’t, he must know that his evil

and treachery will have consequences.

Today I believe that the risk of doing

nothing outweighs the risk of taking

action. President Bush has pledged to

me and the nation that he will exhaust

a peaceful solution before resorting to

a military solution. And I intend to

hold him to his word.

I vote for this resolution with a

heavy heart but also with the knowledge

that we can’t have it both ways.

We cannot wish terrorism away without

taking the necessary steps to ensure

that our country, and certainly

our children, are safe and free.