

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, on the previous motion to recommit vote, in light of the new extraordinary and difficult and strenuous voting time, I was unavoidably delayed in an Iraq briefing. If I was present, I would have voted "nay" on the motion to recommit on the Transportation-HUD appropriations bill.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, during the previous vote on the motion to recommit, number 1101 on H.R. 3074, I was unavoidably detained and I missed that vote. I would like the record to show that I would have voted "nay."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the conference report.

Pursuant to clause 10 of rule XX, the yeas and nays are ordered.

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 270, nays 147, not voting 15, as follows:

[Roll No. 1102]

YEAS—270

Abercrombie	Donnelly	Knollenberg
Ackerman	Edwards	Kucinich
Aderholt	Ehlers	Kuhl (NY)
Allen	Ellison	LaHood
Altmore	Ellsworth	Lampson
Andrews	Emanuel	Langevin
Arcuri	Emerson	Lantos
Baca	Engel	Larsen (WA)
Baird	Eshoo	Larson (CT)
Baker	Etheridge	LaTourette
Baldwin	Everett	Lee
Barrow	Farr	Lewis (GA)
Bean	Fattah	Lipinski
Becerra	Ferguson	LoBiondo
Berkley	Filner	Loebsack
Berman	Fortenberry	Lofgren, Zoe
Berry	Frank (MA)	Lowey
Bishop (GA)	Gerlach	Lynch
Bishop (NY)	Giffords	Mahoney (FL)
Blumenauer	Gilchrest	Maloney (NY)
Boren	Gillibrand	Markey
Boswell	Gonzalez	Marshall
Boucher	Goode	Matheson
Boyd (FL)	Gordon	Matsui
Boysa (KS)	Graves	McCarthy (NY)
Brady (PA)	Green, Al	McCullom (MN)
Braley (IA)	Green, Gene	McDermott
Brown, Corrine	Grijalva	McGovern
Butterfield	Hall (NY)	McHugh
Camp (MI)	Hare	McIntyre
Capito	Harman	McNerney
Capps	Hastings (FL)	McNulty
Capuano	Hayes	Meek (FL)
Cardoza	Herseth Sandlin	Meeks (NY)
Carnahan	Higgins	Melancon
Carney	Hill	Michaud
Castle	Hinchey	Miller (MI)
Castor	Hinojosa	Miller (NC)
Chandler	Hirono	Miller, George
Clarke	Hodes	Mitchell
Clay	Holden	Mollohan
Cleaver	Holt	Moore (KS)
Clyburn	Honda	Moore (WI)
Cohen	Hooley	Moran (VA)
Conyers	Hoyer	Murphy (CT)
Cooper	Inslee	Murphy, Patrick
Costa	Israel	Murphy, Tim
Costello	Jackson (IL)	Murtha
Courtney	Jackson-Lee	Nadler
Cramer	(TX)	Napolitano
Crowley	Jefferson	Neal (MA)
Cuellar	Johnson (GA)	Obey
Cummings	Johnson (IL)	Olver
Davis (AL)	Johnson, E. B.	Ortiz
Davis (CA)	Jones (NC)	Pallone
Davis (IL)	Jones (OH)	Pascarella
Davis, Lincoln	Kagen	Pastor
Davis, Tom	Kanjorski	Payne
DeFazio	Kaptur	Perlmutter
DeGette	Kennedy	Peterson (MN)
Delahunt	Kildee	Petri
DeLauro	Kilpatrick	Pomeroy
Dent	Kind	Porter
Dicks	King (NY)	Price (NC)
Dingell	Kirk	Rahall
Doggett	Klein (FL)	Ramstad

Rangel	Shays	Tsangas
Regula	Shea-Porter	Turner
Reichert	Sherman	Udall (CO)
Renzi	Shuler	Udall (NM)
Reyes	Shuster	Upton
Richardson	Sires	Van Hollen
Rodriguez	Skelton	Velázquez
Rogers (AL)	Slaughter	Visclosky
Ross	Smith (NE)	Walsh (NY)
Rothman	Smith (NJ)	Walz (MN)
Royal-Allard	Smith (WA)	Wasserman
Rush	Snyder	Schultz
Ryan (OH)	Solis	Waters
Salazar	Space	Watt
Sánchez, Linda T.	Spratt	Waxman
Sanchez, Loretta	Stark	Weiner
Sarbanes	Stupak	Welch (VT)
Schakowsky	Sutton	Wexler
Schiff	Tanner	Wilson (OH)
Schwartz	Tauscher	Wolf
Scott (GA)	Taylor	Woolsey
Scott (VA)	Thompson (CA)	Wu
Serrano	Thompson (MS)	Wynn
Sestak	Tierney	Yarmuth
	Towns	Young (AK)

NAYS—147

Akin	Fossella	Musgrave
Alexander	Foxx	Myrick
Bachmann	Franks (AZ)	Neugebauer
Bachus	Frelinghuysen	Nunes
Barrett (SC)	Gallegly	Pearce
Bartlett (MD)	Garrett (NJ)	Pence
Barton (TX)	Gingrey	Peterson (PA)
Biggert	Gohmert	Pickering
Bilbray	Goodlatte	Pitts
Bilirakis	Granger	Platts
Blackburn	Hall (TX)	Poe
Blunt	Hastert	Price (GA)
Boehner	Hastings (WA)	Pryce (OH)
Bonner	Heller	Putnam
Boozman	Hensarling	Radanovich
Boustany	Herger	Rehberg
Brady (TX)	Hobson	Reynolds
Brown (GA)	Hoekstra	Rogers (KY)
Brown (SC)	Hulshof	Rogers (MI)
Brown-Waite,	Hunter	Rohrabacher
Ginny	Inglis (SC)	Ros-Lehtinen
Buchanan	Issa	Roskam
Burgess	Johnson, Sam	Royce
Burton (IN)	Jordan	Ryan (WI)
Buyer	Keller	Sali
Calvert	King (IA)	Saxton
Campbell (CA)	Kingston	Schmidt
Cannon	Kline (MN)	Sensenbrenner
Cantor	Lamborn	Shadegg
Carter	Latham	Shimkus
Chabot	Lewis (CA)	Simpson
Coble	Lewis (KY)	Smith (TX)
Cole (OK)	Linder	Souder
Conaway	Lucas	Stearns
Crenshaw	Lungren, Daniel E.	Sullivan
Culberson	Manzullo	Tancredo
Davis (KY)	Marchant	Terry
Davis, David	McCarthy (CA)	Thornberry
Deal (GA)	McCaul (TX)	Tiaht
Diaz-Balart, L.	McCotter	Tiberi
Diaz-Balart, M.	McCrery	Walberg
Doolittle	McDrake	Walden (OR)
Drake	McHenry	Wamp
Dreier	McKeon	Weldon (FL)
Duncan	McMorris	Westmoreland
English (PA)	Rodgers	Whitfield
Fallin	Mica	Wicker
Feeley	Miller (FL)	Wilson (NM)
Flake	Miller, Gary	Wilson (SC)
Forbes	Moran (KS)	Young (FL)

NOT VOTING—15

Bishop (UT)	Gutierrez	Paul
Bono	Jindal	Ruppersberger
Carson	Levin	Sessions
Cubin	Mack	Watson
Doyle	Oberstar	Weller

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The Speaker pro tempore (during the vote). Members are advised they now have less than 2 minutes remaining in which to cast their vote.

□ 1725

Mr. TURNER changed his vote from "nay" to "yea."

So the conference report was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 1102, I was unable to vote due to medical reasons. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, this afternoon I was unavoidably detained and could not cast my vote for H.R. 3074, on agreeing to the Conference Report for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing, and Urban Development and Related Agencies Appropriations for FY 2008.

Had I been able to cast my vote, I would have voted "yea" for H.R. 3074.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has agreed to without amendment a concurrent resolution of the House of the following title:

H. Con. Res. 258. Concurrent resolution directing the Clerk of the House of Representatives to correct the enrollment of H.R. 1429.

The message also announced that the Senate agrees to the report of the committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 1429) "An Act to reauthorize the Head Start Act, to improve program quality, to expand access, and for other purposes."

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4156, ORDERLY AND RESPONSIBLE IRAQ REDEPLOYMENT APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2008

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up H. Res. 818 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 818

Resolved, That upon the adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 4156) making emergency supplemental appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived except those arising under clause 9 or 10 of rule XXI. The bill shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions of the bill are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) two hours of debate equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations; and (2) one motion to recommit.

SEC. 2. During consideration of H.R. 4156 pursuant to this resolution, notwithstanding the operation of the previous question, the Chair may postpone further consideration of the bill to such time as may be designated by the Speaker.

□ 1730

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TIERNEY). The gentleman from Massachusetts is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER). All time yielded during consideration of the rule is for debate only.

I yield myself 6 minutes.

GENERAL LEAVE

I also ask unanimous consent that all Members be given 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on House Resolution 818.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Massachusetts?

There was no objection.

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 818 provides for consideration of H.R. 4156, the Orderly and Responsible Iraq Redeployment Appropriations Act of 2008. The rule provides 2 hours of debate and provides for one motion to recommit.

Mr. Speaker, the war in Iraq has gone on for nearly 5 years. Thousands of our brave men and women have lost their lives. Many more thousands have returned home with injuries so severe that they will require a lifetime of medical treatments.

We have spent hundreds of billions of dollars on the war, virtually none of it paid for, almost all of it on our national credit card. That means that the bill will be paid for not by us, but by our kids and our grandkids.

The war has diminished our standing in the world. It has distracted us from the war in Afghanistan, the very place where those responsible for 9/11 are now regrouping. And it has put incredible strain on the readiness of our Armed Forces.

The President of the United States and many of my Republican friends have argued fiercely over the years for a blank check. They want no strings, no conditions, no benchmarks, no end dates, no accountability, no nothing.

Today, they will tell us that the President's strategy is working; that the recent decrease in deaths and casualties in certain areas of Iraq prove it, and, therefore, we should provide yet another blank check.

Mr. Speaker, let me caution my friends about declaring "mission accomplished" yet again. While all of us pray that the violence continues to subside, we should also appreciate history enough to know that lulls in intense violence are not always permanent. Let me also state that the current levels of violence in Iraq are still unacceptable high.

As Joe Christoff of the Government Accountability Office recently testified, this recent reduction in violence should be put into the proper context as it coincides with increased sectarian cleansing and a massive refugee displacement. Let me quote:

"You know, we look at the attack data going down, but it's not taking into consideration that there might be fewer attacks because you have ethnically cleansed neighborhoods, particularly in the Baghdad area. It's pro-

duced 2.2 million refugees that have left, and it's produced 2 million internally displaced persons within the country as well."

Mr. Speaker, we must remember that the justification for the surge and the justification for the Bush military strategy in Iraq has always been to foster Iraqi political reconciliation. And there is precious little evidence of any such thing.

Over 10 months ago, President Bush said, "A successful strategy for Iraq goes beyond military operations. Ordinary Iraqi citizens must see that military operations are accompanied by visible improvements in their neighborhoods and communities. So America will hold the Iraqi Government to the benchmarks it has announced."

But, Mr. Speaker, as the GAO reported last month, "Iraq has not yet advanced key legislation on equitably sharing oil revenues and holding provincial elections. In addition, sectarian influences within Iraqi ministries continue while militia influences divide the loyalties of Iraqi security forces."

Mr. Speaker, the Maliki government continues to be corrupt, inept and without the support of the vast majority of the Iraqi people. When will the Bush administration live up to its word and hold the Iraqi Government accountable for its actions, or inaction?

The fundamental crisis facing Iraq remains the same: the inability of Sunnis, Shiites and Kurds to agree to set aside their sectarian divisions and live in peace. As long as we remain there indefinitely, Mr. Speaker, there is no incentive for anything to change.

Mr. Speaker, our soldiers have already given so much to create an opportunity for the Iraqi Government, an opportunity that that government has squandered. So, today, we are saying we want a different course. We reject the President's vision of an endless war that will cost more lives and bankrupt our Nation.

Today, we will vote on a bill that requires the redeployment of U.S. troops from Iraq to begin within 30 days of enactment, with a target for completion of December 15, 2008. It would prohibit the deployment of U.S. troops to Iraq who are not fully trained and equipped. And it changes the mission of our forces.

It also extends to all government agencies and personnel the limitations in the Army Field Manual on permissible interrogation techniques, which means that torture will be absolutely banned, and anyone who engages in such practices will be committing a crime under U.S. law, no ands, ifs or buts.

Mr. Speaker, it is no longer acceptable for Congress to simply write yet another blank check. It is not acceptable for the President to simply run out the clock and hand this problem off to his successor.

This is a war that George Bush started, and this is a war that he needs to end. For the sake of our troops, for the

sake of our country, we need to support this legislation. Enough is enough.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I rise to express my appreciation to my friend from Worcester for yielding me the customary 30 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, as I listened to my long-time Rules Committee colleague, the gentleman from Worcester, I am reminded of a great speech that was delivered last Friday. Last Friday, our very distinguished colleague, the Senator from Connecticut, JOE LIEBERMAN, in an address, said something that I think encapsulates exactly what we just heard from my very good friend.

Senator LIEBERMAN, in speaking of the Democratic Party, and he is now an independent Democrat, sometimes I see him listed as a Democrat, I know he organizes with the Democrats, he is listed as an independent as well, he said, "The Democrats are emotionally invested in a narrative of defeat."

Mr. Speaker, I have got to say as I listened to the words of my colleague from Worcester, I can't help but think that Senator LIEBERMAN was right on target when he used that language, "emotionally invested in a narrative of defeat." I was so struck with that when I heard it that I committed it to memory, and I think, again, it really takes on exactly what we have just heard.

It comes as no surprise that I rise in very, very strong, vigorous opposition to this rule and the underlying legislation as well. We have had 40 votes on Iraq policy, and today's bill brings us to vote No. 41. Not one, Mr. Speaker, not one of the withdrawal bills went through the normal legislative process. Not one, not one of these 41 measures is the product of a committee markup. Not one got its own hearing. Not one has been brought up under an even slightly open process, allowing for amendment, and consequently not allowing for any kind of real debate.

Mr. Speaker, most telling of all, not one has been enacted into law.

Now, we all know that the Democrats control both the House and the Senate, and still they cannot produce a single legislative victory on Iraq. Not once, not twice, not 10 times. Forty times. Mr. Speaker, 40 times we have gone through the motions of their failed, bankrupt strategy. I can't recall a more naked display of demagoguery.

Now we come to vote No. 41. It has all the hallmarks of the Democratic majority's work: no deliberation, no gesture towards bipartisanship, and no hope of being enacted.

But there is something different about the vote this time, and that is context. We are considering this vote in a much different context than we have the 40 previous votes that we have addressed on this. In fact, our colleague in the Senate, JOHNNY ISAKSON, Senator ISAKSON, said this debate was understandable in May. He said in July, it was questionable. He said now it is absolutely ridiculous.

For many months, the situation in Iraq has been very bleak. While there were many promising signs of progress, the turnaround in al Anbar province most notably, the overall picture was one of great challenges and struggles. I have argued repeatedly that a precipitous withdrawal would only create more challenges, and, Mr. Speaker, I have highlighted the signs of progress amid the struggles all along.

But today, the tide is turning in Iraq. We are seeing far more than pockets of success, as my friend has said. We are seeing a dramatic shift in the landscape. It began in al Anbar, as I have said. The Sunni sheiks there turned on al Qaeda, joined with the largely Shiite Iraqi army and with coalition forces, and reclaimed the province. Ramadi, its capital, the city that we have all heard of described as the most dangerous city in the world just a year ago, hasn't had an attack in 3 months. The city and the province are rebuilding. They are constructing small business centers so that the entrepreneurial spirit of Iraqis can flourish once again.

A delegation, including the Anbar governor, the Ramadi mayor, several prominent religious leaders and Ahmed Abu Risha, the brother of Sheik Sattar Abu Risha, the father of the Sunni Awakening, was just here in Washington a couple of weeks ago. They came here, Mr. Speaker, to spend several days receiving training in institution building, good governance, transparency and the rule of law.

Mr. Speaker, these are Anbar's political, business and religious leaders, not coming here to seek security assistance, not seeking military assistance. They have achieved security in al Anbar. Now what they want, Mr. Speaker, is help from us in their quest to build a democracy. But, most important of all, they are serving as a model for the rest of Iraq.

Prior to their trip, they participated with Shiite leaders in a summit in Karbala. Sheiks from Karbala and Najaf, Iraq's two holiest cities for Shiite Muslims, reached out to their Sunni brothers in Anbar and asked for their help in combating al Qaeda. This comes at a time when Sunni and Shiite leaders in Baghdad are reaching out to each other to begin the process of reconciliation as well.

Baghdad's notorious Adhamiya neighborhood that we have heard so much about, formerly the site of some of Iraq's worst sectarian violence, is now a place where Sunni and Shiite sheiks are meeting regularly to discuss how to bring their people together, just the things that my friend from Worcester said are so imperative. They are taking place at this very moment.

Now, all of this has been possible, Mr. Speaker, because of the dramatic drop in violence brought about by General Petraeus' counterinsurgency strategy. This strategy, which included the surge, has resulted in months of plummeting IED attacks, plummeting

American troop deaths, plummeting Iraqi civilian deaths, and plummeting sectarian attacks.

Many of my colleagues have pointed out that this has been the deadliest year for American troops yet in Iraq, and, Mr. Speaker, I will acknowledge that this has been the deadliest year for American troops in Iraq. And it is true over the past year we have tragically seen that great number. But that does not reflect what is happening now in this post-surge world.

□ 1745

The past few months have seen the most dramatic decline in the deaths of American troops because we have had a new strategy. Mr. Speaker, we have had a new strategy, and that strategy is working. And perhaps most important for all of us, that strategy has enabled our military commanders to begin a drawdown in U.S. troop levels.

Not because of artificial timetables. Not because of the micromanagement of Members of Congress from the comfort of our offices thousands of miles away from the front lines. But by empowering our commanders on the ground, they have created a stable security situation that is allowing for both the beginnings of Iraqi reconciliation and the safe withdrawal of our troops.

Mr. Speaker, the big question for today is this: Will the dramatic improvement in Iraq prove to be a true turning point or nothing more than a lull in the war? I don't know the answer to that. Neither outcome is a foregone conclusion. Whether it is a major turning point in the war or just a lull, no one knows for sure. What we do know now will profoundly affect the future of Iraq. Will we fund our troops and empower our commanders to continue to do what is best for our long-term interests? Or will we pull the rug out from under them now at the precise moment they have achieved what we have asked of them?

As one of my friends just said to me, it seems like our friends on the other side of the aisle want defeat before we can win.

For my colleagues who would resort to the latter option out of political expediency, Mr. Speaker, let me remind them of another war our men and women are fighting. Today our troops are also battling a very real enemy in Afghanistan.

We got a terrible reminder just a few days ago of the viciousness of that fight when six of our counterparts, members of the Afghan Parliament, were brutally targeted in the worst attack in Afghanistan's history, and I would like to express my appreciation for the bipartisan support that my colleague, DAVID PRICE, and I offered as leaders of the House Democracy Assistance Commission.

We have been working with those parliamentarians in Afghanistan, and we are hoping to work with those in Iraq as soon as possible. And we once

again express our condolences to the people of Afghanistan who have suffered the single worst attack in their nation's history when a week ago yesterday six parliamentarians and 44 other people were brutally murdered.

Let me also remind my colleagues that this war that we are seeing in Afghanistan is not our first war in Afghanistan. Many of us were intricately involved in their war against the Soviets in the 1980s, many Members who are still here today. And what did we do after the Soviets were defeated? We withdraw and left the Afghans to fend for themselves.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot forget that democracy is hard work. For over a decade, unfortunately, in Afghanistan we indulged in the luxury of ignoring what was going on there. And then on a sunny Tuesday six Septembers ago, 3,000 Americans paid a horrible price for that mistake.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot refuse to learn from history or we are doomed to repeat it. Our support for our troops in Iraq has earned us a far more stable, secure situation. And yet what does the Democratic leadership propose to do? Their bill would reward our military commanders' success by cutting them off.

It would provide constitutional protections for terrorists, while leaving our veterans, including Iraq veterans, without funding. It would force the same disastrous, shortsighted withdrawal that led to the terrorist sanctuary in Afghanistan. It would do all of this at a time when we are achieving not just pockets of success in Iraq but broad-based improvements, and at a time when Republicans have been trying every possible means to get an appropriations bill for our veterans to the President, which he will certainly sign if we can ever get it to him.

Mr. Speaker, the Democratic majority's priorities, foolhardy policies, and constitutional rights for terrorists have never been so out of whack. I suppose we can take comfort in the fact that this is all a meaningless charade that will never be enacted, because we all know this will never be enacted. But that is a hollow comfort when we consider our troops in harm's way and our veterans in need.

Mr. Speaker, it is a very cruel comfort for the families of those who have made incredible sacrifices in this war.

I often think of my good friend, Ed Blecksmith, a former marine and the father of JP Blecksmith, also a marine, who died in November 2004 just 3 years ago in the very famous battle of Fallujah. I have talked about the Blecksmith family here on the House floor many, many times. I didn't know JP, but from everything that I have read, and I have a recent article that has just come out about him, he was a very talented young man with a very bright future. He had so many opportunities before him, and he chose to be a marine because he wanted to serve as his father had done. His family proudly, but soberly, supported him. As a

former marine, Ed Blecksmith knew in a very real way the cost of war. JP Blecksmith would not return to his family, having made the ultimate sacrifice.

And his father said something to me that I will never forget. He looked me in the eye and asked me to make sure that we complete his son's mission in Iraq. He has said to me on countless occasions, You must complete the mission or my son JP will have died in vain.

Mr. Speaker, it is deeply heartening to see the beginnings of victory. And no, I am not saying "mission accomplished" or anything like that because we know full well that we have difficult days ahead. But it is deeply heartening to see the beginnings of victory in Iraq, for JP's sake and for the sake of all who have paid a very dear price.

We have a profound responsibility to allow our commanders to continue on this path.

Mr. Speaker, after 41, 41 wasted efforts, I can only hope that the Democratic leadership will finally abandon empty demagoguery for substantive legislation, meaningful debate, and a quest at bipartisanship so we can work with the President to come to an agreement. Until that time, I urge my colleagues to reject this closed rule and the terribly wrongheaded policy that it seeks to shield.

[From Details, Holiday 2007]

THE FALLEN: 2ND LIEUTENANT JP
BLECKSMITH, 24

(By Jeff Gordinier)

On the night before 2nd Lieutenant JP Blecksmith shipped out to Iraq, after his family took him out for dinner in Newport Beach, California, his older brother, Alex, picked up a pair of clippers and shaved JP's head. When that was done and JP looked ready for combat, Alex gave his brother a hug. Then Alex climbed into JP's green Ford Expedition and drove it north, back to the family's house in San Marino, weeping part of the way. He had a feeling. So did his parents. A premonition. They didn't talk about it much, but two months later, in November 2004, when JP joined a wave of U.S. Marines roaring into the city of Fallujah as part of Operation Phantom Fury, the feeling intensified.

On the night of November 10, Blecksmith and his closest friend in Iraq, Lieutenant Sven Jensen, slept on a rooftop in Fallujah. It was, miraculously, a quiet night, and chilly. They got a decent night's sleep. They awoke just before sunrise and were amused to find a small pet bird with green wings and a yellow belly perched a couple of feet away from their faces. Jensen took a picture of the bird. There were other ones like it all over Iraq, because when U.S. troops were searching abandoned houses, they often found cages that had been left behind. The soldiers let the birds go free so they wouldn't starve to death.

Hours before, JP had sent a letter to his girlfriend, addressing it formally, as always, to "Ms. Emily M. Tait." In it he wrote, "By the time you receive this, you will know we have gone into the city. We've been preparing for it the last few days, and my guys are ready for the fight, and I'm ready to lead them. It'll be hectic, and there will be some things out of my control, but the promise of

you waiting at home for me is inspiring and a relief." Now he was in the thick of it. Blecksmith and Jensen came down from the roof, ate their MREs for breakfast, and got their orders. Before the invasion the battalion commander, Colonel Patrick Malay, had given his men an analogy: "Imagine a dirty, filthy windowpane that has not been cleaned in hundreds of years," he recalls saying. "That's how we looked at the city of Fallujah. Our job was to scrub the heck out of that city, and then take a squeegee and wipe it off so that it was clean and pure." Most of Fallujah was empty, and anyone left in the city was presumed to be an insurgent.

Blecksmith and the other members of the India Company of the Third Battalion, Fifth Marines Regiment, moved south through the city, with their blood types scrawled in indelible marker on the sleeves of their uniforms. The streets smelled terrible—a stubborn aroma of rotting food and bodies. Late in the day on November 11, things started to go wrong. A marine in Blecksmith's platoon, Klayton South, was shot in the mouth by an insurgent when he kicked open the door of a house. Blood gushed from his mangled teeth and tongue. The medics cut into South's throat to give him an emergency tracheotomy. (He survived. He's since had more than 40 operations to repair the damage.) "It shook the platoon up," Jensen says now, "and JP was the most in-control person I saw. He had a sector to clear, so he rallied his guys and said, 'Okay, we've got to continue clearing.'" Blecksmith's and Jensen's platoons moved off in different directions, and the two friends shot each other a glance. "I'll never forget looking at his eyes the last time I saw him," Jensen says. "He turned and he gave me almost an apprehensive look, like, Oh, s-it, we've got some s-it going on. I wanted to say 'Hey, I'll see you later.' But I didn't say anything to him."

Minutes later, Blecksmith led his platoon into a house and climbed a flight of stairs to the roof to survey the surrounding landscape. Shots came from a building across the street. Blecksmith stood up to direct the squads under his command, shouting at them to take aim at the enemy nest. He was tall, and was now visible above the protective wall. "He was up front a lot, and he made a big target, and we'd talked to him about that," Colonel Malay says. "He exposed himself consistently to enemy fire in the execution of his duties. He displayed a fearlessness to the point that we had to talk to him about the fact that nobody is bulletproof."

As Blecksmith stood on the roof, a sniper's 7.62-mm bullet found one of the places on his body where he was vulnerable. It was a spot on his left shoulder, less than an inch above the rim of his protective breastplate. The bullet sliced downward diagonally, coming to rest in his right hip, and along the way it tore through his heart. "I'm hit," Blecksmith said. He fell. He raised his head for a moment, and that was it. A Navy medic got to Blecksmith immediately, but he was already dead, and his men carried his heavy body back down the stairs. He was 24.

That night in San Marino, Alex Blecksmith came home from work and noticed that the house was dark. He opened the front door and saw his mother, Pam, sitting at the kitchen table with a couple of marines in dress blues and white gloves, and he heard the phrase "We regret to inform you . . ."

The funeral was so magnificent, so full of pageantry, that at times it was difficult for Alex to remember that the guy being buried was his brother. The Marines do it right when it comes to honoring the fallen. They do it so right that you can get swept up in the ceremony and feel as though you're watching a parade. The funeral took place at the Church of Our Saviour in San Gabriel—

the church where the most celebrated of San Marino's favorite sons, General George S. Patton, had been baptized as a baby. As the flag-draped casket was carried out of the sanctuary and into the California sun, a long, silent line of almost 2,000 people followed. There were marines and midshipmen and local firefighters in uniform. There was a 21-gun salute. Four World War II fighter planes swooped toward the cemetery in the "missing man" formation—just as they passed over the funeral, the fourth plane symbolically split from the quartet and veered into the sky. A bagpiper played a Scottish dirge. One of JP's old friends would later observe that the day, in all of its glory and pomp, made him think of Princess Diana's wedding.

As public support for the war in Iraq wavers, it's easy to forget that people like JP Blecksmith even exist. The American military is so predominantly blue-collar that we tend to assume that the sons and daughters of the rich never voluntarily die in warfare anymore. Blecksmith was born in September 1980, just weeks before his state's own Ronald Reagan was elected president, and he spent most of his youth in the small Los Angeles County town of San Marino during what felt, for many of its wealthy and conservative inhabitants, like something of a "Leave It to Beaver" golden age. To look at a photograph of him, blue-eyed and suntanned and grinning, is to understand the enduring magnetism of the word "California." He stood six foot three and weighed 225 pounds. His chest was a keg; his biceps were gourds. His biography reads as though it were scripted by a Hollywood publicist: legendary quarterback on the Flintridge Prep football team, track star, graduate of the United States Naval Academy.

His father, Ed Blecksmith, who is 64, runs an executive-recruiting firm in Los Angeles. He and Pam met in the early seventies, while both were working in the White House. Along a wall leading into their kitchen hang framed Christmas cards from Dick and Pat Nixon. "Here's a kid," Ed says, "who didn't need to do this." It's as though JP were transplanted into our world from the Eisenhower years. Somehow, in an ironic age of Jon Stewart and "South Park," the guy grew up in a kind of pre-Summer of Love bubble in which young men of strength and valor still yearned to distinguish themselves on the battlefield. He was groomed, in a sense, for something that no longer exists, at least not for guys who grow up in the wealthiest zip codes in the country. He believed in ideals of duty and sacrifice that have become, for many men, anachronistic and even unfathomable.

"I was in awe," says Peter Twist, Blecksmith's closest friend since preschool. Twist played wide receiver to Blecksmith's quarterback on the Flintridge Prep football team; a local newspaper called the duo "Fire & Ice." Blecksmith was known for being fast, composed, smart, and unflappable, and his giant arms could propel the ball a good 80 yards down the field. If he had an athletic flaw, it was that he was aware of his own flawlessness. "He had such personal confidence," says Tom Fry, a mentor to Blecksmith in high school and one of the assistant coaches on his team. "He felt that if all the stars aligned, there was nothing he couldn't do—it was JP's world." When they graduated in 1999, Twist and a couple other teammates went off to the University of Arizona, where it's safe to say the prospect of partying was on their minds, while Blecksmith opted for the rigors and restrictions of Annapolis. "I was stoked for the man" says Twist, 26, who lives in Newport Beach and works in the mortgage business. "Most of us are still trying to figure it out, but JP always had a goal."

November 11, the date on which JP Blecksmith died, was noteworthy for other reasons. It's Twist's birthday. It also happens to be the birthday of General Patton, who grew up in San Marino and holds a prominent place in the town's history. This coincidence has only bolstered the mythology of JP Blecksmith—a feeling that it was his destiny to die in combat. The Blecksmiths have a statue of Patton on a shelf in their home, and it becomes clear in conversation that Ed, a decorated Vietnam veteran himself, sees a kind of mystical link between the fate of his son and the military triumphs of the legendary general (who was a passionate believer, it just so happens, in reincarnation).

Indeed, JP Blecksmith fit the "hero" mold in such classic, square jawed American style that a kind of cult of JP has begun to develop in San Marino. They give out awards in his name at the local schools. On the Fourth of July, San Marino hosts a JP Blecksmith 5K run. A Marine Corps training center in Pasadena has been christened Blecksmith Hall. On a hot Sunday morning this past August, Alex parked his brother's Expedition in the cemetery and walked across the grass to the pale granite stone that says JAMES PATRICK BLECKSMITH. An elderly man wandered over to the headstone, hand in hand with a grade-school kid who had a blond Mohawk, and told Alex, "I never met JP, but I go by here and show my grandson his grave."

THREE YEARS AFTER BLECKSMITH'S death, his bedroom still looks the way it did when he left for Annapolis in 1999. There's a Green Bay Packers poster over the bed, a dense forest of athletic trophies, toy race cars lined up on the dresser. "This is all his stuff from Iraq that they sent over," Alex says, looking down at a cardboard box on the floor. "We haven't gone through it, really."

Ed Blecksmith walks into the bedroom, and within a few seconds his voice is cracking and his blue eyes are growing wet. "It's still tough," he says. "You see all these pictures and things . . ." He insists on sitting down in front of the TV downstairs and watching DVD footage of that magnificent funeral, fighting back a sob at the moment when one of the eulogists, a Navy SEAL, describes JP as having been "the best of the best." Ed has some Fox News footage, too. In it, you can see JP speaking to his men hours before the battle in Fallujah, and that's where you get a brief glimpse of the regular guy behind the mythology. Because there stands JP, in fatigues and a floppy Boonie hat, holding a map, telling his marines to "expect everything you can possibly imagine." When he looks at the camera for a moment, he's smiling.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 20 seconds.

Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from California mischaracterized my position and what I am invested in. I am invested in what is best for this country, Mr. DREIER. And I am invested in what is best for our troops. And I am opposed to this Bush policy of an endless war, and I think it would be a mistake for this Congress to give this President another blank check.

This is not a meaningful charade, Mr. DREIER. Those of us who are arguing for this legislation want to bring this war to an end.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MATSUI).

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Massachusetts for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, today's debate is not about political calculation. It is not about public appearance or ready-made slogans. It is not about approval ratings or polls.

Today's debate is about the very future of this country that each one of us loves so dearly. It is a fork in the road. It is a rare opportunity for each of us to chart the course of the Nation we serve by casting a single vote.

Today we can vote for the status quo in Iraq or we can vote for change. For me, this choice is simple. I will vote for change.

The war in Iraq has divided our country for nearly 5 years, longer than our participation in World War II. Its monetary cost has already reached dizzying heights. Measured in casualties lost, lives forever altered, the toll of this war is truly staggering.

That is why we must transcend politics and party loyalty when we vote today. An issue of this magnitude requires each one of us as Members of Congress to vote based on our conscience and obligation to represent our constituents.

Mr. Speaker, on this issue my conscience and my constituents speak loud and clear. They say, We must end this war. Bring our troops home and work to restore our international reputation.

I stand here today in support of this rule and the underlying legislation because it accomplishes each of these three goals:

Within 30 days of enactment, it requires an immediate and orderly redeployment of our military from Iraq. No more delays, Mr. Speaker.

With today's bill, Congress stands with the American people in demanding a swift and responsible conclusion to military engagement in Iraq.

I also support this legislation because of what it does in the long term. It recognizes that we have a moral and strategic obligation to help rebuild Iraq, to avoid leaving a country in shambles.

The legislation before us today requires a comprehensive, diplomatic, political, and economic strategy for Iraq. We must work with our international partners to bring stability to Iraq, and this legislation does so. A renewed commitment to diplomacy is not only the right thing to do to fulfill our commitment to the Iraqi people, it also begins restoring our Nation's standing in the world.

I urge all of my colleagues to stand with the American people by voting for the bill before us today. This legislation takes a strong step forward in ending this long and costly war. In doing so, it is worthy of this House, worthy of the constituents we all serve, and worthy of the sacrifices of our soldiers and their families.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, as I prepare to yield 4 minutes to my distin-

guished friend from Redlands, I would simply say that my friend from Worcester never mentioned the word "victory" in his analysis.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the distinguished ranking member of the Appropriations Committee.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TIERNEY). The Chair advises all Members that prefatory remarks before yielding time will be deducted from their time.

Mr. LEWIS of California. I appreciate the Speaker's help in this matter, but in the meantime, I appreciate my colleague yielding.

Mr. Speaker, the wheels have finally come off the appropriations process. One need only to look at the sorry state of affairs in which we find ourselves as we address these appropriations bills.

Earlier today, the House passed a Transportation-HUD appropriations conference report that is \$3 billion over the budget request. The President has said he will veto this legislation.

Tomorrow the House will vote to sustain the President's veto on a bloated Labor-HHS bill that is \$10 billion over the budget request. That will essentially send the bill back to the drawing board.

And if that is not enough, consider this. It is now 3 days after Veterans Day and there is still no sign of the majority moving to consider the MilCon-VA bill, a freestanding bill identical to the MilCon-VA conference report that was removed from the Labor-HHS conference report by a point of order in the Senate, by the way, in the other body.

That bill was introduced by Congressman WICKER this week. This legislation, which the President said he would sign, could be brought to the House floor today. It now appears that a Democrat majority has no intent of bringing this legislation to the floor before Thanksgiving.

The appropriations process this year has been reduced to what Shakespeare might refer to as "a tale full of sound and fury, signifying nothing."

For all of the time and energy put into these bills this year by Members and our overworked, highly professional staff, the end result thus far is all sound and fury and very little to show for it.

That leads us to the legislation we are now considering, the so-called bridge fund. Frankly, that legislation is so ill-conceived and damaging to our troops, I hardly know where to begin.

First, let me say that we learned that this bill would be considered by the Rules Committee while we were waiting for the Rules Committee hearing on the THUD conference report to begin last night. I was given no notice whatsoever, nor was I provided any opportunity to testify. It is a sad state of affairs when the ranking member of the Appropriations Committee isn't even given the courtesy of paper notice

to testify on legislation as important as this. I can't imagine the wails and screaming I would have heard last year if the ranking member had been put in that position.

The House is being asked to consider a funding bill that reflects the priorities of Speaker PELOSI and a deeply divided, extremely left-leaning Democratic Caucus. It attempts to bridge these widening divisions over the war in Iraq through providing funding only on the condition that troops are withdrawn beginning 30 days after the bill's enactment.

□ 1800

Our troops are badly in need of funding to continue their mission, but this legislation ties the hands of our Commander in Chief during a time of war, places military decisions in the hands of the politicians, and micromanages our combatant commanders in whom we place the ultimate responsibility for prosecuting military actions.

If the majority's goal is to end the war or withdraw our troops, then that should be addressed in separate legislation. The majority cannot have it both ways, pretending on the one hand to support our troops while on the other hand undercutting our ability to prosecute their mission.

Men and women of good conscience can disagree about the war in Iraq, but on one thing we must all agree: Our men and women in uniform must continue to receive our unqualified support and the resources they need to complete their mission successfully.

By appeasing the wishes of the Out of Iraq Caucus, the Democrat majority has chosen to place partisan politics above the lives and well-being of our troops in harm's way. This action is reckless and irresponsible. There is absolutely no reason why a clean bridge fund could not have been included within the DOD conference report which the President signed yesterday. Again, the Democrat majority chose to place politics ahead of our troops.

My colleagues, consider carefully the consequences of our actions here today. Passage of the bridge fund legislation in its present form will signal to the insurgents and terrorists that the United States doesn't have the political will to continue supporting the fledgling Iraqi democracy. Al Qaeda and other enemies of freedom will simply lay in wait until our troops are withdrawn. And with the collapse of this fragile democracy, our efforts, and the sacrifices of our troops, will have been for nothing.

There is no question that the President will veto this bill. In the meantime, our troops will face the uncertainty resulting from the majority's mixed signals and lack of a clear commitment.

I urge my colleagues to support our troops and oppose this legislation.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Wisconsin, the chairman

of the Appropriations Committee (Mr. OBEY).

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, the last person in the world I will take lectures from on the appropriations process is the gentleman from California. The fact is that when he was the chairman of the Appropriations Committee last year, they never bothered to send any veterans health care legislation to the President at all. They simply, after the election, shut down the Congress and went home without sending one dime to veterans.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Would my colleague yield?

Mr. OBEY. No, I will not. You've had your time.

Mr. Speaker, I would appreciate not being interrupted. It's a technique which they use on that side of the aisle time after time. I hope it comes out of their time, not mine.

The fact is that they never bothered to send a dime to the needy veterans of the country. And so it was only after the Democrats took control of the House that we added \$3.4 billion to the veterans health care budget and sent it to the President, and then later in the year in the regular bill, we have added \$3.6 billion more. So I will be happy to compare the record of this party with his party any time on the issue of veterans health care.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire of the Chair how much time is remaining on each side.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from California has 9 minutes remaining. The gentleman from Massachusetts has 19½ minutes remaining.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, at this time I would like to yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER).

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the rule and the bill because I believe it does two critical and important things.

First, it provides \$50 billion to finance military withdrawal from Iraq, to be completed by the end of next year. I voted against the beginning of the war, and I have consistently tried to end America's involvement in the war. Saddam Hussein is gone, there were no weapons of mass destruction, and there was no Iraqi involvement with al Qaeda or with 9/11. Al Qaeda in Iraq is now in shatters and subject to attack by both Shiites and Sunnis and poses no ongoing threat to the United States. We have no stake in the Iraqi civil war, and it is time to end our occupation.

I signed a letter to the President back in July with over 60 of my colleagues vowing not to support any more money for the war in Iraq unless it was for the protection and redeployment of our troops. I believe this bill is consistent with that commitment. The time has come to end the war, and the money we provide should be used only for that purpose.

The second critical thing this bill does is to end torture by the United States Government. By including in this bill the American Anti-Torture Act, which was introduced by Representative DELAHUNT and myself, we are saying, once and for all, no more torture. The law now requires the Department of Defense to follow the Army Field Manual, which bars torture or cruel and inhuman procedures such as waterboarding. This bill extends these limits to every U.S. government agency, including the CIA, and ensures a single, uniform, baseline standard for all interrogations of people under U.S. control. In short, that means no more waterboarding, no more clever wordplay, no more evasive answers, and no more uncertainty with regard to what is allowed and what is not allowed. It is time to restore the honor of the United States and to force the administration to act in a manner consistent with the Constitution.

When this bill is passed, the President could have two options: He could sign this bill and help bring the war in Iraq to a speedy end. Or he could veto the bill, in which case he will have to explain why he is denying funds for the troops. But we will not vote for further funding without a requirement to withdraw the troops as in this bill.

Mr. Speaker, let's end this war and let's end torture. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I am happy to yield 5 minutes to my very good friend from Columbus, Indiana (Mr. PENCE), a hardworking member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

(Mr. PENCE asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PENCE. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I rise in opposition to the rule and the bill.

The tide is turning in Iraq, Mr. Speaker, but nothing changes on Capitol Hill. Here we go again. Another Democrat plan for redeployment from Iraq, tying some \$50 billion in necessary combat funds to a Democrat plan for withdrawal.

With unambiguous evidence of progress on the ground in Iraq, the Democrats in Congress seem to have added denial to their agenda of retreat and defeat. And the evidence of our progress is unambiguous.

I have seen many different Iraqs in my five trips, some hopeful, some not hopeful. But the news coming out of Iraq just in recent days from independent and official sources is encouraging.

U.S. military fatalities are down sharply: 101 Americans lost their lives in uniform in June; 39 in October. Iraqi civilian deaths are down sharply: 1,791 casualties in August; 750 in October. Mortar rocket attacks by insurgents in October were the lowest since February 2006. Iraqi officials say they plan to reduce checkpoints, ease curfews, and

open some roads around Baghdad because of the improving security situation. And this weekend, the government of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki said that sectarian violence between Shia and Sunni in the neighborhoods of Baghdad has declined by more than 75 percent in the last 12 months. And yet here we are again, another plan for retreat and defeat in Iraq.

And it is not just the official sources that say we have made progress. The Associated Press just reported, "Twilight brings traffic jams to the main shopping district of this once affluent corner of Baghdad, and hundreds of people stroll past well-stocked vegetable stands, bakeries, and butcher shops."

The Washington Post recently wrote, "The number of attacks against U.S. soldiers has fallen to levels not seen since before the February 2006 bombing of a Shia shrine in Samarra that touched off waves of sectarian killing."

And the New York Times noted just last week, "'American forces have routed al Qaeda in Mesopotamia, the Iraqi militant network from every neighborhood in Baghdad,' a top general reported today, 'allowing American troops involved in the surge to depart as planned.'

I urge my colleagues to reject again this Democrat plan for withdrawal as a part of the supplemental appropriations bill, but I urge my countrymen to give our soldiers a chance. Freedom and stability are beginning to take hold in Iraq. We cannot lose faith in ourselves or in our fighting men and women.

It would be Winston Churchill who exhorted his own people as follows: "Nothing can save England if she will not save herself. If we lose faith in ourselves, in our capacity to guide and govern, if we lose our will to live, then indeed our story is told. If, while on all sides foreign nations are every day asserting a more aggressive and militant nationalism by arms and trade, we remain paralyzed by our own theoretical doctrines or plunged into the stupor of after-war exhaustion, then indeed all the croakers predict will come true and our ruin will be swift and final." So said the man who saved western civilization.

To my countrymen and to my colleagues, I say again: Reject this legislation, give our soldiers in a widening and undeniable success in Iraq a chance, and we will all, Republicans and Democrats, celebrate some day a free and democratic Iraq that will be a legacy for our children and our grandchildren for generations to come.

Mr. MC GOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 15 seconds.

The gentleman says give the Iraqi Government a chance. We are on our fifth year, Mr. Speaker. Three American soldiers lost their lives in Iraq yesterday, bringing the total to 3,858 deaths. I think we have given them more than a chance.

Mr. Speaker, at this point I would like to yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. SUTTON).

Ms. SUTTON. I thank the gentleman for the time.

All of us in this Chamber and in this Nation support our troops. They have fought bravely, with love of this great country uppermost in their hearts. They have done all that we have asked them to do. They have done their job well. And now in this Congress, Mr. Speaker, we must do ours.

The President has indicated that he thinks this war will continue for another decade. But, Mr. Speaker, we must not concede to a 10-year war. Over 3,850 brave American lives have been lost; 163 Ohio soldiers have been killed; more than 28,000 of our Nation's finest have been wounded. The year 2007 has been the deadliest year for U.S. troops since this war began 4½ years ago.

Our troops have been stretched woefully thin, exposing this Nation to greater risk, not less. We have already spent over \$450 billion on the war in Iraq. The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office has estimated that the President's war policies could cost \$2.4 trillion in the next decade. And the President insists in getting that money that it come with no strings, no oversight, no accountability, no questions asked. And, in return, he offers to the American people and to our brave troops no end in sight. It is time for a new direction. We must not proceed further down the road to a 10-year war.

This bill requires a transition in the mission of U.S. forces in Iraq from combat to force and diplomatic protection. It provides for targeted counter-terrorism operations. And this bill prohibits deployment to Iraq of troops who are not fully equipped and fully trained. It prohibits the use of torture, as described in the Army Field Manual. And it changes direction from the 10-year war plan being offered by the President toward a responsible plan redeploying our troops, while providing our troops with the resources they need.

When I visited Iraq, I saw some of the hardships and the obstacles our troops face, and I also saw the commitment and dedication in each of those men and women. They truly took my breath away. They deserve a policy that is worthy of their commitment and their sacrifice.

The bill before us today gives our troops the support, the equipment, the training they need to responsibly redeploy. It repairs the readiness of our military and refocuses our efforts on fighting terrorism around the world.

Last November, people across the Nation cast their ballots seeking a change in direction. After more than 4 years and countless taxpayer dollars, this Congress has a responsibility to tell this President that the status quo is not acceptable. It's time to bring a responsible end to the war in Iraq and to focus on fighting terrorism and protecting the Nation.

□ 1815

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 1 minute.

I will say to my colleagues that it's very interesting to listen to this debate, because as we've proceeded, I have yet to hear the word "victory" come from the other side of the aisle at all. I have yet to hear anyone interested in trying to build a democracy.

Now, we saw three elections take place in Iraq, as we all know, with a 70 percent voter turnout.

We know that there are problems there. My friend from Worcester correctly said that we have problems with corruption in government in Iraq. We've had corruption problems in this country as well. But the fact of the matter is we have seen dramatic improvement. There is no doubt about the fact that we've seen improvement.

And I've got to say, Mr. Speaker, that we continue to hear this term "re-deployment." That means one thing. It doesn't mean victory. It doesn't mean build a democracy. It means withdraw and lose. And I will tell you, Mr. Speaker, we are determined to ensure that that doesn't happen.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MC GOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DOGGETT).

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, some refer to this as a bridge fund connecting monies from one year to the next to finance this Iraq war.

A bridge is built to overcome an obstacle, and the obstacle here is George Bush. Granting this President 50 billion more dollars without reasonable restrictions to end this war is just building another bridge to nowhere.

Today, instead, we use this funding to build a bridge that brings our troops home by beginning a safe, orderly, phased redeployment from Iraq.

The President can no longer defy our Constitution as the sole "decider." America has decided that he's wrong, dead wrong, too many deaths wrong, and it's elected representatives in this Congress are now declaring "no more blank checks."

Despite the sacrifices of our troops in this deadliest year of the war, this surge has failed completely to achieve its purpose of political progress. "Retreat," you say; you've had a 5-year retreat from political reality. Progress, you say; not in Iraq, not in political reconciliation; progress, perhaps only in your self-defeating propaganda as you repeatedly waved your "mission accomplished" banner.

The continued cost of this war in hemorrhaged blood and \$3 billion of taxpayer money every week is not acceptable or sustainable.

Mr. President, no more "cut-and-run". We will not cut these reasonable restrictions from this legislation, and we will not run from your veto threat.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TIERNEY). All Members are advised to address their remarks to the Chair.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 15 seconds, and I do so to say I still have yet to hear the term “victory” come from the other side of the aisle. I still have yet to hear anyone talk about the notion of building a democracy in Iraq so that self-determination and the rule of law and the building of democratic institutions can, in fact, have a chance to succeed. And there is no recognition of the fact that we have seen a tremendous number of reduction in IED attacks, and the number of overall attacks has dropped dramatically.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURU).

Ms. DELAURU. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this bill to change the mission of the United States Armed Forces in Iraq and undertake their redeployment. It is time to set a real plan to end this war, fought courageously by our troops on the ground, but recklessly mismanaged by our administration at home.

2007 has been the deadliest year for American troops since the start of the war in Iraq; 860 U.S. casualties since January. And almost 1 year after the President announced a so-called surge, the Iraqi Government has made no progress toward political reconciliation and is nowhere near taking responsibility for security in all of its provinces.

Without any progress or end in sight, the cost of the war continues to rise. The recent Joint Economic Committee report estimates the cost of the war at \$1.3 trillion from 2002 to 2008; yet just this week the President vetoed critical funds for education, job training and health care, and, yes, he vetoed the children’s health care bill.

With its latest \$200 billion request for wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the administration has asked for a total of \$800 billion, all paid for with the government’s credit card.

Mr. Speaker, with this bill we put forth a plan and a clear path toward change. We require the start of the redeployment of U.S. forces within 30 days of enactment, with a goal for completion of redeployment by December 15, 2008.

It prohibits the deployment of U.S. troops to Iraq who are not fully trained and fully equipped, and changes the mission of U.S. forces in Iraq to diplomatic and force protection, targeted counterterrorism operations, and limited support to Iraqi security forces. And notably, the bill prohibits torture once and for all.

We provide \$50 billion to meet the immediate needs of the troops in Iraq and Afghanistan and defer consideration of the remainder of the President’s request.

The President and his stubborn Republican allies in the Congress have acted recklessly in Iraq and with our Nation’s standing in the world. And the American people pay the price. Our

young men and women are paying the price.

The Bush administration rushed to war and never had an exit strategy. If we, in the Congress, do not provide one, who will?

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I’ve still not heard the term “victory” or “building democracy.”

I would inquire of the Chair, how much time is remaining on each side?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from California has 3½ minutes remaining. The gentleman from Massachusetts has 10¼ minutes remaining.

Mr. DREIER. I think at this juncture I might reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, let me yield myself 30 seconds.

Mr. Speaker, I and everybody in this Chamber, hopefully, wants to see democracy flourish in Iraq. But the fact of the matter is that the status quo isn’t producing that. And maybe, just maybe, the corrupt and inept Maliki government will get its act together if it finally realizes that we won’t be there forever, that this will not be an endless war.

Our troops have sacrificed enough. They have sacrificed enough.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2¼ minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the American people get it. Over 50 percent of the American people believe that we should now begin a reduction of our troops.

As I listened here on the floor of the house, and I listened to my good friends on the other side of the aisle claiming the me-me’s and the I-I’s, I hear no one talking about victory.

Victory in what sense? So that we can pound our chests and brag about what this Congress and this President has done?

We’re talking about lives here. We’re talking about lives. And I am sick and tired of listening to people bragging about who can claim a victory.

Well, my belief is that the soldiers on the battlefield, the most deadliest year that we’ve ever had, 2006, we buried more than we could ever imagine. Those soldiers have already claimed victory. They took Fallujah. They took Baghdad.

And my concern is why have we not championed the victory of those soldiers? Why haven’t we welcomed them home, given them accolades because they have been victorious?

Someone on the other side has not read this bill. This bill allows for a redeployment in an orderly manner, and it demands that the President use these dollars to redeploy.

I am not going to trample on the graves of dead soldiers and continue a war that has no end. That government has the ability in Iraq to diplomatically deal with democracy. We have died so they can deal with democracy.

It is time to end this war now and to bring our soldiers home with the dignity and victory they deserve.

Right now, in the Nation’s hospitals, we are seeing the results of his victory. We are seeing soldiers with brain injury, soldiers with no limbs. And we have a broken health care system that can’t even address the question of those soldiers with posttraumatic stress brain injury and otherwise.

My voice is gone, but I am tired of this question of victory because I believe, and I have a bill, and I ask my good friend from California to join it, the Military Success Act of 2007 that chronicles the victories of our soldiers.

We can bring them home with dignity. I am not going to tolerate one more dead body. And it is time to end this war and end it now.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4156, introduced by my colleague, Mr. OBEY. I would like to thank him for his ongoing leadership as chairman of the Committee on Appropriations, and on this important issue in particular.

The legislation we are considering today provides our troops with the resources they need, but it does not give the President the blank check he has asked for to fund an endless combat operation in Iraq. Instead of his additional \$200 billion, we are considering a \$50 billion package, which institutes a redeployment timeline, as well as other critical directives designed to transition our role in Iraq and bring our troops home.

Madam Speaker, the funds provided by this legislation are, crucially, tied to a requirement for the immediate start of the redeployment of U.S. forces. It sets December 15, 2008, as the target date for the completion of the redeployment, and requires redeployment to begin within 30 days of enactment.

As lawmakers continue to debate U.S. policy in Iraq, our heroic young men and women continue to willingly sacrifice life and limb on the battlefield. Our troops in Iraq did everything we asked them to do. We sent them overseas to fight an army; they are now caught in the midst of an insurgent civil war and continuing political upheaval. The United States will not and should not permanently prop up the Iraqi Government and military. U.S. military involvement in Iraq will come to an end, and, when U.S. forces leave, the responsibility for securing their nation will fall to Iraqis themselves. However, whether or not my colleagues agree that the time has come to withdraw our American forces from Iraq, I believe that all of us in Congress should be of one accord that our troops deserve our sincere thanks and congratulations.

For this reason, I extremely please to have worked with the Democratic leadership to include language recognizing the extraordinary achievements of our men and women in uniform. Paragraph 2 of Title I reads, “the performance of United States military personnel in Iraq and Afghanistan should be commended, their courage and sacrifice have been exceptional, and when they come home, their service should be recognized appropriately.” I believe that the inclusion of this language makes it clear that we are proud of the accomplishments of our troops, and we look forward to commanding them as they return safely home.

I also worked with the Leadership to include the language in Paragraph 3 of Title 1. This paragraph reads, “the primary purpose of funds made available by this Act should be to transition the mission of United States Armed Forces in Iraq and undertake their redeployment, and not to extend or prolong the war.” This language makes explicit that this legislation is providing funding for the safe and responsible redeployment of our troops, not for the continuation of combat operations.

This legislation protects our troops, by providing them with the funding they need to safely and successfully redeploy from Iraq. It also prohibits the deployment of forces to Iraq who are not fully trained and fully equipped. In addition, this legislation includes an extension to all U.S. Government agencies and personnel of the current prohibition in the Army Field Manual against the use of certain interrogation techniques.

Mr. Speaker, this bill contains important language that changes the mission of U.S. forces in Iraq to diplomatic and force protection, targeted counterterrorism operations, and limited support to Iraqi security forces. I firmly believe that we must make diplomacy and statecraft tools of the first, rather than the last, resort. We must seek constructive engagement with Iraq, its neighbors, and the rest of the international community, as we work to bring resolution to this calamitous conflict that has already gone on far too long.

Because of my deeply held belief that we must commend our military for their exemplary performance and success in Iraq, I have introduced legislation, H.R. 4020, with the support of a number of my colleagues, entitled the “Military Success in Iraq Commemoration Act of 2007.” This legislation recognizes the extraordinary performance of the Armed Forces in achieving the military objectives of the United States in Iraq, encourages the President to issue a proclamation calling upon the people of the United States to observe a national day of celebration commemorating the military success of American troops in Iraq, and provides other affirmative and tangible expressions of appreciation from a grateful Nation to all veterans of the war in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, we have already expended 3,500 American lives and \$400 billion in taxpayer dollars in Iraq. We have occupied the country for over 4 years. And our President continues to push a strategy devoid of clear direction and visible targets, while rejecting congressional calls to solidify an exit strategy.

Last November, the American people clearly stated that they did not want to see an endless conflict in Iraq; they went to the polls and elected a new, Democratic Congress to lead our Nation out of Iraq. I am proud to be a member of the Congressional class that listens and adheres to the will of the American people, as we did when both houses of Congress approved Iraq Supplemental bills that instituted a timetable for U.S. withdrawal. We need a new direction, because we owe our brave, fighting men and women so much more. Washington made a mistake in going to war. It is time for politicians to admit that mistake and fix it before any more lives are lost.

This Congress will not, as the previous, Republican, Congress did, continue to rubber stamp what we believe to be an ill-conceived war. As we continue to receive reports on the situation in Iraq, it is important that we continue to look forward, to the future of Iraq beyond a U.S. military occupation.

Despite the multitude of mistakes perpetrated by President Bush and former Defense Secretary Rumsfeld, our troops have achieved a military success in ousting Saddam Hussein and assisting the Iraqis in administering a democratic election and electing a democratic government. However, only the Iraqi government can secure a lasting peace. Time and time again, the Iraqi government has demonstrated an inability to deliver on the political benchmarks that they themselves agreed were essential to achieving national reconciliation. Continuing to put the lives of our soldiers and our national treasury in the hands of what by most informed accounts, even by members of the Bush Administration, is an ineffective central Iraqi government is irresponsible and contrary to the wishes of the overwhelming majority of the American people.

Our Nation has already paid a heavy price in Iraq. Over 3,810 American soldiers have died. In addition, more than 27,660 have been wounded in the Iraq war since it began in March 2003. June, July, and August have marked the bloodiest months yet in the conflict, and U.S. casualties in Iraq are 62 percent higher this year than at this time in 2006. This misguided, mismanaged, and misrepresented war has claimed too many lives of our brave servicemen; its depth, breadth, and scope are without precedent in American history. In addition, the United States is spending an estimated \$10 billion per month in Iraq. This \$10 billion a month translates into \$329,670,330 per day, \$13,736,264 per hour, \$228,938 per minute, and \$3,816 per second.

For this huge sum of money, we could have repaired the more than 70,000 bridges across America rated structurally deficient, \$188 billion, potentially averting the tragedy that occurred August 1 in Minneapolis, Minnesota. We could have rebuilt the levees in New Orleans, \$50 billion, protecting that city from future hurricanes that could bring Katrina-like destruction upon the city. We could have provided all U.S. public safety officials with interoperable communication equipment, \$10 billion, allowing them to effectively communicate in the event of an emergency, and we could have paid for screening all air cargo on passenger planes for the next 10 years, \$3.6 billion. And, we could have enrolled 1.4 million additional children in Head Start programs, \$10 billion. Instead of funding increased death and destruction in Iraq, we could have spent hard-earned taxpayer dollars on important progress here at home.

The Foreign Affairs Committee, of which I am proud to be a member, has recently heard a string of reports from military and civilian officials about the political, military, social, and economic situation in Iraq. Two weeks ago, the Government Accountability Office, GAO, informed the Congress that the Iraqi government has met only 3 of the 18 legislative, economic, and security benchmarks. Despite the surge, despite increasing U.S. military involvement, the Iraqi Government has not made substantial progress toward stabilizing their country.

President Bush rationalized his surge, over opposition by myself and other House Democrats, by arguing it would give the Iraqi government “the breathing space it needs to make progress in other critical areas,” bringing about reconciliation between warring factions, Sunni and Shia. However, non-partisan as-

sessments, such as last week’s GAO report, have illustrated that escalating U.S. military involvement in Iraq is instead hindering that nation’s ability to move beyond the devastation of war and death, to build a successful new government, and to create a stable and secure environment. In the 7 months since the surge began, increased American military presence has not been able to end the relentless cycles of sectarian violence that continue to plague Iraq. Nor have larger numbers of U.S. troops been successful in unifying and strengthening the Iraqi Government.

Instead, the security situation continues to deteriorate. Sectarian violence remains high, and even the Bush administration has noted the unsatisfactory progress toward political reconciliation. The Sunni-led insurgency continues, with insurgents conducting increasingly complex and well-coordinated attacks. The August 2007 National Intelligence Estimate cited ongoing violence, stating, “the level of overall violence, including attacks on and casualties among civilians, remain high; Iraq’s sectarian groups remain unreconciled.” The report went on to note that al-Qaeda in Iraq, AQI, “retains the ability to conduct high-profile attacks,” and “Iraqi political leaders remain unable to govern effectively.”

The ever-increasing sectarian violence is causing immense daily challenges for Iraqis. Millions have been displaced, and an Iraqi Red Crescent Organization has reported an increase of nearly 630,000 internally displaced persons from February 2007 to July 2007. The same organization predicts an additional 80,000 to 100,000 persons are displaced each month. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees has estimated that 1.8 million Iraqis are now refugees, with an additional 40,000 to 50,000 fleeing to neighboring countries each month. Iraq has become a humanitarian disaster, and one that continues to get worse every day.

The United States military is a skilled and highly proficient organization, and where there are large numbers of U.S. troops, it is unsurprising that we see fewer incidents of violence. However, it is our responsibility to take a longer-term view. The United States will not and should not permanently prop up the Iraqi Government and military. U.S. military involvement in Iraq will come to an end, and, when U.S. forces leave, the responsibility for securing their nation will fall to Iraqis themselves. And so far, we have not seen a demonstrated commitment by the Iraqi Government.

In addition, evidence suggests that not only is increased U.S. military presence in Iraq not making that nation more secure, it may also be threatening our national security by damaging our ability to respond to real threats to our own homeland. The recently released video by Osama bin Laden serves to illustrate that President Bush has not caught this international outlaw, nor brought him to justice. Instead, he has diverted us from the real war on terror to the war of his choice in Iraq.

The former Chairman and Vice Chairman of the 9/11 Commission, Thomas H. Kean and Lee H. Hamilton, share this view. In a recent op-ed, Kean and Hamilton note that our own actions have contributed to a rise of radicalization and rage in the Muslim world. Kean and Hamilton write that “no conflict drains more time, attention, blood, treasure, and support from our worldwide counterterrorism efforts than the war in Iraq. It

has become a powerful recruiting and training tool for al-Qaeda."

Our troops in Iraq did everything we asked them to do. We sent them overseas to fight an army; they are now caught in the midst of an insurgent civil war and political upheaval. I have, for some time now, advocated for congressional legislation declaring a military victory in Iraq, and recognizing the success of our military. Our brave troops have completed the task we set for them; it is time now to bring them home. Our next steps should not be a continuing escalation of military involvement, but instead a diplomatic surge.

Democrats in Congress will not continue to rubber stamp the President's ill-conceived war effort. Last November, the American people spoke loudly and clearly, demanding a new direction to U.S. foreign policy, and we here in Congress are committed to seeing that change be brought about. We are working to see the extensive funds currently being spent to sustain the war in Iraq go to important domestic programs and to securing our homeland against real and imminent threats.

President Bush and Vice President CHENEY have been given numerous chances and ample time by the American people and the Congress to straighten out the mess in Iraq. They have failed. It is pure fantasy to imagine that President Bush's military surge has created the necessary safety and security to meet economic, legislative, and security benchmarks. It is time for a new strategy, a new plan that will encourage Iraqis to take charge of their own destiny, seek constructive and sustained regional engagement, and substitute the ill-advised military surge for a thoughtful diplomatic one. It is time to be realistic and pragmatic, to recognize that our troops achieved what they were initially sent in for and that continued U.S. military engagement is not bringing about the desired results.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation provides our brave soldiers in Iraq with the resources they need, while requiring that the President begin to redeploy our troops. It keeps our soldiers safe, and it keeps our Nation safe. By bringing an end to this conflict, this Democratic Congress is making significant strides forward toward protecting and securing America.

I strongly urge all my colleagues to join me in supporting today's legislation, and in giving the troops the resources they need to safely redeploy from Iraq.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 15 seconds.

I'm very sorry that my friend wouldn't yield so that we could engage in debate. And I will say, victory means ensuring that our children don't face the threat of another terrorist attack like what we saw on September 11. We know that Iraq is the central point for al Qaeda, and I am absolutely determined to ensure that we achieve victory.

There have been tremendous achievements when it comes to democracy building. We can't ignore that. But we want to bring our troops home as soon as possible.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS).

Mr. CUMMINGS. I want to thank the gentleman for yielding. And I also want to associate myself with the

words of the lady from Texas who just spoke.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the rule and the bill. To date, President Bush has asked us for a total of \$804 billion for fighting the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Yesterday, the Joint Economic Committee, the committee on which I sit, concluded in a report that the real economic cost of these wars is \$1.6 trillion. However, there are numerous hidden costs that could potentially bring the grand total to \$3.5 trillion.

In response to the President's failing new strategy in Iraq and wasteful spending, Congress has chosen instead to ensure strict accountability. We have heard the American people and have chosen to exercise fiscal responsibility by considering this vitally important legislation.

Namely, the bill limits funding in the amount of \$50 billion, in comparison to the President's original supplemental request of \$196.4 billion, to continue our military operations in Iraq, while ensuring that the responsible and strategic redeployment of our forces begins no later than 30 days from the date of enactment.

It also provides troops with the resources needed for continued protection from improvised explosive devices.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to exercise their responsibility to the American people, to over 3,800 brave soldiers, 71 from Maryland who have died and who have paid the ultimate price, and to more than 2.3 million Iraqis who have fled their homes, by supporting the rule and voting in favor of this legislation.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. MORAN).

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, this is about whether or not we continue to fund the worst foreign policy fiasco in American history.

This is not about al Qaeda. In fact, if we had gone after al Qaeda when we had the opportunity, they wouldn't have been able to strengthen themselves in Pakistan and Afghanistan. But we've been diverted over to Iraq, where al Qaeda didn't even exist until our invasion gave them a recruitment tool and rallying cry.

And sure there's less violence in Baghdad, but the reason is because the Shiia have ethnically cleansed much of Baghdad. When we started, 60 percent of Baghdad was Sunni. Now, almost 80 percent of Baghdad is Shiia.

And the reason there's less violence in al-Anbar province is because the Sunni warlords have taken it upon themselves to drive out the al Qaeda insurgents.

Our military generals have told us this war does not lend itself to a military victory. The most we can do is to step up our diplomatic efforts.

But the fact is that we are supporting a government that doesn't deserve our support. It is not representative of the people of Iraq. It is endemically cor-

rupt. And the reality is that when we look back and ask ourselves what have we accomplished, we are going to look at a government which is far more loyal to Iran than it is to the United States. That's what we've done, to empower our enemies.

We've created chaos throughout the Middle East. And isn't it time now to have a plan to start withdrawing our troops, to tell our military families that they have sacrificed as much as we could possibly expect of them?

But the reality is that this policy has never been worthy of the sacrifice of our soldiers and their military families.

□ 1830

And if you really believed in what you're doing in this war, you would support Mr. OBEY's attempt to pay for it. Not one dime of this war has been paid for. It's all been borrowed, borrowed from our children and our grandchildren. They deserve better and this bill is the best thing we can do for them right now.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, how much time remains?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Massachusetts has 4 minutes remaining. The gentleman from California has 3½ minutes remaining.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Let me just first say this has been an interesting debate and I do think that victory, a dramatic reduction in the number of attacks, the fact that reconciliation is, in fact, taking place in Baghdad is something that cannot be ignored.

Mr. Speaker, earlier today, before the House voted for the 12th time to allow the House to go to conference with the Senate on the Veterans Affairs funding bill, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DIAZ-BALART) and I had a brief colloquy after which a Member on the other side of the aisle claimed that we had misrepresented the facts about this Congress's track record on getting the Veterans Affairs appropriations measure signed into law.

Well, I take this as akin to being accused of lying. Here is what we said, and, Mr. Speaker, I will say it again: The House passed the Veterans and Military Construction funding bill on June 15, 2007, by a vote of 409-2, with the Senate following suit and naming conferees on September 6. Unfortunately, the majority leadership of the House has refused to move the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs appropriations act to conference and has refused to name conferees.

So whether the majority likes it or not, that is a fact. Now, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. EDWARDS) and the gentleman from New York said that we were misrepresenting the facts. How is this so? For 68 days, Mr. Speaker, the message from the Senate requesting a conference has languished at the Speaker's desk without action. How is this fact disputable? Just look at the

calendar and count the days between September 7 and today, and you'll come up with 68. Every day the Democrats choose not to act to move this bill forward, our Nation's veterans lose \$18.5 million.

Those are the facts surrounding this bill in this Congress. The gentleman from Texas went on earlier to malign Republicans for what we did or didn't do concerning veterans funding over the last 12 years, which begs the question, what does the last 12 years have to do with this year? Are Democrats trying to use past Congresses' shortcomings as excuses for their own failed policy? Otherwise, how is this even relevant?

I am sure that the gentleman from Worcester would stand up and attempt to deflect this plea by criticizing Republicans, just as his colleagues before him, and touting the increases in funding for our veterans provided by this Congress which all but two Members of this body voted for. The sad fact is that this Congress hasn't provided the funding that the gentleman has espoused. Why is that? That's because not one dime will flow from the Treasury to the Department of Veterans Affairs until the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs appropriations bill is signed into law, and in order to do so, this House has to go to conference with the Senate and send a bill down to the President to sign. So let's finally get that process started.

Mr. Speaker, anyone who is concerned about funding for our veterans must join us in voting against the previous question so that I can amend the rule and we can go to conference with the Senate on this much-needed and far-delayed funding measure.

I ask unanimous consent to have the text of the amendment and extraneous material appear in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD just prior to the vote on the previous question.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, let me go back to the subject that we are debating here today, and that is the war in Iraq. Mr. Speaker, we have been fighting this war for nearly 5 years. That's longer than we fought World War II. My friends on the other side of the aisle have said over and over and over, just give the Iraqi Government a chance. Well, Mr. Speaker, after 5 years, I say, give me a break.

It is not us, not any of us in this Chamber who are in harm's way. But we have sent thousands and thousands and thousands of our fellow citizens to battle in Iraq. They are in harm's way. They wake up tomorrow in a situation where they are refereeing a civil war, and that, Mr. Speaker, in my opinion, is wrong.

My friends on the other side of the aisle talk about al Qaeda. Well, we're

all worried about al Qaeda, too. That's why we wish we were doing the job in Afghanistan better. That's why we wish we weren't so diverted from that mission in Iraq that we could actually have better results in Afghanistan than we're having right now. We are worried, Mr. Speaker, about the fact that al Qaeda is regrouping in Afghanistan, is regrouping in Pakistan. That should be a worry to every single Member in this Chamber. And yet we are stretched so thin, we are so preoccupied in Iraq that we have lost sight of what our central mission needs to be.

Mr. Speaker, victory is what is in the best interest of the American people. And this war in Iraq has not only diminished our standing in the world, it has spread our troops so thin that we can't complete missions like the one that we need to be completing in Afghanistan.

Mr. Speaker, too often in this place we talk about numbers instead of the people behind those numbers. Yesterday, as I mentioned earlier, another three American soldiers lost their lives in Iraq, bringing the total to 3,858. Also yesterday, Mr. Speaker, CBS News reported that there is an epidemic of suicide among our soldiers and our veterans. Thousands and thousands of these men and women have taken their own lives. For too many, the war does not end when they return home. And behind each one of those numbers is a devastated family, a heartbroken father, a new widow, a child without a father. Mr. Speaker, we will be paying for this war for a very long, long time.

Now, my friends on the other side of the aisle say we all want the war to end, we all want our troops to come home. Well, I say to my friends, here is your chance. You have a voice. Use it. You have a vote. Use it. You have the opportunity to change the direction of this policy. You have the opportunity to force the Iraqi Government to live up to its promises. You have the opportunity to finally, finally, honor the will of the American people and to safely redeploy our troops. I ask my friends to seize that opportunity and to support this bill.

The material previously referred to by Mr. DREIER is as follows:

AMENDMENT TO H. RES. 818 OFFERED BY MR. DREIER OF CALIFORNIA

At the end of the resolution, add the following:

SEC. 3. The House disagrees to the Senate amendment to the bill, H.R. 2642, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes, and agrees to the conference requested by the Senate thereon. The Speaker shall appoint conferees immediately, but may declare a recess under clause 12(a) of rule I for the purpose of consulting the Minority Leader prior to such appointment. The motion to instruct conferees otherwise in order pending the appointment of conferees instead shall be in order only at a time designated by the Speaker in the legislative schedule within two additional legislative days after adoption of this resolution.

(The information contained herein was provided by Democratic Minority on multiple occasions throughout the 109th Congress.)

THE VOTE ON THE PREVIOUS QUESTION: WHAT IT REALLY MEANS

This vote, the vote on whether to order the previous question on a special rule, is not merely a procedural vote. A vote against ordering the previous question is a vote against the Democratic majority agenda and a vote to allow the opposition, at least for the moment, to offer an alternative plan. It is a vote about what the House should be debating.

Mr. Clarence Cannon's Precedents of the House of Representatives, (VI, 308-311) describes the vote on the previous question on the rule as "a motion to direct or control the consideration of the subject before the House being made by the Member in charge." To defeat the previous question is to give the opposition a chance to decide the subject before the House. Cannon cites the Speaker's ruling of January 13, 1920, to the effect that "the refusal of the House to sustain the demand for the previous question passes the control of the resolution to the opposition" in order to offer an amendment. On March 15, 1909, a member of the majority party offered a rule resolution. The House defeated the previous question and a member of the opposition rose to a parliamentary inquiry, asking who was entitled to recognition. Speaker Joseph G. Cannon (R-Illinois) said: "The previous question having been refused, the gentleman from New York, Mr. Fitzgerald, who had asked the gentleman to yield to him for an amendment, is entitled to the first recognition."

Because the vote today may look bad for the Democratic majority they will say "the vote on the previous question is simply a vote on whether to proceed to an immediate vote on adopting the resolution . . . [and] has no substantive legislative or policy implications whatsoever." But that is not what they have always said. Listen to the definition of the previous question used in the Floor Procedures Manual published by the Rules Committee in the 109th Congress, (page 56). Here's how the Rules Committee described the rule using information from Congressional Quarterly's "American Congressional Dictionary": "If the previous question is defeated, control of debate shifts to the leading opposition member (usually the minority Floor Manager) who then manages an hour of debate and may offer a germane amendment to the pending business."

Deschler's Procedure in the U.S. House of Representatives, the subchapter titled "Amending Special Rules" states: "a refusal to order the previous question on such a rule [a special rule reported from the Committee on Rules] opens the resolution to amendment and further debate." (Chapter 21, section 21.2) Section 21.3 continues: "Upon rejection of the motion for the previous question on a resolution reported from the Committee on Rules, control shifts to the Member leading the opposition to the previous question, who may offer a proper amendment or motion and who controls the time for debate thereon."

Clearly, the vote on the previous question on a rule does have substantive policy implications. It is one of the only available tools for those who oppose the Democratic majority's agenda and allows those with alternative views the opportunity to offer an alternative plan.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

Reyes	Sherman	Udall (CO)
Richardson	Shuler	Udall (NM)
Rodriguez	Sires	Van Hollen
Ross	Skelton	Velázquez
Rothman	Slaughter	Visclosky
Royal-Allard	Smith (WA)	Walz (MN)
Rush	Snyder	Wasserman
Ryan (OH)	Solis	Schultz
Salazar	Space	Waters
Sánchez, Linda	Spratt	Watson
T.	Stark	Watt
Sanchez, Loretta	Stupak	Waxman
Barbanes	Sutton	Weiner
Schakowsky	Tanner	Welch (VT)
Schiff	Tauscher	Wexler
Schwartz	Thompson (CA)	Wilson (OH)
Scott (GA)	Thompson (MS)	Woolsey
Scott (VA)	Tierney	Wu
Serrano	Towns	Wynn
Shea-Porter	Tsongas	Yarmuth

NAYS—190

Aderholt	Gallegly	Pearce
Akin	Garrett (NJ)	Pence
Alexander	Gerlach	Peterson (PA)
Bachmann	Gilchrest	Petri
Baird	Gohmert	Pickering
Baker	Goode	Pitts
Barrett (SC)	Goodlatte	Platts
Barrow	Granger	Poe
Bartlett (MD)	Graves	Porter
Barton (TX)	Hall (TX)	Price (GA)
Biggert	Hastings (WA)	Pryce (OH)
Bilbrey	Hayes	Putnam
Bishop (UT)	Heller	Radanovich
Blackburn	Hensarling	Ramstad
Blunt	Herger	Regula
Boehner	Hobson	Rehberg
Bonner	Hoekstra	Reichert
Boozman	Hulshof	Renzi
Boustany	Hunter	Reynolds
Brady (TX)	Inglis (SC)	Rogers (AL)
Brown (GA)	Issa	Rogers (KY)
Brown (SC)	Johnson (IL)	Rogers (MI)
Brown-Waite, Ginny	Johnson, Sam	Rohrabacher
Buchanan	Jones (NC)	Ros-Lehtinen
Burgess	Jordan	Roskam
Burton (IN)	Keller	Royce
Buyer	King (IA)	Ryan (WI)
Calvert	King (NY)	Sali
Camp (MI)	Kingston	Saxton
Campbell (CA)	Kirk	Schmidt
Cannon	Kline (MN)	Sensenbrenner
Cantor	Knollenberg	
Capito	Kucinich	Sestak
Carter	Kuhl (NY)	Shadegg
Castle	LaHood	Shays
Chabot	Lamborn	Shimkus
Coble	Latham	Shuster
Cole (OK)	LaTourette	Simpson
Conaway	Lewis (CA)	Smith (NE)
Crenshaw	Lewis (KY)	Smith (NJ)
Culberson	Linder	Smith (TX)
Davis (KY)	LoBiondo	Souder
Davis, Tom	Lucas	Sterns
Dent	Lungren, Daniel	Sullivan
Diaz-Balart, L.	E.	Tancredo
Diaz-Balart, M.	Manzullo	Taylor
Doolittle	Marchant	Terry
Drake	McCarthy (CA)	Thornberry
Dreier	McCaull (TX)	Tiaht
Duncan	McCotter	Tiberi
Ehlers	McHenry	Turner
Emerson	McHugh	Upton
English (PA)	McKeon	Walberg
Everett	McMorris	Walden (OR)
Fallin	Rodgers	Walsh (NY)
Feeley	Mica	Wamp
Ferguson	Miller (FL)	Weldon (FL)
Flake	Miller (MI)	Westmoreland
Forbes	Miller, Gary	
Fortenberry	Moran (KS)	Whitfield
Fossella	Murphy, Tim	Wicker
Foxx	Musgrave	Wilson (NM)
Franks (AZ)	Myrick	Wilson (SC)
Frelinghuysen	Neugebauer	Young (AK)
	Nunes	Young (FL)

NOT VOTING—23

Abercrombie	Deal (GA)	McCrary
Allen	Doyle	Oberstar
Bachus	Gingrey	Paul
Bilirakis	Hastert	Ruppersberger
Bono	Jindal	Sessions
Carson	Jones (OH)	Weller
Cubin	Levin	Wolf
Davis, David	Mack	

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE
The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). Members are advised 2 minutes remain in this vote.

□ 1902

So the resolution was agreed to.
The result of the vote was announced
as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:
Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 1104, I was unable to vote for medical reasons. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

Stated against:

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 1104, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "nay."

EFFECTIVE CHILD PORNOGRAPHY PROSECUTION ACT OF 2007

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TIERNEY). The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4120, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4120.

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 409, nays 0, not voting 23, as follows:

[Roll No. 1105]

YEAS—409

Abercrombie	Brown, Corrine	Davis (KY)
Ackerman	Brown-Waite,	Davis, David
Aderholt	Ginny	Davis, Lincoln
Akin	Buchanan	Davis, Tom
Alexander	Burgess	Deal (GA)
Allen	Burton (IN)	DeGette
Altmire	Butterfield	Delahunt
Andrews	Buyer	DeLauro
Arcuri	Calvert	Dent
Baca	Camp (MI)	Diaz-Balart, L.
Bachmann	Campbell (CA)	Diaz-Balart, M.
Bachus	Cannon	Dicks
Baird	Cantor	Dingell
Baker	Capito	Donnelly
Baldwin	Capps	Doolittle
Barrett (SC)	Capuano	Drake
Barrow	Cardoza	Dreier
Bartlett (MD)	Carnahan	Duncan
Barton (TX)	Carney	Edwards
Bean	Carter	Ehlers
Becerra	Castle	Ellison
Berkley	Castor	Ellsworth
Berman	Chabot	Emanuel
Berry	Chandler	Emerson
Biggert	Clarke	Engel
Bilbray	Clay	English (PA)
Bilirakis	Cleaver	Eshoo
Bishop (GA)	Clyburn	Etheridge
Bishop (NY)	Coble	Everett
Bishop (UT)	Cohen	Fallin
Blackburn	Cole (OK)	Farr
Blumenauer	Conaway	Fattah
Blunt	Conyers	Feeley
Bonner	Cooper	Ferguson
Boozman	Costa	Filner
Boren	Costello	Flake
Boswell	Courtney	Forbes
Boucher	Cramer	Fortenberry
Boustany	Crenshaw	Fosella
Boyd (FL)	Crowley	Foxx
Boysd (KS)	Cuellar	Frank (MA)
Brady (PA)	Culberson	Franks (AZ)
Brady (TX)	Cummings	Frelinghuysen
Braley (IA)	Davis (AL)	Gallegly
Broun (GA)	Davis (CA)	Garrett (NJ)
Brown (SC)	Davis (IL)	Gerlach

Giffords	Lynch	Royce
Gilchrest	Mahoney (FL)	Rush
Gillibrand	Maloney (NY)	Ryan (OH)
Gingrey	Manzullo	Ryan (WI)
Gohmert	Marchant	Salazar
Gonzalez	Markey	Sali
Goode	Matheson	Sánchez, Linda
Goodlatte	Matsui	T.
Gordon	McCarthy (CA)	Sanchez, Loretta
Granger	McCarthy (NY)	Barbanes
Graves	McCaull (TX)	Saxton
Green, Al	McCollum (MN)	Schakowsky
Green, Gene	McCotter	Schiff
Grijalva	McDermott	Schmidt
Hall (NY)	McGovern	Schwartz
Hall (TX)	McHenry	Scott (GA)
Hare	McHugh	Scott (VA)
Harman	McIntyre	Sensenbrenner
Hastert	McKeon	Serrano
Hastings (FL)	McMorris	Sestak
Hastings (WA)	Rodgers	Shadegg
Hayes	McNerny	Shays
Heller	McNulty	Shea-Porter
Hensarling	Meek (FL)	Sherman
Herger	Meeks (NY)	Shimkus
Herseth Sandlin	Melancon	Shuler
Higgins	Mica	Shuster
Hinchey	Michaud	Simpson
Hinojosa	Miller (FL)	Sires
Hirono	Miller (MI)	Skelton
Hobson	Miller (NC)	Slaughter
Hodes	Miller, Gary	Smith (NE)
Hoekstra	Miller, George	Smith (NJ)
Holden	Mitchell	Smith (TX)
Holt	Mollohan	Smith (WA)
Honda	Moore (KS)	Snyder
Hooley	Moore (WI)	Solis
Hoyer	Moran (KS)	Souder
Hulshof	Moran (VA)	Hunter
Inglis (SC)	Murphy (CT)	Space
Inslee	Murphy, Patrick	Spratt
Israel	Murphy, Tim	Stearns
Issa	Musgrave	Stupak
Jackson (IL)	Nadler	Sullivan
Jackson-Lee (TX)	Napolitano	Tancredo
Jefferson	Neal (MA)	Tanner
Johnson (GA)	Neugebauer	Tauscher
Johnson (IL)	Nunes	Taylor
Johnson, E. B.	Obey	Terry
Johnson, Sam	Olver	Thompson (CA)
Jones (NC)	Ortiz	Thompson (MS)
Jones (OH)	Pallone	Thornberry
Jordan	Pascrell	Tiahaht
Kagen	Pastor	Tiberi
Kanjorski	Payne	Tierney
Kaptur	Pearce	Towns
Keller	Pence	Tsongas
Kennedy	Perlmutter	Turner
Kildee	Peterson (MN)	Udall (CO)
Kilpatrick	Peterson (PA)	Udall (NM)
Kind	Pickering	Upton
King (IA)	Pitts	Van Hollen
King (NY)	Platts	Velázquez
Kingston	Poe	Visclosky
Kirk	Pomeroy	Waiberg
Klein (FL)	Porter	Walden (OR)
Kline (MN)	Price (GA)	Walsh (NY)
Knollenberg	Price (NC)	Walz (MN)
Kucinich	Pryce (OH)	Wamp
Kuhl (NY)	Putnam	Wasserman
LaHood	Radanovich	Schultz
Lamborn	Rahall	Waters
Lampson	Ramstad	Watson
Langevin	Rangel	Watt
Lantos	Regula	Waxman
Larsen (WA)	Rehberg	Weiner
Larson (CT)	Reichert	Welch (VT)
Latham	Renzi	Weldon (FL)
LaTourette	Reyes	Westmoreland
Lee	Reynolds	Wexler
Lewis (GA)	Richardson	Whitfield
Lewis (KY)	Rodriguez	Wicker
Linder	Rogers (AL)	Wilson (NM)
Lipinski	Rogers (KY)	Wilson (OH)
LoBiondo	Rogers (MI)	Wilson (SC)
Loebssack	Rohrabacher	Woolsey
Lofgren, Zoe	Ros-Lehtinen	Wu
Lowey	Roskam	Wynn
Lucas	Ross	Yarmuth
Lungren, Daniel E.	Rothman	Young (AK)
	Royal-Allard	Young (FL)

NOT VOTING—23