

Brown-Waite,	Heller	Pitts
Ginny	Hensarling	Platts
Buchanan	Herger	Poe
Burgess	Hobson	Porter
Burton (IN)	Hoekstra	Price (GA)
Buyer	Hulshof	Pryce (OH)
Calvert	Hunter	Putnam
Camp (MI)	Inglis (SC)	Radanovich
Campbell (CA)	Jindal	Issa
Cannon	Johnson (IL)	Ramstad
Cantor	Jordan	Regula
Capito	Keller	Rehberg
Carney	King (IA)	Reichert
Carter	King (NY)	Renzi
Castle	Kingston	Reynolds
Chabot	Kirk	Rogers (AL)
Coble	Kline (MN)	Rogers (KY)
Cole (OK)	Knollenberg	Rogers (MI)
Conaway	Kuhl (NY)	Rohrabacher
Culberson	LaHood	Ros-Lehtinen
Davis (KY)	Lamborn	Royce
Davis, David	Latham	Ryan (WI)
Davis, Tom	LaTourette	Sali
Deal (GA)	Lewis (CA)	Saxton
Dent	Lewis (KY)	Schmidt
Diaz-Balart, L.	Linder	Sensenbrenner
Diaz-Balart, M.	LoBiondo	Sessions
Doolittle	Lucas	Shadegg
Drake	Lungren, Daniel	Shays
Dreier	E.	Shimkus
Duncan	Mack	Shuster
Ehlers	Manzullo	Simpson
Emerson	Marchant	Smith (NE)
English (PA)	Marshall	Smith (NJ)
Everett	McCarthy (CA)	Smith (TX)
Fallin	McCaull (TX)	Souder
Feeney	McCotter	Stearns
Ferguson	McCrary	Sullivan
Flake	McHenry	Tancredo
Forbes	McHugh	Terry
Fortenberry	McKeon	Thornberry
Fossella	McMorris	Tiahrt
Foxx	Rodgers	Tiberi
Franks (AZ)	Mica	Turner
Frelinghuysen	Miller (FL)	Upton
Gallegly	Miller (MI)	Walberg
Garrett (NJ)	Miller, Gary	Walden (OR)
Gerlach	Moran (KS)	Walsh (NY)
Gilchrest	Murphy, Tim	Wamp
Gillmor	Musgrave	Weldon (FL)
Gingrey	Myrick	Weller
Gohmert	Neugebauer	Westmoreland
Goode	Nunes	Whitfield
Goodlatte	Paul	Wicker
Granger	Pearce	Wilson (NM)
Graves	Pence	Wilson (SC)
Hall (TX)	Peterson (PA)	Wolf
Hastert	Petri	Young (AK)
Hastings (WA)	Pickering	Young (FL)

NOT VOTING—8

Clarke	Davis, Jo Ann	Perlmutter
Crenshaw	Ellison	Waters
Cubin	Johnson, Sam	

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. There are 2 minutes remaining in this vote.

□ 1153

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.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed a bill of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 845. An act to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to expand and intensify programs with respect to research and related activities concerning elder falls.

The message also announced that pursuant to section 9355(a) of title 10, United States Code, the Chair, on behalf of the Vice President, appoints the following Senators to the Board of

Visitors of the U.S. Air Force Academy:

The Senator from Utah (Mr. BENNETT), from the Committee on Appropriations.

The Senator from Nebraska (Mr. NELSON), from the Committee on Appropriations.

The Senator from Colorado (Mr. AL-LARD), At Large.

The message also announced that pursuant to section 6968(a), of title 10, United States Code, the Chair, on behalf of the Vice President, appoints the following Senators to the Board of Visitors of the U.S. Naval Academy:

The Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN), from the Committee on Appropriations.

The Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI), from the Committee on Appropriations.

The Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN), designated by the Chairman of the Committee on Armed Services.

The Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN), At Large.

The message also announced that pursuant to section 1295b(h), of title 46 App., United States Code, the Chair, on behalf of the Vice President, appoints the following Senators to the Board of Visitors of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy:

The Senator from Hawaii (Mr. INOUYE), ex officio as Chairman of the Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation.

The Senator from New Jersey (Mr. LAUTENBERG), from the Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation.

The Senator from Alaska (Mr. STEVENS), from the Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation.

The Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), At Large.

The message also announced that pursuant to section 4355(a), of title 10, United States Code, the Chair, on behalf of the Vice President, appoints the following Senators to the Board of

Visitors of the U.S. Military Academy:

The Senator from Texas (Mrs. HUTCHISON), from the Committee on Appropriations.

The Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU), from the Committee on Appropriations.

The Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED), designated by the Chairman of the Committee on Armed Services.

The Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS), At Large.

ENSURING MILITARY READINESS THROUGH STABILITY AND PREDICTABILITY DEPLOYMENT POLICY ACT OF 2007

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 601, I call up the bill (H.R. 3159) to mandate minimum periods of rest and recuperation for units and members of the regular and reserve components of the Armed Forces between deployments for Operation Iraqi Freedom or Operation End-

during Freedom, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3159

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. MINIMUM PERIODS OF REST AND RECUPERATION FOR UNITS AND MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES BETWEEN DEPLOYMENTS.

(a) REGULAR COMPONENTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—No unit or member of the Armed Forces specified in paragraph (3) may be deployed for Operation Iraqi Freedom or Operation Enduring Freedom (including participation in the NATO International Security Assistance Force (Afghanistan)) unless the period between the deployment of the unit or member is equal to or longer than the period of such previous deployment.

(2) SENSE OF CONGRESS ON OPTIMAL MINIMUM PERIOD BETWEEN DEPLOYMENTS.—It is the sense of Congress that the optimal minimum period between the previous deployment of a unit or member of the Armed Forces specified in paragraph (3) to Operation Iraqi Freedom or Operation Enduring Freedom and a subsequent deployment of the unit or member to Operation Iraqi Freedom or Operation Enduring Freedom should be equal to or longer than twice the period of such previous deployment.

(3) COVERED UNITS AND MEMBERS.—The units and members of the Armed Forces specified in this paragraph are as follows:

(A) Units and members of the regular Army.

(B) Units and members of the regular Marine Corps.

(C) Units and members of the regular Navy.

(D) Units and members of the regular Air Force.

(E) Units and members of the regular Coast Guard.

(b) RESERVE COMPONENTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—No unit or member of the Armed Forces specified in paragraph (3) may be deployed for Operation Iraqi Freedom or Operation Enduring Freedom (including participation in the NATO International Security Assistance Force (Afghanistan)) if the unit or member has been deployed at any time within the three years preceding the date of the deployment covered by this subsection.

(2) SENSE OF CONGRESS ON MOBILIZATION AND OPTIMAL MINIMUM PERIOD BETWEEN DEPLOYMENTS.—It is the sense of Congress that the units and members of the reserve components of the Armed Forces should not be mobilized continuously for more than one year; and the optimal minimum period between the previous deployment of a unit or member of the Armed Forces specified in paragraph (3) to Operation Iraqi Freedom or Operation Enduring Freedom and a subsequent deployment of the unit or member to Operation Iraqi Freedom or Operation Enduring Freedom should be five years.

(3) COVERED UNITS AND MEMBERS.—The units and members of the Armed Forces specified in this paragraph are as follows:

(A) Units and members of the Army Reserve.

(B) Units and members of the Army National Guard.

(C) Units and members of the Marine Corps Reserve.

(D) Units and members of the Navy Reserve.

(E) Units and members of the Air Force Reserve.

(F) Units and members of the Air National Guard.

(G) Units and members of the Coast Guard Reserve.

(c) WAIVER BY THE PRESIDENT.—The President may waive the limitation in subsection (a) or (b) with respect to the deployment of a unit or member of the Armed Forces if the President certifies to Congress that the deployment of the unit or member is necessary to meet an operational emergency posing a threat to vital national security interests of the United States.

(d) WAIVER BY MILITARY CHIEF OF STAFF OR COMMANDANT FOR VOLUNTARY MOBILIZATIONS.—

(1) ARMY.—With respect to the deployment of a member of the Army who has voluntarily requested mobilization, the limitation in subsection (a) or (b) may be waived by the Chief of Staff of the Army.

(2) NAVY.—With respect to the deployment of a member of the Navy who has voluntarily requested mobilization, the limitation in subsection (a) or (b) may be waived by the Chief of Naval Operations.

(3) MARINE CORPS.—With respect to the deployment of a member of the Marine Corps who has voluntarily requested mobilization, the limitation in subsection (a) or (b) may be waived by the Commandant of the Marine Corps.

(4) AIR FORCE.—With respect to the deployment of a member of the Air Force who has voluntarily requested mobilization, the limitation in subsection (a) or (b) may be waived by the Chief of Staff of the Air Force.

(5) COAST GUARD.—With respect to the deployment of a member of the Coast Guard who has voluntarily requested mobilization, the limitation in subsection (a) or (b) may be waived by the Commandant of the Coast Guard.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WEINER). Pursuant to House Resolution 601, the amendment in the nature of a substitute printed in the bill is adopted and the bill, as amended, is considered read.

The text of the bill, as amended, is as follows:

H.R. 3159

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Ensuring Military Readiness Through Stability and Predictability Deployment Policy Act of 2007”.

SEC. 2. MINIMUM PERIODS OF REST AND RECOVERY FOR UNITS OF THE ARMED FORCES BETWEEN DEPLOYMENTS.

(a) REGULAR COMPONENTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—No unit of the Armed Forces specified in paragraph (3) may be deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom unless the period between the most recent previous deployment of the unit and a subsequent deployment of the unit is equal to or longer than the period of such most recent previous deployment.

(2) SENSE OF CONGRESS ON OPTIMAL MINIMUM PERIOD BETWEEN DEPLOYMENTS.—It is the sense of Congress that the optimal minimum period between the most recent previous deployment of a unit of the Armed Forces specified in paragraph (3) and a subsequent deployment of the unit in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom should be equal to or longer than twice the period of such most recent previous deployment.

(3) COVERED UNITS.—Subject to subsection (c), the units of the Armed Forces specified in this paragraph are as follows:

(A) Units of the regular Army and members assigned to those units.

(B) Units of the regular Marine Corps and members assigned to those units.

(C) Units of the regular Navy and members assigned to those units.

(D) Units of the regular Air Force and members assigned to those units.

(b) RESERVE COMPONENTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—No unit of the Armed Forces specified in paragraph (3) may be deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom unless the period between the most recent previous deployment of the unit and a subsequent deployment of the unit is at least three times longer than the period of such most recent previous deployment.

(2) SENSE OF CONGRESS ON MOBILIZATION AND OPTIMAL MINIMUM PERIOD BETWEEN DEPLOYMENTS.—It is the sense of Congress that the units of the reserve components of the Armed Forces should not be mobilized continuously for more than one year, and the optimal minimum period between the previous deployment of a unit of the Armed Forces specified in paragraph (3) and a subsequent deployment of the unit in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom should be five years.

(3) COVERED UNITS.—The units of the Armed Forces specified in this paragraph are as follows:

(A) Units of the Army Reserve and members assigned to those units.

(B) Units of the Army National Guard and members assigned to those units.

(C) Units of the Marine Corps Reserve and members assigned to those units.

(D) Units of the Navy Reserve and members assigned to those units.

(E) Units of the Air Force Reserve and members assigned to those units.

(F) Units of the Air National Guard and members assigned to those units.

(c) EXEMPTIONS.—The limitations in subsections (a) and (b) do not apply—

(1) to special operations forces as identified pursuant to section 167(i) of title 10, United States Code; and

(2) to units of the Armed Forces needed, as determined by the Secretary of Defense, to assist in the redeployment of members of the Armed Forces from Iraq to another operational requirement or back to their home stations.

(d) WAIVER BY THE PRESIDENT.—The President may waive the limitation in subsection (a) or (b) with respect to the deployment of a unit of the Armed Forces to meet a threat to the national security interests of the United States if the President certifies to Congress within 30 days that the deployment of the unit is necessary for such purposes.

(e) WAIVER BY MILITARY CHIEF OF STAFF OR COMMANDANT FOR VOLUNTARY MOBILIZATIONS.—

(1) ARMY.—With respect to the deployment of a member of the Army who has voluntarily requested mobilization, the limitation in subsection (a) or (b) may be waived by the Chief of Staff of the Army.

(2) NAVY.—With respect to the deployment of a member of the Navy who has voluntarily requested mobilization, the limitation in subsection (a) or (b) may be waived by the Chief of Naval Operations.

(3) MARINE CORPS.—With respect to the deployment of a member of the Marine Corps who has voluntarily requested mobilization, the limitation in subsection (a) or (b) may be waived by the Commandant of the Marine Corps.

(4) AIR FORCE.—With respect to the deployment of a member of the Air Force who has voluntarily requested mobilization, the limitation in subsection (a) or (b) may be waived by the Chief of Staff of the Air Force.

(f) DEFINITIONS.—In this Act:

(1) DEPLOYMENT.—The term “deployment” or “deployed” means the relocation of forces and materiel to desired areas of operations and encompasses all activities from origin or home station through destination, including staging, holding, and movement in and through the United States and all theaters of operation.

(2) UNIT.—The term “unit” means a unit that is deployable and is commanded by a commissioned officer of the Army, Navy, Air Force, or

Marine Corps serving in the grade of major or, in the case of the Navy, lieutenant commander, or a higher grade.

(g) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This Act shall take effect on the date of the enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) and the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri.

Mr. SKELTON. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3159, introduced by my colleague on the House Armed Services Committee, Ellen Tauscher, the gentlelady from California, as well as other Members of the House.

Our troops and their families are stressed and they are under pressure. Yesterday, the USA Today newspaper had an article entitled, “Stress of War Hits Army Kids Hard.” The article, sadly, was about the increasing number of child abuse and neglect cases among deployed Army families. The article quotes Amy Lambert, an Army wife living at Fort Stewart, Georgia. She states, “I firmly believe that more time at home between deployments would be the most beneficial solution.” I think that quote sums up the reason we’re here and why this bill is before the House.

Our troops and their families are tired. They are being stressed by the continued and extended deployments. It’s time that Congress takes a stand on behalf of our families and states in a clear, unequivocal voice that it is time that servicemembers have a minimum dwell time between deployments.

This bill would require that active component units and members be provided at least the same time at home as they are deployed. It would also require that Reserve and National Guardsmen who are called to deploy are given at least three times at home as they are deployed.

This proposed minimum period of deployment is less than the Department’s own goal, which provides that active duty servicemembers should be deployed for 1 year, with 2 years back in home station, and Reservists and Guardsmen should have 5 years between deployments.

The Army recently implemented a policy that requires active duty units to deploy for 15 months and only spend 12 months back at their home station. This is a troubling sign, Mr. Speaker, since the time back at home station is used to reset, retrain and re-equip forces.

Servicemembers and their families are entitled to a predictable and stable time between deployments. Congress needs to step up on behalf of the troops, as well as their families, and say enough is enough.

We need to hold the Department accountable to their own policies and protect the readiness of our forces. That’s no small thing. We have a moral responsibility to our troops to ensure

that their quality of life is reflective of the sacrifices that we ask them to make.

We need to ensure that our active forces have at least the same amount of time deployed that they have back home with their families, and that our citizen-soldiers have at least three times the amount home as that time deployed.

This bill is also about our national security and its readiness, and it's about strategic risk. This bill will help to ensure that our military can deal not only with Iraq, where they have been serving remarkably under extraordinarily difficult conditions for 4 years, but wherever the next conflict occurs, our force must have adequate time to train if it is to be prepared.

And in this exceptional all-volunteer force, we must keep our retention levels up if we are to insure that our military will be able to succeed both now and in the next fight, which, of course, is very unpredictable.

H.R. 3159 is a step in the right direction. I urge my colleagues to stand with us in support of our troops and in support of our families.

Before I reserve the balance of my time, I ask unanimous consent that the gentlelady from California (Mrs. TAUSCHER) control the time on my behalf.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LYNCH). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Missouri?

There was no objection.

Mr. SKELTON. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from California is recognized for 30 minutes.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I might consume.

Mr. Speaker, this is a well-motivated bill. I want to commend my colleagues on the Armed Services Committee for all the great work that they do, Democrat and Republican. Most of the time we're on common ground. In this case, I think that this bill does not accrue to the benefit of the troops. I think it hurts the troops.

□ 1200

I think that is a question every Member of the House has to ask themselves: Is this going to be good for the troops, or is it going to be bad for the troops?

I think it will be bad for the troops, for this reason: We are fighting a war in Iraq which requires innovation, flexibility and experience. This bill, which will put a straitjacket on our ability to deploy troops on the basis that their clock has not yet expired back in the United States before they go over, is going to have an incredibly detrimental affect on our ability to project a well-rounded, effective fighting team in the warfighting theater in Iraq.

Let me talk about that a little bit, Mr. Speaker.

You are going to have units which desperately require specialties. Some of the specialties, I would remind my friend, are IEDs, the ability to operate jammers, the ability perhaps to decontaminate if you come into contact with some of the chemical weapons stockpiles that were left by the old regime. Military effectiveness is built on dozens and dozens of specialties, all of which support the other.

The idea that you can't put this team together, that the Marines or the Army can't put their warfighting team together because they looked at the list of people who are most able to fill those roles, most able to move in and stand next to their fellow Marine, their fellow soldier, their fellow airman, the guy that is doing the mechanic work on that important helicopter that is going to be the transportation vehicle, the guy that is doing the repair work on that particular weapons system, those people are not going to be able to flow over into the theater because their clock hasn't moved appropriately on the one-to-one ratio.

Now, we consulted the U.S. Marines on this provision. We didn't consult political people in the White House. We didn't consult people who had an opinion on whether or not we should be in Iraq. We consulted the people who have the job of putting together these packages of personnel which are required in the warfighting theater and transporting them to the theater.

Of course, the Deputy Commandant of the Marine Corps for Plans and Operations is Lieutenant General Richard Natonski. Here is his statement he gave to the committee. He said, "In order to support OIF requirements during Fiscal Year 2008 and comply with the minimum period between deployments proposed by provisions like H.R. 3159, a one-to-one ratio, the Marine Corps would have to adjust force generation plans. These plan adjustments would include extending unit deployments."

Somebody has to stay on the battlefield. The battlefield is not going to be empty. So if you are not going to allow new Marines to come in, the Marines that are there right now are going to have to stay there.

It is the same with the Army. These plan adjustments could include extending unit deployments, creating provisional units. That means you are going to have to put new units together because the old unit hasn't had its meter expire yet. And forcing units to execute missions as in-lieu-of forces, meaning that units that don't have that specialty are going to have to become units that have that specialty. That means "quickie" training and moving people immediately into the battlefield to fill a role that otherwise could be filled by people who have a deep specialty in that capability.

Mr. Speaker, he finishes with this statement that every Member of Congress should listen to very carefully. He said, each of these adjustments that

will be required by Mrs. TAUSCHER's bill, among others, incurs higher risk than that associated with deploying the unit at a deployment-to-dwell time of seven to six.

I want to remind my colleagues, higher risk means higher risk of casualties. That is what happens when the guy that is supporting you on the battlefield doesn't have as much experience as you would like him to have, doesn't have that specialty, hasn't been there before, doesn't have that insight that is going to keep you alive.

Mr. Speaker, this is a well-meaning bill. But if you ask this question, does it help the troops or hurt the troops, this bill hurts the troops.

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

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to offer H.R. 3159, a bipartisan bill to mandate minimum periods of rest, training and recuperation for units and members of the regular and Reserve components of our Armed Forces between deployment. Fixing our troops' unpredictable rest and retraining policy is long overdue.

In an interview last Monday, Marine Corps Commander General James Conway highlighted repeated deployments and short periods of time between them to rest as factors contributing to increased mental stress and burdens on families of service men and women.

As a member of the Armed Services Committee, I am intimately acquainted with how this war has damaged our national security, our diplomatic standing and the readiness of our military; and, as a Californian, I am well aware of how it is draining the defense and security resources of my home State and others.

As we speak, a unit from Walnut Creek, California, in my district, is leading a task force comprised of six units that come from armories throughout the East Bay and Northern California. The California Army National Guard indicates that the unit of 824 soldiers is the largest single California National Guard unit to be deployed since the Korean War. These are men and women who will benefit from this legislation in real time.

We are sending more and more men and women to Iraq every day. The Bush administration is failing to accurately account for all of the costs of these repeated deployments. On the microlevel, our deployed men and women are being taken away from their families in a revolving door of service because the war has gone on much longer than the President believed it would. And on a larger scale, we are damaging the readiness for our Armed Forces to defend against future attacks here at home and around the world, as well as national emergencies here at home.

Mr. Speaker, my bill simply states that if a unit or a member of a regular

component of the Armed Forces deploys to Iraq, they will have an equivalent amount of time at home before they are redeployed. No unit or member of a Reserve component, including the National Guard, could be redeployed to Iraq within 3 years of their previous deployment. In the event of an operational emergency posing a threat to vital national security interests, the President may waive the amendment's limitations by certifying to Congress that deployment of the unit or a member is necessary for national security.

The military departments also are provided waiver authority in the bill for individual volunteers who seek to redeploy before the expiration of the mandated time of rest between the deployments. This bill in no way, shape or form hinders the Commander in Chief's ability to manage military personnel.

Mr. Speaker, it is critical that we come together and take a very critical step to preserve the readiness of our men and women in uniform for them and for our national security.

If we are honest about wanting to support our troops, there is no better place to start than to correct our troop rotation policy. For far too long, the members of the Guard and Reserve have been unrepresented in Congress. Today, every Member has an opportunity to help them.

Mr. Speaker, I include the following letters of support for my bill from the Reserve Enlisted Association and Veterans for America.

RESERVE ENLISTED ASSOCIATION,
July 27, 2007.

Hon. ELLEN TAUSCHER,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSWOMAN TAUSCHER: Thank you on behalf of the members of the Reserve Enlisted Association of the United States (REA) for keeping enlisted men and women serving in the Reserve Component in the forefront of your work as evidenced by your introduction of a bill to mandate minimum periods of rest and recuperation between deployments.

REA appreciates the intent of the bill to provide predictability for serving reservists, their families and their employers.

Your continued support of the Reserve Components is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

LANI BURNETT,
CMSgt, USAFR (RET),
Executive Director.

VETERANS FOR AMERICA STATEMENT IN
SUPPORT OF H.R. 3169

We are compounding the wounds of war.—
Bobby Muller, President of Veterans for America.

Veterans for America strongly supports H.R. 3159, sponsored by Rep. Ellen Tauscher, calling for adequate dwell time for our service members serving in Iraq and elsewhere.

Current deployment policies and operational tempo are compounding the wounds of war. It is a medical fact—confirmed by DoD studies such as the Mental Health Advisory Team IV—that repeated exposure to combat greatly increases the likelihood of service-connected mental health problems. The DoD Mental Health Task Force has already reported that almost half of the mem-

bers of the Guard and Reserve who have served in Iraq are experiencing such problems, as are 38 percent of Soldiers, and 31 percent of Marines.

Inadequate dwell time will cause these numbers to further increase.

Rep. Tauscher's bill will help to ensure that our brave men and women in uniform have the time at home they need to prepare for a return to combat.

Veterans for America urges members of the House Armed Services Committee to support this important legislation. The well-being of our service members depends on it.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to briefly comment to my colleague from California when he talks about and laments on behalf of the Pentagon about all of the problems that they are potentially going to have making all these units up and doing all of these things.

I would like to remind my colleague that the Pentagon has plenty of people speaking for them and working for them. It is our job as the Members of the House of Representatives to speak for our Armed Forces and their families to be sure that we have a consistent policy for dwell time and rest. I appreciate the fact that we are all interested in making sure that we have a strong military, but we need to do that in a way that is responsible and responsive to the needs of our military and their families.

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

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON), who is a former chairman of the Terrorism Subcommittee and the ranking member on the Subcommittee on Air and Land Forces.

Mr. SAXTON. I want to thank Mr. HUNTER for yielding time and just say to my friend, Mrs. TAUSCHER, that I very much understand and appreciate the goals that she has in bringing this legislation forward, but, at the same time, I think there are some realities that we have to face relative to the subject that the bill addresses.

The problem here is twofold. Number one, there is the issue of command flexibility. As Mr. HUNTER pointed out just a few minutes ago, we learned in previous wars that making decisions on tactical activities in a war should not probably be made at the White House and probably should even less likely be made here by 435 Members of Congress.

So while I very much appreciate and agree with the goal of making sure that every soldier and Marine and every member of the four services gets time to recharge their batteries between deployments, having a law which stipulates how precisely that is to be done is a very unwise thing to do.

Secondly, let me say that this problem involves the total number of people that we have in the service. We make decisions from time to time, and sometimes those decisions are right, hopefully most of the time those decisions are right, but sometimes they are not.

In 1991 and 1992, when we started to hear about the "peace dividend," we

decided, collectively, all of us together, some in disagreement, that it would be okay to reduce the size of the Army from about 18 divisions to the equivalent of 10. We collectively decided to reduce the number of people in the Army significantly, almost by half. So today we are operating with the equivalent of 10 divisions, made up in a different structure, a brigade structure; and today 20 of those brigades, Army and Marine brigades, are deployed in Iraq.

When the Commander in Chief and his military commanders in the field decide they need to make changes, they make them based on need, based on threat, and based on operational plans and operational capabilities. That flexibility must in this situation, in my opinion, be preserved.

So, while those of us on this side of the aisle certainly share the goals of the gentlewoman from California, this bill is most unwise and will do, as Mr. HUNTER said, much more harm than good to our troops in the field.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I am happy to yield 1 minute to my friend and colleague from New Jersey (Mr. ANDREWS).

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

Mr. ANDREWS. I thank my friend for yielding and I rise in strong support of her legislation.

Mr. Speaker, there is no disagreement that we should do only what is right for our troops in the field and keep them safe, but there is a disagreement over the meaning of article I of the Constitution of the United States.

Conduct of the foreign policy of this country is not the exclusive purview of the executive branch, but for too long in this institution we have behaved as if it is. So this bill says that it is about time that the Congress of the United States took on our responsibility for assessing the problems in Iraq, took on our responsibility to provide for the common defense. Not to be a spectator as the executive branch makes these decisions in isolation but to be a thoughtful and full partner in that decision-making process.

It is very important for the Members to understand that if the President feels that there is an impairment to the national security of the country, he has the authority to waive the provisions of this bill. But, absent that, he should abide by it.

Please vote "yes."

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING).

Mr. KING of Iowa. I thank my friend from California for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to this debate. I think I will start with the constitutional side of this and what I believe is a disagreement and maybe a fundamental and real disagreement in the Constitution.

I will make this statement, that the Constitution grants Congress the

power to do three things with regard to war: One of them is to declare it, and that is clear; the second one is to raise an Army and a Navy and, by implication, an Air Force, and that is clear; and the third thing is to fund it. But there is nothing in this Constitution that says that we have the authority to overrule the Commander in Chief, nor to micromanage a war. Nor are there any 535 generals that are somehow or another empowered within article I or any other article of the Constitution it.

So when the gentleman says that it is a constitutional responsibility of Congress to conduct foreign policy, I would ask, where in this Constitution do you find that? I find that all vested in the powers of the President, where he appoints ambassadors, he sets foreign policy. Yes, with the advice and consent of the Senate on the confirmation, but it is the President's foreign policy, it is the President's State Department, and it is the President's military to command.

When we deviate from that, we put ourselves in the condition where our Continental Army was back before we established this Constitution. They knew what was wrong. The Continental Congress was trying to fight a war by consensus, and that is why we have a Commander in Chief, and we must adhere to that.

If you really want to give some rest to these troops, don't tell the President what he has to do. He is doing all he can to give our troops all the rest he can.

I just came back from there. Expand this standing, active duty military so that they can get some rest. Don't pull them out of the field. And if you are sincere about this, don't limit it to Operation Iraqi Freedom. Expand this globally. If you really mean it, they get tired wherever they are, in Afghanistan, Iraq and wherever they happen to be on the globe.

The President knows that. He cares about these troops. I looked him in the eye last week. He is doing everything he can. Everyone is a volunteer, and everyone is a volunteer not just for the military but for this mission. And you cannot separate your support for the troops from support of the mission. You must support their mission. If you are going to ask them to put their lives on the line for us, then you stand for their mission. The least we can do is wait for General Petraeus' report.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind my colleagues that opposing this bill is to ratify the status quo; and if my colleagues choose to say that things are going just great, that we are not damaging our readiness, that we are not damaging the ability for the Guard to be home when they are needed by their Governors to do emergencies here, that we are not overstressing our troops, then I urge my colleagues not to support my bill. They are then ratifying the status quo.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to my friend and colleague, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS).

Mr. CUMMINGS. I want to thank Mrs. TAUSCHER for this very important legislation, and I support it wholeheartedly.

I want to say to the last gentleman that spoke, it is because we support our troops, because we care about them and their families, that we support this legislation. 159,000 of our troops are currently deployed in battle to stabilize Iraq.

□ 1220

On Tuesday, the United States Department of Defense reported that another 20,000 will be sent to Iraq for rotation duty.

In the meantime, our servicemembers continue to suffer through multiple deployments with little time for rest or to retrain. The DOD has continuously failed to meet the goal of deploying active duty troops for 1 year and allowing them to rest for 2, along with ensuring that Reservists are deployed for 1 year and rest for 5. This failure has often been called a backdoor draft.

Not only has ongoing multiple deployments had a detrimental physical and emotional impact on our troops and their families, but it also has hindered the Armed Forces' ability to reach its retention and recruitment goals. Namely, both the Army and Air Force have failed to reach their retention goals for the mid-career and career personnel. At the current rate, there will be few officers and enlisted soldiers left to lead. Who will be our next generation of soldiers? I urge all of my colleagues to vote in support of this legislation.

Mr. HUNTER. I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. DRAKE).

Mrs. DRAKE. Mr. Speaker, I recognize that this is a contentious issue. I also recognize that some of us will never agree on the question of Iraq and whether our presence there is justified. However, I believe there is common ground, and I introduced a substitute amendment during the Armed Services Committee that highlights the common ground.

My substitute amendment, which is modeled after Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM's alternative to what has come to be known as the Webb amendment, replaced the base text with a sense of Congress that the Department of Defense should strive to meet certain goals concerning dwell time between troop deployment.

My amendment maintained the goals that are outlined in the underlying bill. My amendment represents an alternative that touches on the issues that all of us, Republicans and Democrats, agree on. We all agree that our troops need to rest between deployment. We all agree that a rested fighting force is an effective fighting force. We all agree, hopefully, that these

goals should not be limited to troops deployed to Operation Iraqi Freedom, which the underlying bill unfortunately does.

We all agree that this committee must continue, as it has done so effectively in the past, providing the resources to our troops that they need to do their jobs effectively and safely.

I believe this bill creates an unrealistic expectation on the part of our families and our military members. The bill does not define threat to national security interests, and the Presidential waiver is simply paperwork with no minimum standard.

I also believe this bill violates the separation of powers as defined in our Constitution. Unfortunately, the Democrat majority decided to consider this bill under a closed rule with no room for debate on alternatives.

Mr. Speaker, there is common ground on this issue, but, unfortunately, it is not represented in this bill, and I urge my colleagues to vote against H.R. 3159.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES).

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for introducing this legislation and giving me 1 minute.

Deployed, depleted, desperate. Deployed, depleted, desperate. A news article in the Raleigh, North Carolina, paper in April of this year, and I read: "The volunteer military, especially the Army and the Marine Corps, has been ground down by endless combat deployments." Deployed, depleted, desperate. They desperately need this bill to pass so they can spend time with their families.

One other quick point. An Army study found that the more often soldiers are deployed, the longer they are deployed each time. And the less time they spend at home, the more likely they are to suffer mental health problems, such as combat trauma, anxiety, and depression.

I close by saying again, deployed, depleted, desperate. We have got to pass this legislation. God bless our men and women in uniform. As Barry McCaffrey said in the spring of this year, the Army and the Marine Corps are going to unravel if we don't help them.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I want to address my remarks to the gentleman, for a second, to the gentleman who just spoke.

My son is a marine who is doing his third tour. He is calm. He is determined. He loves his country, just like all of his fellow marines. The constant illustrating or projecting of our Armed Forces as somehow victims is something that finds absolutely no truth when you go out among our uniformed personnel.

The Marine Corps has never been more effective. They have never had higher morale. They have excellent re-enlistment rates. Interestingly, there are high reenlistment rates among the

people that are in combat. They are not deployed to the point where they are depleted, and they are not desperate and their families are not desperate.

With those happy words, I would like to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. McKEON), a member of the committee.

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I thank him and his family and son, especially, who joined the Marines the day after 9/11 and is now serving his third deployment.

I rise today in opposition to the cleverly dubbed troop readiness bill being considered. While none of us here want to be at war, the fact remains that we are. And we owe it to the honorable men and women in uniform to provide the proper tools, resources and atmosphere for victory.

So it is beyond my comprehension that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle must insist on limiting the authority of our military leaders and General Petraeus.

From the outset, this poorly crafted dwell time bill may have the faint appearance of trying to improve the readiness of units and quality of life of members in the Armed Forces, but it is just another example of the disingenuous goal masked by a clever name. In truth, the bill is a backhanded attempt to force an American withdrawal from Iraq.

In doing so, the bill limits the flexibility of the U.S. military commanders to conduct operations in the field and only prohibits troops deployed in Iraq. This is a point that should not be overlooked. The true intent of this legislation is obvious. There are mandates that only apply to the U.S. forces committed to Operation Iraqi Freedom. Afghanistan, another active theater in this war against terror, is not even mentioned. If this were a sincere effort on the part of my Democrat counterparts, it would apply to all deployments.

Mr. Speaker, the harsh realities in this bill would have lasting negative effects on our military and would inappropriately infringe upon the constitutional duties of the President of the United States as Commander in Chief. If this bill were to become law, it would paralyze our military. It would increase stress on our Armed Forces by reducing the pool of forces available and would intensify the risk of our soldiers remaining in Iraq. Moreover, it could theoretically extend the amount of time forces remain on the ground in Iraq, which would negatively impact the morale of our soldiers and their families at home.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 3159 is bad policy, and I urge my colleagues to oppose it. Churchill once said in the midst of another war, "Give us the tools and we will finish the job."

Mr. Speaker, it is the duty of this House and of this Congress and of this Nation to give our men and women the

resources they need to see this conflict through to the end. While our troops are fighting in Iraq, Democrat leadership is crafting thinly veiled legislation to weaken their ability to succeed, and I think we must ask ourselves why. I urge my colleagues to join me in opposing this bill.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, I remind my colleagues that voting against this bill is to vote for the status quo.

At this time I am very happy to yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. HARMAN).

Ms. HARMAN. Mr. Speaker, to paraphrase an old ad, when ELLEN TAUSCHER and IKE SKELTON speak, I listen. They work together carefully on important legislation, and this is a piece of important legislation.

I don't know about others in this Chamber, but I am tired. We have been working all day and all night for weeks to try to get to an August recess after accomplishing as much as possible. It is 100 degrees outside. The humidity level is very high, but we are in an air-conditioned place.

In contrast to us, over 100,000 American troops, very brave kids, are in 120 degree weather with 40 to 75 pounds of equipment on their backs, bravely defending America. I think as tired as I am, this bill strikes the right tone and says that in order to fulfill our constitutional duty to provide for the common defense, our constitutional duty to provide for the common defense, we have to make sure that we have a ready military.

Mr. Speaker, we don't. It is broken. Every expert we have heard from knows that. Our failure to plan adequately for the post-military phase in Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere has created a broken military.

So I commend the sponsor of this bill and the others who have helped draft it. I am proud to be a cosponsor in the effort to state clearly that the kids we have sent into harm's way should get the rest and training they deserve.

I would close by saying there was a lot of conversation this morning about FISA and how we are at heightened risk and we are doing the wrong things. Well, I know what is the right thing to do about FISA, and I know what is the right thing to do about a broken military. Pass this bill.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I am just constrained again, and I yield myself 30 seconds.

The military is not broken. The Army is not broken. The Marine Corps is not broken. This continued depiction of our military people as victims who are totally desperate, as the last Member of Congress who spoke on the other side depicted them, that they are somehow desperate, their families are desperate, they are ineffective, they are broken, is totally in error.

We have never had better morale. We have never been more effective. The interesting thing is the people who are reenlisting are reenlisting from the

combat units. That means that they think that their mission has value, and that means that they have high morale.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. MILLER).

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I don't think you can find a single Member in this House who does not want the war in Iraq to end. We pray every day, every day that the war ends. And we are all so very proud of the brave men and women who serve us in the Armed Forces. We all want them to come home to their families safe and secure.

But unfortunately, the terrorists don't really care what we want. Like it or not, the terrorists' war against us is going to continue through the end of this administration and into the next. Whatever you think of George W. Bush, after his time is up, this war will not end.

I can understand the consternation that some have for the way the Bush administration has prosecuted this war. I can understand the desire of some who want to tie his hands. But for the life of me, I cannot understand why we would want to tie the hands of the next administration, of the next President, as he, or she, takes on the mantle of responsibility to lead our Armed Forces as Commander in Chief.

In fact, I just heard the other day one of the major Democrat Presidential contenders, Senator OBAMA, who said that as President he might order an invasion into Pakistan. This, of course, would be a major escalation of the war. How would this legislation affect his ability to do that? What impact would it have on our troops, because this legislation only refers to Iraq deployments.

Could some troops who just returned from Iraq, could they immediately be deployed to Pakistan by "President Obama". I believe it would allow that, regardless of their need for dwell time.

All of us need to think through everything we are doing and how our actions affect our troops and their families. Military families should not be given false hope of decreased deployments and longer dwell times, because any President forced to take on the tremendous responsibility of leading our Armed Forces in this war will just utilize the waiver provisions in this bill and make it meaningless.

You would think any President would just give their Secretary of Defense a blanket waiver. So really, what is the point of this legislation?

Mr. Speaker, in September, General Petraeus will be coming to Congress with his unvarnished assessment in his report on progress in Iraq. Recent reports fortunately have been more positive about the progress being made by our military; although, I will note that the lack of progress by the Iraqi Government on the political front remains a huge problem. The fact that the Iraqi Parliament is taking a recess is cause for great consternation.

But let us all pray that real progress is happening which will allow our troops to come home, and complete their mission and come home soon. I would ask my colleagues to wait to hear the assessment from General Petraeus and then make a judgment on how to move forward in Iraq. I don't believe this legislation is fair to our troops.

And I also want to make a point that I have very high regard and respect for my colleague, the gentlewoman from California, who brings this to the floor today. I do not question her motives for a moment on this, but I do urge my colleagues to defeat this legislation.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, at this time I am very happy to yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. GILCHREST).

Mr. GILCHREST. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

I want to say as a marine combat veteran 40 years ago in Vietnam, I sometimes wonder, as I look around this Chamber, which Members would I follow into combat. Those of you who are sitting here now, those of you who are sitting here now, are you competent enough to lead soldiers into this very difficult human endeavor?

The troops are doing a stunningly competent job and they continue to do so. Are we as Members of this House doing a stunningly competent job to be thoroughly informed about the problems of the war in Iraq and the Middle East?

Part of our competence must be to understand the psychological and physical stress our soldiers in real combat must endure. Experience in combat, those of us who have been there, know how valuable that is to one soldier and the next soldier. But we as policymakers must come up with a policy, and we weigh that experience that is necessary with the physical and psychological endurance of those soldiers that is necessary.

Respecting the troops means we are responsible and competent in developing a policy that is worthy of those young men and women. I urge support for this legislation.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. AKIN) whose son has served as a marine in Iraq.

Mr. AKIN. Mr. Speaker, I have to say in terms of sympathy, I understand the motivation I believe and the interest in our troops that this legislation is designed to deal with. I have two marines that are my sons. I have visited the one when he was in Fallujah. I talked to a number of their troops. I think I understand the stresses that are involved in warfare, also as somebody who served as an officer myself.

That said, however, I think there is a danger when we take a look at a specific problem and we try to micro-manage a solution from the position of Congress. It didn't work during the War of Independence. And the trade-offs as to whether or not you are going

to leave somebody in theater longer, there are a lot of different factors that you have to balance and a lot of special situations.

To give you one that seems a little bit obvious, I suspect that General Petraeus and other generals have been in theater a pretty long time. They probably would have to get a special waiver from the President to do their jobs.

We understand it would be better if they could take a break and see their families more, but the specific situation in their situation calls for the fact that this sort of blanket rule we are going to top-down impose as Congressmen or Congresswomen doesn't make a whole lot of sense.

□ 1240

To try to set up a policy now and to hamstring all the military planners and to apply it just specifically to the situation in Iraq effectively reduces our options, makes it more complicated for us to get our job done, and effectively makes it so that we have less practical combat strength.

I think all of us have agreed that we've seen that we need more troops, and that's something that we need to deal with and have the courage to put that into the budgets in the future. But I think this is a micromanagement. While it may be inspired by good intentions, and I do know that there is a lot of stress on Marine families and Army families as well, I think this is the wrong to go, and I would urge my colleagues to vote "no."

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, I'm so happy to yield 1 minute to my friend and colleague, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LOEBSACK).

Mr. LOEBSACK. I thank the gentlewoman from California for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in very strong support of H.R. 3159, of which I'm a proud cosponsor.

I would like to thank the gentlewoman from California and the chairman of the Armed Services Committee for their leadership on this issue.

Just 14 months after returning from deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, the 833rd Engineer Company of the Iowa Army National Guard was again mobilized for combat duty in Iraq. The men and women of the 833rd have served with distinction. Yet, by providing inadequate and unpredictable rest between deployments, the Bush administration has broken our contract with our citizen soldiers. We have strained our troops, endangering both our men and women in uniform and our national security.

Our servicemembers must have the dwell time necessary to be fully rested, trained and equipped. This bill provides the rest and predictability necessary to ensure the health of our Armed Forces, and I strongly urge its passage.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield to Mr. SHIMKUS, the gentleman from Illinois, 3 minutes.

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

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the ranking member and my good friend, Congresswoman TAUSCHER.

This is a tough bill, and I appreciate it being brought to the floor. People know I come here heartfelt because of my 25 years connected with the United States Army. I don't like to throw that out. You know that. An Army Ranger and Army paratrooper, still an active reservist, but I have become frustrated that we are losing sight of why we have a military.

The mission of the United States military is to fight and win our Nation's wars. Now, many people don't want us to have a military, I understand that, but I think the best hope for democracy and freedom in the world today, even in our work with NATO, is a strong, powerful, committed, professional United States military, and we work on that with our NATO allies.

The mission of the infantry is to get close with and destroy our enemies. Destroy our enemies, to go after them and fight them and send down the message that we're going to fight you until you leave us alone.

Now, there are folks on the other side who don't want us to have that. I am one that thinks it's necessary to have in this country. So I don't think we're in conflict. I do think that we have lost some faith in our leadership in the military. I still have it. I still think our career military officers will make the tough call to deploy and use their troops.

I'm going a little bit slower than I hoped because I'm talking from the heart, but more than just the officer rank, it's the career enlisted leaders. In the Army, it's the command sergeant majors all the way up, from the commanding down to the first sergeant in the company. You have to believe that they will raise the issue about whether their troops cannot perform the mission. That is part of who they are. And when you fight in the trenches and you develop that bond that makes you an effective fighting force, how dare they not think about their soldiers first. I think they do.

I believe in the military. I think their heart's right, and our volunteer military is the best on the face of the earth today. I know we want to keep it that way.

I'm not sure this is the right way to go, but I just wanted to come down and talk from the military's perspective.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 3159.

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

There was no objection.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I'm honored to yield 2 minutes to my friend and colleague, the gentlewoman from New Hampshire

(Ms. SHEA-PORTER) who's a cosponsor of this legislation.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from California for the opportunity.

I stand here today in strong support of H.R. 3159. As a former military spouse and the proud wife of a veteran, I know how important this is to military families. The President's policies have failed on many levels, but they certainly have failed on the soldiers, the troops who are suffering this great strain right now.

I find it ironic that the Iraqi parliament is on vacation for a month while we stand here and tell our troops that they cannot have a break, that they need to stay in the field in the heat and keep fighting the battle for the Iraqis.

The Army's available, active duty combat brigades, along with 80 percent of the Reserves and National Guard, have served at least one tour in Iraq and Afghanistan; and the strain is starting to show.

Recruiting and reenlistment are down, especially in the Army which has reported about a 7 percent first retention drop, and we're having to offer greater bonuses to attract people. Reports of traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress syndrome are up; and this spring the Secretary of Defense announced that active duty soldiers can expect to spend more time in Iraq than they spend at home, with only 12-month breaks between 15-month deployments.

We hear a lot of talk from the White House about supporting our troops. That is what this bill does. This bill will support our troops by supporting their right to have a break from combat, and it will support our military families by protecting their rights to spend time with their loved ones.

I urge my colleagues, regardless of how they feel about this war and the President's policies, to support H.R. 3159.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I'm happy to yield 1 minute to my friend, colleague and neighbor from California (Ms. LEE).

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, let me just say thank you to the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. TAUSCHER) for putting forth this bill, which I believe will take a significant step forward in ending this occupation in Iraq.

This administration professes to care about our troops, so let me tell you, why have about 250,000 of our troops served more than one tour? Tell me this, why have tours in Iraq been extended for all active duty Army soldiers from 12 months to 15 months?

I will tell you why. This administration, after nearly 5 years, nearly half a trillion dollars, and nearly 3,700 brave American lives, is willing to sacrifice the health and safety of our troops and the security of our Nation in a last-ditch effort to save face for its failed policies in Iraq.

Enough is enough, Mr. Speaker. The price is simply too high. The least we

can do is give our troops this badly needed break. That's the least we can do.

I congratulate Congresswoman TAUSCHER for this legislation and urge my colleagues to support it. Our troops need this, and both sides of the aisle should vote for this in a bipartisan fashion.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I'm happy to yield 1 minute to my friend and colleague, the gentleman from Georgia, who is the vice chairman of the Subcommittee on Terrorism on the Foreign Affairs Committee, Mr. SCOTT.

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank very much Mrs. TAUSCHER. It's such a pleasure to be here.

This is an extraordinarily important bill, and it is timely. I think it's very important to answer one of my colleague's questions about the constitutional responsibilities. It's clear in Article I, section 2, of the Constitution. Both James Madison as well as Hamilton concurred when they mentioned not only to declare war is the duty of the Congress, not only to raise the Army, but to support the Army. Those words are there, Mr. Speaker.

Now, I have been over to Iraq and Afghanistan and talked and looked at the soldiers themselves. I've gone throughout my district and talked to soldiers' families. The stress is in their eyes as you go.

I've gone to Landstuhl in Germany and sat with our soldiers on every trip. I've been three times over there and three times we've been to Germany and talked. The stress is there.

In the military report that was just issued, Mr. Speaker, it said that the extension of the duty, the longer the time and the stress of combat, the longer and the greater occurrences of psychological stress. Our Army may not be broken, Mr. Speaker, but it's at the breaking point, and we need to give ample time for our soldiers to come home and rest.

If you care about the soldiers, vote for this bill.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield to Dr. GINGREY, the gentleman from Georgia, 3½ minutes.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I want to refer to my colleague from Georgia who just spoke. I reference article II, section 2, of the Constitution where it says the President shall be Commander in Chief of the Army and the Navy of the United States and of a militia of the several States.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to this legislation. It's rather outrageously being hailed by the Democrats as a readiness measure. Unfortunately, I fear this becomes nothing more than another attempt by this majority to pander to their liberal base and capitalize on public opinion polls by once again, this time a little more subtlety, attempting to draw down the troops in Iraq.

This is because the readiness provision within this bill apply only to

troops returning from Iraq. While a unit which just completed a 15-month tour in Iraq could not be deployed for 15 months, they could be deployed to combat in Afghanistan or, for that matter, Mr. Speaker, anywhere else in the world tomorrow without any regard for dwell time or readiness.

Inexplicably, while we're engaged in a worldwide campaign against terror, this majority is only concerned with the readiness of the troops deploying to Iraq.

Further, Mr. Speaker, by legislating the military deployment cycle, this bill would hamper the Department of Defense and bar the deployment of units that may be needed to reinforce our efforts in Iraq. Any constitutional scholar would tell you that these decisions, by their very nature, are the job of the Commander in Chief, not 435 would-be commanders in chief.

Now, to get around these unfortunate facts, my friends on the other side of the aisle included in their bill a Presidential waiver. During consideration of the bill in committee, the dangerous implications it could have on our ability to fight and win this global war on terror were often dismissed by the Democrats, my colleagues on the House Armed Services Committee, because of the presence of a waiver in the bill.

In reality, Mr. Speaker, not only will this bill make it more difficult to prosecute the global war on terror, the waiver adds another layer of bureaucracy that could potentially disrupt the deployment preparation cycle.

Mr. Speaker, all of this comes, unfortunately, during a time when we are just now starting to see marked progress and the momentum swinging in our favor in Iraq. Sadly, what is great news for America and for our troops is consequently bad news for the Democratic majority and this defeatist attitude.

Just this week, a New York Times editorial authored by Mike O'Hanlon and Kenneth Pollack reflected this progress. Make no mistake, Mr. Speaker, these two men have steadily criticized the prosecution of the war and lack of progress in Iraq over the past 4 years. However, just this week they wrote, "We are finally getting somewhere in Iraq, at least in military terms. Today, morale is high. The soldiers and the Marines told us they feel that they now have a superb commander in General David Petraeus; they are confident in his strategy, they see real results, they feel now they have the numbers needed to make a real difference."

And thankfully, U.S. casualties in Iraq are the lowest in 8 months.

Mr. Speaker, I know we are all passionate about this issue, and I care deeply about our troops and our Nation, and I know Mrs. TAUSCHER and my colleagues on the other side of the aisle do as well. But now is not the time to risk impeding the progress that we are making. Now is the time to continue building on the turnaround we

have made in the Anbar Province and the improvement we are seeing in Baghdad.

I urge my colleagues to vote "no."

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I'm happy to yield 2 minutes to my friend and colleague, 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, let me thank my good friend and thank her for her leadership on the Armed Services Committee; and to my friends on the other side of the aisle, it is great news that we have a new direction in the Armed Services Committee that takes seriously the issues of readiness and the quality of life for our troops.

Some would ask the question, troops are in battle, why are you worrying about the quality of life? Because my friend who cited the Constitution failed to recognize Article I, Section 8, that indicates that Congress does have the authority to declare war. Embodied in that declaration is a responsibility for our troops.

And might I refer my friend to the letter by the Reserve Enlisted Association which is thanking Congresswoman TAUSCHER for acknowledging the importance of rest time, rest time between battles. These soldiers are battle worn, mentally and physically. The first part of their duty they were over there with no equipment, no Humvees that were reinforced, no equipment that protected them from those weapons they were being shot at by. The Veterans for America emphasizes we are compounding the wounds of war.

When I visited Iraq, I would talk to individuals who are carpenters and painters. They were given a gun, and they were told to get into battle. Readiness is a key.

I just was home in my district, and a mother came to me crying. Her son is a naval Reserve officer who's been in the Reserves for some 20 years or so, 38 years old, is being handed a gun and said go off to war. There are disciplines and there are training that we must give to these individuals.

And just a few appropriation cycles ago, I offered an amendment dealing with the time frame for redeployment. We're seeing soldiers being redeployed once, twice, three times, four times with no rest. And so we have a balance here for active duty, Reserve, National Guard forces, and others.

We are clearly doing the right thing in this bill, and I ask my colleagues to support it.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3159, the Ensuring Military Readiness Through Stability and Predictability Deployment Policy Act of 2007. I would like to thank my colleague Ms. TAUSCHER for introducing this legislation, and the Chairman of the Armed Services Committee, Mr. SKELTON, for his leadership on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, no issue will define this Congress more than how we handle the ongoing

conflict in Iraq. In recent weeks and months, this Congress has taken definitive action to end what we, and the people of the United States, believe to be a conflict without tangible goals and targets. The American people made their views clear last November: The time has come to end U.S. military involvement in Iraq.

And yet, the Bush Administration has decided to instead increase the numbers of American soldiers in Iraq. President Bush's "New Way Forward" strategy, announced in January, calls for the deployment of over 20,000 additional U.S. combat forces, to be used to stabilize Baghdad and the Anbar Province. This is coming at a time when, according to an NBC News/Wall Street Journal Poll, 59 percent of Americans believe we should be reducing the number of troops in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, at the heart of this effort are our brave troops, the men and women who courageously risk and too often lose their lives thousands of miles from home. The Iraq war has already cost over 3,500 American lives. More than 25,000 Americans have been injured. Thousands of U.S. personnel have lost limbs or suffered debilitating mental and physical injuries. Yet as casualties rise, the Bush Administration pushes for the escalation of American soldiers into the most hostile communities in Iraq. In addition to the enormous expenditure of lives, American taxpayers have paid more than \$400 billion to sustain this misadventure.

When a soldier is deployed away from home for lengthy periods of time, his or her entire family suffers. Earlier this week, the United States Army released a report that stated that the children of enlisted soldiers are 60% more likely to be abused or neglected when a parent is deployed to a combat zone. The author of this study commented, "The surprising finding was that the effect of deployment was so consistent. Just about any way we could divide the population, we found increased rates of child maltreatment during deployment. We looked at pay grade, rank, single or multiple deployments, whether the family lives on or off post—all showed increases." Researchers attributed this to the increasing trend of continuous deployment of our soldiers. As Chair of the Congressional Children's Caucus, I would like to register my strong concern about the impact this war is having on American children and families.

This bill, H.R. 3159, contains important provisions to ensure that those who are sent to fight in what I have always considered to be an ill-advised war have adequate time to rest and recover between deployments: time to spend with their families and loved ones, and time to recover from the mental and psychological problems that are all too common after combat deployment. As we continue to work here in Congress to bring this war to a speedy and comprehensive conclusion, I believe we must make every effort to provide consideration for those who bear the brunt of this Administration's ill-advised preemptive war in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that our service men and women deserve enough time to rest and recover at home between combat deployments for Operation Iraqi Freedom. This legislation reaffirms the stated Department of Defense policy for deployment, which is currently being waived for Iraq, calling for a 1:2 deployment ratio for active duty and a 1:5 ratio for

reserve soldiers. It continues to allow the President and the Chiefs of the Military services to waive these requirements, if unforeseen circumstances arise.

Four years after our ill-advised invasion, the evidence is clear and irrefutable: The invasion of Iraq, while a spectacularly executed military operation, was a strategic blunder without parallel in the history of American foreign policy. This is what can happen when the Congress allows itself to be stampeded into authorizing a president to launch a preemptive war of choice. It is time to rethink our strategy in Iraq, to encourage and engage in diplomacy, and to sit down with the various players in the Middle East and make real strides towards securing Iraq, the Iraqi people, and most importantly our most precious resource: the troops we love so dearly.

Mr. Speaker, I will continue to strongly oppose this war until we are finally able to end this conflict. In the meantime, I believe it is our responsibility, here in Congress, to make sure that those we send to fight and risk their lives in Iraq receive the very best care and services. This includes adequate time to rest and recover between deployments.

I strongly urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this legislation.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I'm happy to yield 2 minutes to my friend and colleague, the gentleman from Pennsylvania, Admiral SESTAK.

Mr. SESTAK. Mr. Speaker, this is a tough bill. We found out after Vietnam that, instead of rotating our forces, if we had just stayed there with the same force, as we did in World War II, our fighting would have been more effective and less lives would have been lost. But this war is different.

We found out in World War II that, on average, a man in that combat did 182 days of combat, horrific combat, but 182 days on average. In this war, in those 15 months, our men and women are overseas in Iraq. Every day of those 15 months those men and women go outside the wire, into combat. This is a different war.

I am taken, first and foremost, by the reports that more are coming home with post-traumatic syndrome. I am, second, taken with our constitutional responsibility to make rules for the government and regulation of our armed services. And then third, I'm taken by the waiver, the national security waiver that is placed within this bill that our national command authorities, the President and the Secretary of Defense may waive for national security reasons the requirement to send troops forward if they have even been home less than they were in combat.

Our national command authorities every day must approve every deployment. They must, therefore, only turn to us and say it is a national requirement that they must redeploy less than they have been over there in Iraq.

□ 1300

This is a different war, and I am glad to see we are taking seriously our responsibility to provide for the rules,

the regulation, the government of our re-armed services in what is truly a different war and yet give our President the right to ensure that the risks are weighed for a national security waiver.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to my friend and colleague, the gentlelady from Ohio (Mrs. JONES).

(Mrs. JONES of Ohio asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. I would like to thank my colleague, Mrs. TAUSCHER, for her leadership on this committee and on this issue. When I went to Congress, I never thought that I would be deploying troops or welcoming caskets back to my congressional district. What I am learning is most of the young men and women who get killed in Iraq are on their second or third or fourth tour. Clearly it must indicate that they need some rest and down time.

I am here to say I understand, Mr. Leadership in the military, you think you know what you are doing, but I am telling you I sit with mothers and fathers and sisters and brothers and aunts and uncles who have lost people in the military. If all it takes to help them save their lives is to give them some rest, give them some rest.

Does it need to be mandated? Apparently so. Let's mandate it. Let's give our young men and women the time they need, down time, to be able to do a good job. I support your resolution and am glad to stand up with you.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, what I continuously hear from my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are arguments that speak for poor Pentagon planners that are going to have to work a little harder to put units together and handcuffing the Commander in Chief.

Let me remind my colleagues that this Presidential waiver, which is inside of this bill, is not only substantive, but it is there to prevent further degrading of our military readiness. I think we all understand that we have heard from people like General McCaffrey, who most recently reported to Congress that 88 percent of non-deployed Army Guard units are rated not ready or poorly equipped, that the Army is overextended, and that we will soon be unable to meet our Homeland Security commitments and meet any new threats if we maintain the current abusive and untenable dwell-time policy.

The question for the Members of the House today is who do you stand for. Do you stand for military planners or other members of the Pentagon who have the executive branch to speak for them, or do you stand with the American people, the families of our troops, and the troops themselves, to be sure that we increase our readiness to make sure that we honor their service and their valor and their sacrifice by mak-

ing sure that they are not only re-trained and ready, but they have time to be home with their family before they are redeployed.

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

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, could you tell us how much time we have left.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from California has 1 minute, and the gentlewoman from California has 3½ minutes.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, let me make this point: we are in two warfighting theaters right now, Afghanistan and Iraq. We have troops deployed.

We are, by all accounts at this point, doing well in those warfighting theaters. Somebody stays in battle space. For the gentlelady who asked me, who do you stand with, the planner in the Pentagon, or the troops in the field, I would answer very firmly, I stand for the troops in the field. I stand for that marine corporal who needs to have that gunnery sergeant, who's been there before, who understands how you avoid that roadside bomb, who understands how you approach that village, who understands how you work that cannon, who understands how you interrogate people without risking your own troops.

That comes from experience, and the idea that we are going to deny these experienced, noncommissioned officers, these old hands whose experience can make the difference between life and death because their meter didn't expire when they were back home, and they only got 6 months' worth of dwell time in country, rather than 7, is the wrong reason to vote for this bill.

Please oppose this bill, readiness mandates, with a "no."

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, I want to respond to my colleague, because I think it's important that we make sure that we have everything on the table and that we are very clear about who we are standing for and who we are putting the burdens on.

What is clear to me is that we have the finest military in the world, that we have men and women, sons and daughters, spouses, brothers and sisters, employees, friends and neighbors that have decided to give their country their time, ultimately, perhaps, pay the sacrifice, the ultimate sacrifice, and go fight for the American people and their ideals to protect us here at home.

We have an opportunity today to do what is right, to do what the Pentagon has not done for many reasons. I know my colleagues want to make this about the Iraq war, but I know this is really about our families and our troops.

If we cannot guarantee them some predictability for their dwell time at home, for retraining and rest, we are going to continue to degrade the readiness of our military. We are in no shape in this very dangerous world to continue on that path.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to my friend and colleague, the gentlelady from California (Ms. WATERS).

Ms. WATERS. I would like to commend the gentlelady from California for the tremendous work that she has done, not only to deal with all of the problems of our being in Iraq, but for bringing this legislation to the floor.

The U.S. has been at war in Afghanistan since October 7, 2001, and in Iraq since March 19, 2003. Since that time, over 1 million troops have been deployed to Iraq, in total, with 500,000 having been deployed at least twice. These numbers are rapidly growing at the detriment of the military. There are currently 160,000 troops on active duty in Iraq.

To keep up this level of deployment with an all-volunteer military, the administration is cutting corners on previous rules on troop deployment limits and rest times. Our military is being ground down to the hilt, and it's near the breaking point.

In recent briefings, Major General Batiste said young officers and non-commissioned officers are leaving the service at an alarming rate. Equipment is in dismal shape, requiring hundreds of billions of dollars to refit the force to preinvasion conditions. Active duty companies preparing for deployment to Iraq within the next 6 months are at less than 50 percent strength, are commanded by young and sometimes inexperienced lieutenants, and are lacking the equipment needed for training. Our all-volunteer force cannot sustain the current attempt for much longer.

The lack of deployment limits and dwell times have taken an incredible strain on the individuals who have been asked to shoulder this burden. Post-traumatic stress disorder and similar illnesses are significantly amplified by enduring or repeated deployments to Iraq.

Consequently, our men and women in uniform are returning with levels of mental illness not seen since Vietnam. According to a recent study by the Department of Defense, 49 percent of National Guardsmen report mental health problems. Let us not forget the hidden casualties of the war in Iraq, the families.

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this bill to provide minimum "dwell-time" for our troops who have served in Iraq.

Madam Chairwoman, I opposed the war in Iraq from the outset and will continue to do so.

In 4 years, the war has done great damage to our global prestige, our national morale, and our national security. More than anything, it has damaged our military and their families.

It is Congress's duty to ensure that our troops are treated with respect and that they have resources for the missions they perform. Equally important, it is Congress's job to ensure our troops have the rest and training they need. With this bill, we will do right by our military personnel and their families by ensuring they have adequate time at home between deployments.

The Defense Department has established a goal to provide active duty service personnel

with 2 years at home between each year they are deployed, and 5 years at home for every year of deployment for reserves.

Regrettably that goal has not been achieved. In fact, the policy has been waived by the Defense Department for those serving in Iraq.

In the last 4 years our troops and reserves have shouldered the burden of multiple deployments overseas with professionalism and courage. The strain on them and their families grows with each day they are away from home, yet tours of duty have been extended time and again. Just this past April, Secretary Gates announced that tours of duty for the Army would be increased from 12 months to 15 months.

The strain is not only being felt by our troops and their families, it's also affected the Armed Forces, particularly the Army, in meet recruiting and retention goals.

With this bill, we call for time between deployments for active-duty personnel in Iraq to equal to or exceed the length of their most recent deployment. For National Guard and Reserve units and members, the bill calls for time between deployments of at least three times longer than the length of their most recent deployment.

This may seem like a small step, but for our troops it's essential.

I urge my colleague to vote yes on this bill.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3159 and thank Congresswoman TAUSCHER for her leadership.

We have had a lot of disagreement on the occupation of Iraq. There is one thing we all agree upon, however—the support of our troops.

The toll that has been taken on our men and women in uniform is unimaginable. They have volunteered to sacrifice so much in service to their Nation.

Unfortunately, political decisions by this administration have prevented us from bringing this misguided occupation to an end.

Today, we try to fulfill our commitment to the brave troops who are out there serving on the front line. The least we can do is to ensure that every service member gets the right amount of training and rest. It is our moral obligation.

I support H.R. 3159 and look forward to the day when we can bring our troops home for good.

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, we have had some fierce debates here in the Congress about our occupation of Iraq. Many Republicans insist that redeploying our troops from Iraq will lead to failure there. My Democratic colleagues and I see it much differently. We see clearly that our continued occupation is a debacle that prevents Iraqis taking control of their own nation and destiny.

But what Democrats and Republicans can agree on is that Iraq is not America's only national security concern. America faces several potent strategic challenges: al Qaeda. Afghanistan. Iran. North Korea. If we continue to exhaust our military in Iraq, we risk being at a disadvantage facing these other dangerous threats.

This bill ensures that our troops get the rest, recuperation and retraining they need to be most effective. If we fail to provide our troops with the time they need to rest, refit, and retrain at home, we are putting them at a disadvantage when they return to theater.

Furthermore, the common sense provisions in this bill mean that we are paying attention to another group that has borne the brunt of this war: our soldiers' families. It has been said that there are two ways to break the military: you can break the soldier, or you can break the family. Our troops agreed to accept a certain level of hardship when they enlisted. The least we can do in return is make sure that we have their back, and are giving them the time they need to recuperate.

The strength of our armed forces comes from the strength of our men and women in uniform. If we fail to pass this bill, we risk weakening American national security. We face a host of threats beyond Iraq. Pass this bill to keep America strong and prepared.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this legislation to provide some Congressional oversight over the deployment and maintenance of our troops stationed overseas. As the Constitution states in Article I Section 8., Congress has the power "to make rules for the government and regulation of the land and naval forces," and therefore Congress has an obligation to speak on such matters. I have been and remain extremely concerned about the deployment extensions and stop-loss programs that have kept our troops deployed and engaged for increasingly extended periods of time. My constituents who are affected by this policy have contacted me with their concerns as well.

The legislation at least seeks to provide some guidance and relief to our troops who have been stretched to the limit by the increasing duration of deployment overseas and the decreasing duration of time back home between deployments. Several military experts, including General Barry McCaffrey, have commented on this problem and the challenges it poses to the health and safety of our troops.

Although I am voting for this bill, I am increasingly concerned about Congress's approach to the issue of our continued involvement in Iraq. Rather than a substantive move to end the US military presence in Iraq, this bill and others that have passed recently seem to be merely symbolic moves to further politicize the war in Iraq. Clearly the American public is overwhelmingly in favor of a withdrawal from Iraq, but Congress is not listening. At best, the House seems willing to consider only such half-measures as so-called re-deployment. We need a real solution that puts the safety of our troops above politics. We need to simply bring them home. As I said recently on the Floor of the House, we just marched in so we can just march out.

The proper method for ending the war is for Congress to meet its responsibility to de-authorize and defend the war. Micromanaging a troop deployment is not the answer since it overstays the bounds of Congressional authority.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, the House is taking action today to bring some sanity back to our military deployment and rotation policies. I intend to vote for this bill.

We all know that because of these repeated deployments, the divorce rates of military families are up, and the financial burdens faced by our Guard and Reserve families have been enormous. While this bill cannot address all of the deployment-related problems confronting our military families, it would address one of the most glaring: insufficient down time and retraining between deployments.

If this bill becomes law, it would mandate dedicated periods of time between deployments for all servicemembers. For active duty personnel, the intervals between deployments would have to be at least as long as the last deployment itself. For our Guard and Reserve forces, the interval between deployments would have to be at least three times the length of a servicemember's last tour.

Every Member of this House can tell multiple stories they've heard from servicemembers or their family members about the toll that these multiple, sometimes back-to-back deployments take on our military families. Let me quickly relate one story I've heard, one of many reasons I'm voting for this bill today.

Bill Potter is an attorney and lecturer in politics at both Princeton University and Rutgers University. Just over a year ago, he wrote an op-ed in the Trenton Times regarding the situation of his nephew, a Marine Corps captain, who had been blinded in his right eye after being fired on by an Iraqi policeman-turned-insurgent—one of many Iraqi policemen-turned-insurgents that we have trained and armed with an inadequate counterintelligence effort by the Iraqi government to weed out such bad actors.

Bill's nephew is a remarkable young man. Wounded twice in Iraq on his first tour in 2005, recovered sufficiently to go on a deployment to the Pacific in 2006 and is now facing the prospect of a second tour in Iraq beginning in January 2008—and of leaving his now nine year-old son behind for a third time in as many years.

This young Marine—like so many others—has already paid too high a price for this President's misguided war in Iraq. This bill, if enacted, would at least give our servicemembers and their families some real down time between deployments—time to reconnect with each other, and time for these gallant Americans to get the rest and refresher training that they will need to face the future. It's for all of those reasons that I'm voting for this bill, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I went to the Rules Committee yesterday for the fourth time since January asking that my amendment be made in order to allow the House to discuss and vote on the recommendations of the bipartisan Iraq Study Group as the way forward in Iraq.

For the fourth time this year, the Rules Committee said no. I can only assume from that action that the Democrat leadership instead prefers to continue to lock down the House and deny the opportunity to take the bipartisan road on Iraq policy.

On the question of finding solutions in Iraq, this House cannot continue to just blindly follow the White House or the leadership of the Congress.

The Washington Post has editorialized that the debate on Iraq in recent weeks is all about political gamesmanship. Every member in this House knows that's true and that is what's been going on here. More importantly, I believe that the American people know what's going on. Just look at the polls on where Congress stands.

We owe it to the men and women in our armed forces who are putting their lives on the line every day in Iraq to at least take the time to discuss the recommendations of the Iraq Study Group.

We also owe it to their families.

We need to have a honest, true debate on the recommendations of the Iraq Study Group.

To not vote on the recommendations of such a distinguished group that took over eight months looking at this issue and talking to dozens of military officers, regional experts, academics, journalists and high-level government officials from America and abroad just doesn't make sense. Take a look at the Iraq Study Group report for the extensive lists of those who advised the ISG, including the military senior advisor panel—retired Navy Admiral James O. Ellis, Jr., retired Army General John M. Keane, retired Army General Edward C. Meyer, retired Air Force General Joseph W. Ralston, and retired Army Lt. General Roger C. Schultz, Sr.

As I have said time and time again, the Iraq Study Group is the way forward and what I believe is the best and most appropriate way to be successful in Iraq.

It was bipartisan and all of its 79 recommendations were unanimous.

Two of its members—Lee Hamilton, the co-chair, and Leon Panetta—served in this body. Two others—Alan Simpson and Chuck Robb—served in the Senate.

Co-chair Jim Baker and Lawrence Eagleburger served as secretary of State.

Bill Perry was President Clinton's secretary of Defense.

Bob Gates served on the panel for seven months—stepping down to become the current secretary of Defense.

H.R. 2574, the Iraq Study Group Recommendation Implementation Act of 2007, which was the basis of the amendment I asked to be made in order under the bill we are debating today, has 59 cosponsors—34 Republicans and 25 Democrats.

We all know the war has created a bitter divide in our country. The ISG allows us to come together.

I will say it again: the best way forward is for both the Congress and the president to embrace the recommendations of the Iraq Study Group.

Mr. Speaker, in the final analysis, it comes down to doing the right thing. The question is, when will the leadership in Congress show the courage that the American people expect and do the right thing—not for me or for the members of this House, but for the thousands of brave men and women serving in uniform, their families and the good of our country?

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this bill.

We continue to fight to end the war in Iraq. However, in the meantime, we must ensure that our troops are provided with the time to return home, rest, recuperate and train before they return to battle. Our troops have risked their lives and Congress has a responsibility to stand up for them.

The legislation we are considering today strengthens the American military by mandating minimum periods of rest and recuperation for units and members of regular and reserve components of our Armed Forces between deployments. The bill states that if a unit or member of a regular component of the Armed Forces deploys to Iraq, they will have an equivalent amount of time at home before they are redeployed.

The legislation will help alleviate a significant military readiness crisis. When the Bush Administration took office in 2001, all active

duty Army divisions were rated at the highest readiness levels and were fully manned, equipped, and trained. Now, the Administration's failed policies in Iraq have depleted our military and put a tremendous strain on our troops. Already, an estimated 250,000 soldiers in the Army and Marine Corps have served more than one tour in Iraq and each one of the Army's available active duty combat brigades has served at least a 12-month tour in Iraq or Afghanistan. And this spring, the Defense Secretary announced that all active duty Army soldiers would have their tours in Iraq extended from 12 to 15 months.

The war in Iraq has had disastrous consequences for our Armed Forces and our troops. By reducing the stress on our men and women in uniform and ensuring they get the training they need to stay safe, this legislation makes support for the troops into more than an empty slogan.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to House Resolution 601, the previous question is ordered on the bill, as amended.

The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

MOTION TO RECOMMIT OFFERED BY MR. HUNTER

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I offer a motion to recommit.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is the gentleman opposed to the bill?

Mr. HUNTER. Yes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the motion to recommit.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. Hunter moves to recommit the bill H.R. 3159 to the Committee on Armed Services with instructions to report the same back to the House forthwith, with the following amendments:

In subsections (a)(1) and (b)(1) of section 2, strike "No unit" each place it appears and insert the following: "Subject to section 3, no unit".

Add at the end of the bill the following new section:

SEC. 3. CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENT.

Subsections (a)(1) and (b)(1) of section 2 may not be implemented unless the Secretary of Defense certifies to the President and to Congress that implementation of those subsections—

(1) would not cause the tour length of any deployed unit (or members assigned to that unit) to be extended; and

(2) would not increase the operational risk to any deployed unit.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California is recognized for 5 minutes in support of his motion.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, thank you. I want to thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for their decorum during this debate and for their true interest and their motivation in support of our troops.

We all want to conclude this war. We all want to do everything that we can for military families. We simply have a difference of opinion as to whether or not mandating certain rest periods before a soldier or a marine can go back to battle is in the interest of the war fighting troops.

My answer is, it's not in the interest. It will not raise their morale. What it will do is it will deprive our war fighting troops. It will deprive that corporal, it will deprive that squad in Fallujah or Baghdad or up in Mosul. That experienced old hand, that NCO, who is in the military for a career, and who knows that particular area, and he knows how to avoid roadside bombs, and he knows how to interrogate insurgents, and he knows how to approach a certain canyon so that you don't expose yourself to fire. He won't be there if the gentlelady's motion passes, because he will only have spent 6 months instead of 7 months back at Camp Pendleton, and he won't be available to move to the field of battle.

Now, you know, this is a war of specialties, and I notice that one thing that the majority did, which I think was a good move, was that they excluded the special operations forces from this particular law. The reason they excluded them is because they are special operations forces who have to move back and forth in the theater and have to move out of the theater on a regular basis, sometimes going back and forth between Afghanistan and Iraq, because they have specialties which mean life or death to our war fighters in both of those theaters, and they can't be held back, chained back by this law.

I have got news for my colleagues. There are a lot of people in the regular forces whose presence also means life or death to the combatants in those forces. You have to have experience.

Even the line units are full of specialties. If you have a person who is an expert in roadside bombs, and he comes back after a 7-month tour, if he is a marine, or after a 1-year tour, if he is an Army soldier, he comes back and he gets the latest schooling on a jamming device that will keep that 152 round from blowing up, that roadside bomb, and destroying a Humvee and destroying American soldiers.

He has that capability. But he now cannot go back into theater because the Tauscher amendment has passed, and he can't be deployed. So he stays here with that particular insight, that particular capability, and probably the Marines or the Army will rush a team in. They will try to give them a fast learning period and rush them in, to be a poor substitute for this guy who really has the expertise of telling our people how to jam those signals that detonate those deadly roadside bombs.

Now, what if we need decontamination, we have got a decontamination team in the regular military. They can't go over unless they get a waiver from the President.

Well, it was argued that these waivers will be easy to get. But you know the Marines have told us that they can't plan for a waiver, because they can only follow along. The law will say you can't go.

I have got a picture that I have kept in the Armed Services Committee for a

long time, as the former chairman of the committee, and now ranking member, serving alongside my great friend, Mr. SKELTON.

□ 1315

It is a picture of a 5-ton truck that was struck by a Humvee with a particular armor equipment and an armor package that this committee sent those soldiers. And there is a letter attached to it and it is a letter of thanks that says, "Thanks to you on the Armed Services Committee for making sure that we got this armor." And this was after this 5-ton truck has been blown up. And it said, "We owe our lives, the fact that all eight of us were able to escape, to you on the Armed Services Committee," but it also says, "to our gunnery sergeant." That gunnery sergeant that had the capability, that had that certain expertise of being able to do what it took to make sure that all eight of his people survived.

Mrs. TAUSCHER has said, who do you stand with, the big Pentagon planners or the troops?

The worst thing you can do, Mrs. TAUSCHER, for my son who is on his third deployment, or anybody else's son, is to take away that gunnery sergeant or that senior NCO or that expert who can stand by their side and help them to survive in this very dangerous warfighting theater.

Please vote for this motion to recommit. This motion to recommit says that you cannot make this law certain unless you—

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LYNCH). The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. HUNTER. I would ask the gentlelady for 30 additional seconds.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. I don't have the time, sir.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the motion to recommit.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, I want to make it very clear what this motion to recommit does. This motion to recommit guts our bill and prevents us from giving the dwell time necessary to our troops so that they are not overcommitted, that they can be rested, that they can be retrained, and that they can be resuscitated and spend time with their family.

This motion to recommit prevents us from having the readiness that we need for our national security. It prevents the 50 Governors from having their National Guard back home and rested, with good equipment, to deal with contingencies here at home.

This motion to commit is just another delaying tactic by the minority to deny our troops the dwell time that they need to train, equip, and rest.

The best part about this is the motion to recommit is absolutely unnecessary. If the Secretary of Defense determines that the proposed dwell times in this bill will cause tour lengths of currently deployed units to be ex-

tended, or increases the operational risk to deployed units, the underlying bill already provides the President's ability to waive the deployment mandate.

So this motion to recommit is not necessary. It is, once again, perhaps the last fig leaf on the last fig tree that my colleagues can find to not stand with the troops and their families to provide them the dwell time they need at home to be ready for the next deployment.

At this time, Mr. Speaker, I close by saying I urge my colleagues to defeat the motion to recommit and vote "aye" on H.R. 3159.

I yield to the chairman of the committee.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise to oppose the motion to recommit offered by my friend, my colleague from California who has served with me through the years on the Armed Services Committee.

The ground forces of the United States in particular are being stretched and strained as never before. For instance, during the Second World War, those that were involved with active combat after 3 or 4 months at the most would be taken off line for rest and recuperation. The young men and young women today that are in Iraq are on point in combat and now are extended up to 15 months. I think this bill helps alleviate that point and helps keep the readiness at a higher level.

The stretching and straining of the ground forces, in particular the Army, will have a breaking point. We already know about the equipment shortage of nondeployed units. Why stretch these young people? Why not bring them home? This is a reasonable proposal, reasonable, and should be enacted into law. And, as the gentlelady from California points out, should there be any problem with any unit, there are waivers provided for in this legislation.

This is simple and straightforward. It is about protecting our military readiness, it is protecting the health of the troops and, by the way, helping those families recoup with their loved ones as they come back home with predictability, knowing when they will be home and knowing when they will be due to be deployed once again.

So I find myself having to vote against this motion to recommit for all those reasons: the families, the troops, and the need for predictability; and I compliment the gentlelady on this proposal to bring about predictability for our troops.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to defeat the motion to recommit, which will deny our troops the dwell time that they desperately need and will deny the American people the readiness in their military. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3159, and vote for its passage.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the motion to recommit.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to recommit.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 and clause 9 of rule XX, this 15-minute vote on the motion to recommit H.R. 3159 will be followed by 5-minute votes on passage of H.R. 3159, if ordered, and the approval of the Journal, if ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 207, nays 217, answered "present" 1, not voting 7, as follows:

[Roll No. 795]		
YEAS—207		
Aderholt	Foxx	Murphy, Tim
Akin	Franks (AZ)	Musgrave
Alexander	Frelinghuysen	Myrick
Altman	Gallegly	Neugebauer
Bachmann	Garrett (NJ)	Nunes
Bachus	Gerlach	Pearce
Baird	Gillmor	Pence
Baker	Gingrey	Peterson (PA)
Barrett (SC)	Gohmert	Petri
Barrow	Goode	Pickering
Bartlett (MD)	Goodlatte	Pitts
Barton (TX)	Granger	Platts
Biggert	Graves	Poe
Bilbray	Hall (TX)	Porter
Bilirakis	Hastert	Price (GA)
Bishop (UT)	Hastings (WA)	Pryce (OH)
Blackburn	Hayes	Putnam
Blunt	Heller	Radanovich
Boehner	Hensarling	Ramstad
Bonner	Herger	Regula
Bono	Hobson	Rehberg
Boozman	Hoekstra	Reichert
Boren	Hulshof	Renzi
Boustany	Hunter	Reynolds
Brady (TX)	Inglis (SC)	Rogers (AL)
Brown (GA)	Issa	Rogers (KY)
Brown (SC)	Jindal	Rogers (MI)
Brown-Waite,	Johnson (IL)	Rohrabacher
Ginny	Jordan	Ros-Lehtinen
Buchanan	Keller	Roskam
Burgess	King (NY)	Royce
Burton (IN)	Kingston	Ryan (WI)
Buyer	Kirk	Sali
Calvert	Kline (MN)	Saxton
Camp (MI)	Knollenberg	Schmidt
Campbell (CA)	Kuhl (NY)	Sensenbrenner
Cannon	LaHood	Sessions
Cantor	Lamborn	Shadegg
Capito	Lampson	Shays
Carney	Latham	Shimkus
Carter	LaTourette	Shuster
Castle	Lewis (CA)	Simpson
Chabot	Lewis (KY)	Smith (NE)
Coble	Linder	Smith (NJ)
Cole (OK)	LoBiondo	Smith (TX)
Conaway	Lucas	Souder
Cubin	Lungren, Daniel	Space
Culberson	E.	Stearns
Davis (KY)	Mack	Sullivan
Davis, David	Mahoney (FL)	Tancredo
Davis, Tom	Manzullo	Terry
Deal (GA)	Marchant	Thornberry
Dent	Marshall	Tiahrt
Diaz-Balart, L.	Matheson	Tiberi
Diaz-Balart, M.	McCarthy (CA)	Turner
Doolittle	McCaull (TX)	Upton
Drake	McCotter	Walberg
Dreier	McCrery	Walden (OR)
Duncan	McHenry	Walsh (NY)
Ehlers	McHugh	Wamp
Emerson	McKeon	Weldon (FL)
English (PA)	McMorris	Weller
Everett	Rodgers	Westmoreland
Fallin	Melancon	Whitfield
Feeney	Mica	Wicker
Ferguson	Miller (FL)	Wilson (NM)
Flake	Miller (MI)	Wilson (SC)
Forbes	Miller, Gary	Wolf
Fortenberry	Mitchell	Young (AK)
Fossella	Moran (KS)	Young (FL)

Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania changed his vote from "no" to "present."

So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the unfinished business is the question on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the noes appeared to have it.

RECORDED VOTE

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 232, noes 186, answered "present" 2, not voting 12, as follows:

[Roll No. 797]

AYES—232

Abercrombie	DeLauro	Kildee	Paul	Scott (GA)	Towns	
Ackerman	Dent	Kilpatrick	Payne	Scott (VA)	Udall (CO)	
Allen	Dicks	Kind	Perlmutter	Serrano	Van Hollen	
Andrews	Dingell	Kingston	Pomeroy	Sestak	Velázquez	
Arcuri	Doggett	Klein (FL)	Porter	Shea-Porter	Visclosky	
Baca	Doyle	Kucinich	Price (NC)	Sherman	Walberg	
Bachmann	Edwards	Kuhl (NY)	Rahall	Shuler	Walz (MN)	
Baird	Ellsworth	Lampson	Reyes	Shuster	Wasserman	
Baldwin	Emanuel	Langevin	Rodriguez	Sires	Schultz	
Barrow	Emerson	Lantos	Rush	Skelton	Waters	
Bean	Engel	Larsen (WA)	Rothman	Slaughter	Watson	
Becerra	Eshoo	Larson (CT)	Royal-Allard	Smith (WA)	Watt	
Berkley	Farr	Latham	Ruppersberger	Snyder	Waxman	
Berman	Fattah	LaTourette	Rush	Solis	Weiner	
Berry	Filner	Lee	Ryan (OH)	Space	Welch (VT)	
Biggert	Forbes	Levin	Salazar	Spratt	Wexler	
Bishop (GA)	Frank (MA)	Lewis (GA)	Sánchez, Linda T.	Stark	Wilson (OH)	
Bishop (NY)	Gerlach	Lipinski	Sánchez, Loretta	Sutton	Woolsey	
Blumenauer	Gillmor	Loebssack	Sarbanes	Tanner	Wu	
Boren	Gonzalez	Lofgren, Zoe	Schakowsky	Tauscher	Wynn	
Boswell	Gordon	Lowey	Schiff	Taylor	Yarmuth	
Boucher	Green, Al	Lynch	Schwartz	Thompson (MS)	Tierney	
Boyd (FL)	Green, Gene	Mahoney (FL)				
Boysd (KS)	Grijalva	Maloney (NY)				
Brady (PA)	Gutierrez	Markey				
Braley (IA)	Hall (NY)	Matheson				
Brown, Corrine	Hare	Matsui				
Butterfield	Harman	McCarthy (NY)				
Capps	Hastings (FL)	McCullum (MN)				
Capuano	Herseth Sandlin	McDermott				
Cardoza	Higgins	McGovern				
Carnahan	Hinchey	McIntyre				
Carson	Hinojosa	McNerney				
Castle	Hirono	McNulty				
Castor	Hodes	Meek (FL)				
Chandler	Holden	Meeks (NY)				
Clay	Holt	Melancon				
Cleaver	Honda	Michaud				
Clyburn	Hooley	Miller (NC)				
Cohen	Hoyer	Miller, George				
Conyers	Inslee	Mollohan				
Cooper	Israel	Moore (KS)				
Costa	Jackson (IL)	Moore (WI)				
Costello	Jackson-Lee	Moran (VA)				
Courtney	(TX)	Murphy (CT)				
Cramer	Jefferson	Murphy, Patrick				
Crowley	Jindal	Murtha				
Cuellar	Johnson (GA)	Nadler				
Cummings	Johnson (IL)	Napolitano				
Davis (AL)	Johnson, E. B.	Neal (MA)				
Davis (CA)	Jones (NC)	Obey	Gohmert	Tancredo		
Davis (IL)	Jones (OH)	Olver				
Davis, Lincoln	Kagen	Ortiz				
Davis, Tom	Kanjorski	Pallone				
DeGette	Kaptur	Pascarella				
Delahunt	Kennedy	Pastor				

ANSWERED "PRESENT"—2

NOT VOTING—12

Paul	Scott (GA)	Towns	
Payne	Scott (VA)	Udall (CO)	
Perlmutter	Serrano	Van Hollen	
Pomeroy	Sestak	Velázquez	
Porter	Shea-Porter	Visclosky	
Price (NC)	Sherman	Walberg	
Rahall	Shuler	Walz (MN)	
Reyes	Shuster	Wasserman	
Rodriguez	Sires	Schultz	
Rush	Skelton	Waters	
Rothman	Slaughter	Watson	
Royal-Allard	Smith (WA)	Watt	
Ruppersberger	Snyder	Waxman	
Rush	Solis	Weiner	
Ryan (OH)	Space	Welch (VT)	
Salazar	Spratt	Wexler	
Sánchez, Linda T.	Stark	Wilson (OH)	
Sánchez, Loretta	Sutton	Woolsey	
Sarbanes	Tanner	Wu	
Schakowsky	Tauscher	Wynn	
Schiff	Taylor	Yarmuth	
Schwartz	Thompson (MS)	Tierney	

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). Members are advised there are 2 minutes remaining in this vote.

□ 1400

So the Journal was approved.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

Stated against:

Ms. SCHMIDT. Mr. Speaker, I missed the last vote due to an appointment. Had I been present I would have voted "no" on the Journal.

PROVIDING FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3161, AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2008

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 599 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 599

Resolved, That during further consideration of the bill (H.R. 3161) making appropriations for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes, the bill shall be considered as read. No further debate on any pending amendment shall be in order. A further period of general debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed 30 minutes equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations. The amendments printed in part A of the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution shall be considered as adopted in the House and in the Committee of the Whole. Notwithstanding clause 11 of rule XVIII, no further amendment shall be in order except those printed in part B of the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. All points of order against such amendments are waived except those arising under clause 9 or 10 of rule XXI. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill, as amended, to the House with such further amendments as may have been adopted. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 2. After a motion that the Committee rise has been rejected on a legislative day, the Chair may entertain another such motion on that day only if offered by the chairman of the Committee on Appropriations or the Majority Leader or designee. After a motion to strike out the enacting words of the bill (as described in clause 9 of rule XVIII) has been rejected, the Chair may not entertain another such motion during further consideration of the bill.