times more in copayments than for any other outpatient health care treatment.

Seniors who receive necessary mental health services reduce their hospital costs. One hospital offered mental health services for elderly patients with fractures, and reduced the length of stay by 2 days and hospital costs by over $160,000.

I will be reintroducing legislation to end Medicare discrimination for mental health services by adjusting copayments, and I ask my colleagues to cosponsor it. Learn more about how we can make health care affordable and accessible by visiting my Web site, Murphy.house.gov. We need patient-centered health care for patient quality, patient safety and patient choice.

GENERALS AGREE THAT PRESIDENT'S TROOP ESCALATION PLAN IS NOT THE BEST WAY AHEAD

(Mr. PERLMUTTER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, today we will continue debating a bipartisan resolution that voices this Congress' opposition to the President's troop escalation plan. We are not alone in our opposition to the President's plan.

Military leaders have raised concerns since the framework of this plan was announced at the end of last year. Here are a few examples. In testimony before the Senate in November, General John Abizaid, the commander of Central Command said, ''I do not believe that more American troops right now is a solution to the problem.''

Retired General Joseph Hoar stated last month, ''The new strategy reflects the inability of the administration to get it right. The proposed solution to send in more troops will not work. It is far too little and too late.''

Former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs and Secretary of State, Colin Powell, said in December, ''I am not persuaded that another surge of troops into Baghdad for the purposes of suppressing this communitarian violence, this civil war, will work.''

Mr. Speaker, those are all men who have been on the frontlines. They join us in opposing the President's escalation plan.

UMATILLA COUNTY FARMERS

(Mr. WALDEN of Oregon asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, the failure of Congress to reauthorize the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act is a breach of promise to the more than 600 forested counties across America and 4,400 school districts.

In Umatilla County, Oregon, it is the number one food producing county in the State. For them, a well-maintained road system is critical to ensuring family farmers can compete in this global market. With more than 340 bridges and, a State high, 1,650 miles of road, Umatilla County faces a significant infrastructure maintenance backlog and challenge.

County Commissioner Dennis Doherty says, ''American farms are dependent on a farm-to-market road system and loss of those funds will cripple our local road system.''

Tammy Dennee, executive director of the Oregon Wheat Growers League said, ''Global competition starts locally. Being the number one wheat producing county in the State, it is vital to farmers here that the road system is dependable.''

My colleagues, Congress must keep faith with these timbered counties and pass H.R. 17. Our future depends on it, our credibility depends on it, and time is running out.

HOUSE BEGINS HOLDING THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION ACCOUNTABLE FOR THE WAR IN IRAQ

(Mr. ELLISON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, the days of this House rubber-stamping President Bush's failed war policies have ended. So far this year, House and Senate committees have held over 52 hearings on Iraq. And now this week, over a 4-day period here on the House floor, we will be debating the President's plan to send 21,500 more troops to Iraq.

The bipartisan bill is simple. It states that the House will continue to support our troops, but that we oppose the President's troop increase plan. Some of my Republican colleagues say that if you really support the troops, you must support the President's plan. But this makes no sense.

Do my colleagues not realize that our troops in Iraq were polled on the President's plan? Only 41 percent of them supported it. Not even a majority of our troops say that this plan of the President's is a good plan. What about our generals? Both retired and active duty military leaders have said that the President's plan will not reverse the devastating civil war that is now taking place in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, it is time that we listen to those military leaders and our troops and voice our opposition to the President's plan.

JOURNALISTIC ABUSE ON WOMEN

(Mr. POE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, journalism has taken a plunge into the depth of disturbing depravity at Central Connecticut University. A writer for the college newspaper wrote a slam piece against sexual assault victims. His article was entitled, ''Rape Only Hurts if You Fight It.'' He claims rape is a magical experience and a blessing for unattractive women. He and his Third-World college newspaper now say the piece was satire and humor.

This mean-spirited article shows no humor, but vile and vicious and abusive words about women. Journalistic attacks on rape victims dehumanize them and show a total lack of understanding of this crime. Rape is a physical and emotional crime that tries to destroy the inner soul of the victim.

Almost one-fourth of the women on college campuses are rape victims. Journalists who are out of touch with the real world do a disservice to this field, and tragically, like physical abusers, heap journalistic abuse on rape victims.

And that's just the way it is.

NORTH KOREAN NUCLEAR DEAL

(Mr. SCHIFF asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, the announcement in Beijing yesterday that the Government of North Korea has agreed to abandon its nuclear weapons program is a positive step, and I applaud the efforts of Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill, as well as the efforts of our negotiating partners, Japan, South Korea, Russia and China.

Obviously much work remains to be done to ensure that North Korea follows through on its pledge to halt plutonium production at Yongbyon and to allow the return of international inspectors, as well as to resolve other outstanding issues; most noticeably, the need for complete declaration from Pyongyang of all of its nuclear activities and final disposition of North Korea's existing nuclear program.

As with past agreements with the reclusive regime of Kim Jong-Il, this agreement could collapse at any time.

There is now, however, rare optimism that a significant ratcheting down of tensions with the North is possible. The agreement should serve to remind those in the administration who see confrontation as the only way to convince Iran to abandon its nuclear program, that diplomacy can be effective, even if it is often immensely frustrating.

I hope that the President and Secretary of State will use this breakthrough with North Korea to reinvigorate diplomatic efforts to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons.

IRAQ WAR RESOLUTION IS BAD FOR AMERICA

(Mr. HOEKSTRA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Mr. Speaker, let me give you four reasons why I think the resolution we will debate today is a bad resolution. Number one, it is nonbinding. It is a paper tiger. It does

nothing to influence our strategy or our direction in the global war with radical jihadists.

Secondly, it ill defines the enemy. It does not recognize that we are in a global war with radical jihadists who have attacked us around the world. Third, it omits recognizing key U.S. personnel that are serving, and serving ably, in this global war with radical jihadists. Why does it not recognize our intelligence professionals? Why does it not recognize our Armed Forces and intelligence professionals serving in Afghanistan, throughout the Middle East, Africa and parts of Asia?

Finally, most ironic, the bottom line of this resolution tells the President to stay the course. That is not good enough. This is a tough enemy. We need to develop and evolve our strategy to be successful.

TIME TO SEND THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION A MESSAGE THAT A CHANGE IN DIRECTION IS NEEDED IN IRAQ

(Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, it is time to send a message to the Bush administration that change is needed in Iraq. Mr. Speaker, the resolution we are debating this week here on the House floor is the first step in this new Congress' efforts to take Iraq in a new direction.

Last November the American people were clear that they wanted a dramatic change in Iraq. The President's troop escalation plan is not what they were asking for. This week this House will emphatically voice its opposition to the President's plan. We hope that this serves as a wake-up call and sends the ''Decider'' a message that he can no longer walk over Congress. We are not going to rubber-stamp his plans any more.

This week's debate is only the beginning, Mr. Speaker. House and Senate committees have already conducted 52 hearings on Iraq. That is what the Congress is supposed to do, provide real oversight on the administration. Unfortunately for the first 3 years of this war, congressional Republicans rubberstamped the Decider's Iraq plan.

Those days are over. Mr. Speaker, we have an obligation to find a new course in Iraq, and a military solution is now out of the question. And that is why this troop escalation plan should be defeated.

□ 1030

WHAT IS YOUR PLAN?

(Mr. SALI asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SALI. Mr. Speaker, for those who would support House Concurrent Resolution 63, I ask, what is your plan? ''No'' is not a plan.

We have three options to follow. The first is to stay the course. I don't know of anyone, including the President, who is suggesting we take that route. The second is to increase the troops level, which the supporters of House Concurrent Resolution 63 are saying no to. The only other option is to reduce troops.

I would ask you who will support House Concurrent Resolution 63, read the Baker-Hamilton report, a bipartisan report, that talks about the effects that will occur if we do withdraw from Iraq. There will be widespread violence there, more than we are seeing today. And they warn us that a withdrawal may require the U.S. to engage, once again, in Iraq to stabilize that area.

So for those of you who would support House Concurrent Resolution 63, I again ask, what is your plan? ''No'' is not a plan.

IRAQ WAR RESOLUTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 3 of House Resolution 157, proceedings will now resume on the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 63) disapproving of the decision of the President announced on January 10, 2007, to deploy more than 20,000 additional United States combat troops to Iraq.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. When proceedings were postponed on Tuesday, February 13, 2007, time for debate on the concurrent resolution on that day had expired.

Pursuant to the resolution, it is now in order for a further period of debate on the concurrent resolution to extend not beyond midnight.

The gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HOEKSTRA) each will control 5 hours.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Maryland.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to yield my time for controlling the time to Mr. ANDREWS or his designee.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from New Jersey is recognized as the designee of the gentleman from Maryland.

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished majority leader, Mr. HOYER of Maryland.

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

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, 3 months ago, the American people sent a resounding message, a message for change. They voted for a new direction in our Nation, including a new direction for the war in Iraq, which will enter its fifth year next month.

This week on this House floor the Members of this great body can demonstrate that we not only have heard the voters' message, but also that we have the collective will to send one of our own.

The bipartisan resolution before us asks the Members one straightforward question to be answered. Do you approve of the President's proposal to deploy more than 20,000 additional troops in Iraq, or do you not? Thus, this resolution is a clarifying moment for the Members to say precisely where they stand on the President's plan.

There is little doubt that our Iraq policy is not succeeding. Our Commander in Chief, President Bush, acknowledged on this floor last month during his State of the Union address that, and I quote, ''Whatever you voted for, you did not vote for failure.''

I voted for the authorization, and I did not vote for failure. But the policies being pursued by this administration have not led to success.

After nearly 4 years at war, after more than 3,100 of our finest sons and daughters have given the ultimate measure of sacrifice in Iraq, after more than 25,000 have been wounded, after the expenditure of more than $400 billion on this war effort by the American taxpayer, our success seems as remote as ever.

Not surprisingly, two-thirds of the American people oppose the President's escalation plan. So do many current and former senior military officials, and Prime Minister Maliki has expressed his disapproval as well.

I oppose the President's plan for several reasons. First, we simply cannot ignore the many miscalculations made by the administration about this war, from sending too few troops, to grossly underestimating the cost, to failing to properly plan for the postwar period.

The President repeatedly said that his policies were working. He was tragically wrong, just as he is wrong today, in my view, about this escalation.

Secondly, this troop escalation does not represent a new strategy. In fact, we have tried at least four escalations in the past, none of which has succeeded in quelling violence.

The time for more troops was 4 years ago, 3 years ago, perhaps even 2 years ago, but not today.

The fact is our commitment of forces has never, has never been commensurate with the risk the President says exists. Never has the President, the Commander in Chief, suggested the resources necessary to succeed. This is too little, tragically, too late.

Third, we cannot disregard the deep skepticism and warnings of our military leaders. General Abizaid, not just another soldier, but the former chief of the Central Command in charge of our effort in Iraq, has stated that, and I quote, ''More American forces prevent the Iraqis from doing more, from taking more responsibility for their own future.'' That is the consequence General Abizaid believes of the President's policy.

Former Secretary of State Powell, one of the military leaders so successful in Iraq I, stated, and I quote again,