

family. I know they are still searching for answers. But I hope the reverence and respect this Senate shows Sergeant Tackett will remind them that he lived and served as a hero, and his country will forever honor and remember his sacrifice.

I ask my colleagues to keep the family of SGT Joseph M. Tackett in their thoughts and prayers. I know they will be in mine.

#### HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

##### 1ST LIEUTENANT SHAUN M. BLUE

Mr. BAYH. Mr. President, it is with a heavy heart and deep sense of gratitude that I honor the life of a brave young man from Munster. Shaun Blue, 25 years old, died on April 16 while deployed in Al Anbar Province on Operation Iraqi Freedom. With his entire life before him, Shaun risked everything to fight for the values Americans hold close to our hearts, in a land halfway around the world.

Shaun was a lifelong Hoosier, graduating among the top 10 students of his class from Munster High School in 2000. He joined the military because, as his high school principal said, "He was one of those kids who did things everyone else was afraid to do." His valor over the course of his service in Iraq exemplifies Hoosier values and courage. His track and field coach at Munster High described Shaun as a mentally tough kid saying, "The fact that he chose the career path that he did didn't surprise me. It was perfectly suited for him."

Shaun was killed by an improvised explosive device while serving his country in Operation Iraqi Freedom. He was a member of the 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force, based in Twenty-nine Palms, CA.

Today, I join Shaun's family and friends in mourning his death. While we struggle to bear our sorrow over this loss, we can also take pride in the example he set, bravely fighting to make the world a safer place. It is his courage and strength of character that people will remember when they think of Shaun, a memory that will burn brightly during these continuing days of conflict and grief.

Shaun was known for his dedication to his community and his love of country. Today and always, Shaun will be remembered by family members, friends, and fellow Hoosiers as a true American hero, and we honor the sacrifice he made while dutifully serving his country.

As I search for words to do justice in honoring Shaun's sacrifice, I am reminded of President Lincoln's remarks as he addressed the families of the fallen soldiers in Gettysburg:

We cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here.

This statement is just as true today as it was nearly 150 years ago, as I am certain that the impact of Shaun's actions will live on far longer than any record of these words.

It is my sad duty to enter the name of Shaun M. Blue in the official RECORD of the Senate for his service to this country and for his profound commitment to freedom, democracy, and peace. When I think about this just cause in which we are engaged and the unfortunate pain that comes with the loss of our heroes, I hope that families like Shaun's can find comfort in the words of the prophet Isaiah who said, "He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces."

May God grant strength and peace to those who mourn, and may God be with all of you, as I know He is with Shaun.

##### PRIVATE FIRST CLASS DAVID NEIL SIMMONS

Mr. President, it is with a heavy heart and deep sense of gratitude that I honor the life of a brave young man from Kokomo. Neil Simmons, 20 years old, was killed on April 8th while deployed in Baghdad, when his convoy encountered an improvised explosive device and insurgent fire. He had been in Iraq for less than 2 weeks. With his entire life before him, Neil risked everything to fight for the values Americans hold close to our hearts, in a land halfway around the world.

Neil attended Kokomo's Northwestern High School and followed the example set by his father and uncle by enlisting in the Army a few months before graduating in 2005. He enjoyed the structure of the military and felt a sense of duty to serve his community and country. His father described Neil as "an avid outdoorsman who was happy and always had plenty of friends."

Neil was killed while serving his country in Operation Iraqi Freedom. He was a member of the 2nd Battalion, 69th Armor Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, in Fort Benning, GA. Neil's father reflected on his son's death, asking, "What's the odds of, among 160,000 troops your only child is there 1 week and gets killed?" Private First Class Simmons leaves behind his father, David, and uncle, Jim Simmons.

Today, I join Neil's family and friends in mourning his death. While we struggle to bear our sorrow over this loss, we can also take pride in the example he set, bravely fighting to make the world a safer place. It is his courage and strength of character that people will remember when they think of Neil, a memory that will burn brightly during these continuing days of conflict and grief.

Neil was known for his dedication to his family and his love of country. Today and always, Neil will be remembered by family members, friends, and fellow Hoosiers as a true American hero, and we honor the sacrifice he made while dutifully serving his country.

As I search for words to do justice in honoring Neil's sacrifice, I am re-

minded of President Lincoln's remarks as he addressed the families of the fallen soldiers in Gettysburg:

We cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here.

This statement is just as true today as it was nearly 150 years ago, as I am certain that the impact of Neil's actions will live on far longer than any record of these words.

It is my sad duty to enter the name of David Neil Simmons in the official RECORD of the United States Senate for his service to this country and for his profound commitment to freedom, democracy, and peace. When I think about this just cause in which we are engaged, and the unfortunate pain that comes with the loss of our heroes, I hope families like Neil's can find comfort in the words of the prophet Isaiah who said, "He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces."

May God grant strength and peace to those who mourn, and may God be with all of you, as I know He is with Neil.

##### SPECIALIST JASON J. BEADELS

Mr. President, it is with a heavy heart and deep sense of gratitude that I honor the life of a brave young man from La Porte. Jason Beadles, 22 years old, died on April 11th while deployed in Baghdad on Operation Iraqi Freedom. With his entire life before him, Jason risked everything to fight for the values Americans hold close to our hearts, in a land halfway around the world.

Jason has been a lifelong Hoosier, graduating from La Porte High School in 2003. He had been interested in technical engineering throughout high school, earning his welding certificate from A.K. Smith Career Center before graduating. Army Specialist Beadles enlisted in the Army as an engineer after the attacks of 9/11. His valor over the course of his service in Iraq exemplifies Hoosier values and courage. He decided to enlist because as his welding instructor put it, "he was always concerned about other people." Jason enjoyed the military, and he believed that throughout all the hardships they faced he and his company were helping the Iraqi people.

Jason died while serving his country in Operation Iraqi Freedom. He was a member of the 887th Engineer Company, 326th Engineer Battalion, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), in Fort Campbell, KY.

Today, I join Jason's family and friends in mourning his death. While we struggle to bear our sorrow over this loss, we can also take pride in the example he set, bravely fighting to make the world a safer place. It is his courage and strength of character that people will remember when they think of Jason, a memory that will burn brightly during these continuing days of conflict and grief.

Jason was known for his dedication to his community and his love of country. Today and always, Jason will be remembered by family members, friends, and fellow Hoosiers as a true American hero, and we honor the sacrifice he made while dutifully serving his country.

As I search for words to do justice in honoring Jason's sacrifice, I am reminded of President Lincoln's remarks as he addressed the families of the fallen soldiers in Gettysburg:

We cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here.

This statement is just as true today as it was nearly 150 years ago, as I am certain that the impact of Jason's actions will live on far longer than any record of these words.

It is my sad duty to enter the name of Jason J. Beadle in the official record of the United States Senate for his service to this country and for his profound commitment to freedom, democracy, and peace. When I think about this just cause in which we are engaged, and the unfortunate pain that comes with the loss of our heroes, I hope families like Jason's can find comfort in the words of the prophet Isaiah who said, "He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces."

May God grant strength and peace to those who mourn, and may God be with all of you, as I know He is with Jason.

PRIVATE FIRST CLASS RICHARD P.  
LANGENBRUNNER

Mr. President, it is with a heavy heart and deep sense of gratitude that I honor the life of a brave young man from Fort Wayne. Richard Langenbrunner, 19 years old, was killed on April 17 while deployed in Rustamiyah, Iraq. With his entire life before him, Richard risked everything to fight for the values Americans hold close to our hearts, in a land halfway around the world.

Richard was a lifelong Hoosier, graduating from Northrop High School in 2006. He completed basic training this past January and was deployed just a few weeks later. He is remembered for his love of people, life, and adventure. "He was so happy and excited about his future before he graduated," said a former classmate. "He joined the military because he wanted to drive a tanker." Richard enlisted in the Army just before graduating high school. His valor over the course of his service in Iraq exemplifies Hoosier values and courage.

Richard died while serving his country in Operation Iraqi Freedom. He was a member of the 2nd Battalion, 69th Armor Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, stationed in Fort Benning, Georgia.

Today, I join Richard's family and friends in mourning his death. While

we struggle to bear our sorrow over this loss, we can also take pride in the example he set, bravely fighting to make the world a safer place. It is his courage and strength of character that people will remember when they think of Richard, a memory that will burn brightly during these continuing days of conflict and grief.

Richard was known for his dedication to his community and his love of country. Today and always, Richard will be remembered by family members, friends and fellow Hoosiers as a true American hero, and we honor the sacrifice he made while dutifully serving his country.

As I search for words to do justice in honoring Richard's sacrifice, I am reminded of President Lincoln's remarks as he addressed the families of the fallen soldiers in Gettysburg:

We cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here.

This statement is just as true today as it was nearly 150 years ago, as I am certain that the impact of Richard's actions will live on far longer than any record of these words.

It is my sad duty to enter the name of Richard P. Langenbrunner in the official RECORD of the Senate for his service to this country and for his profound commitment to freedom, democracy, and peace. When I think about this just cause in which we are engaged and the unfortunate pain that comes with the loss of our heroes, I hope that families like Richard's can find comfort in the words of the prophet Isaiah who said, "He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces."

May God grant strength and peace to those who mourn, and may God be with all of you, as I know He is with Richard.

STAFF SERGEANT BRADLEY D. KING

Mr. President, it is with a heavy heart and deep sense of gratitude that I honor the life of a brave young man from Gas City. Bradley King, 28 years old, was killed on April 2 while deployed in Al Amiriyah, Iraq, when a roadside bomb exploded near his Humvee. With his entire life before him, Bradley risked everything to fight for the values Americans hold close to our hearts, in a land halfway around the world.

Bradley attended Mississinewa High School, enlisting in the National Guard in 1997, a year before his graduation in 1998. Bradley enjoyed the military and felt a sense of duty to serve his community and country. The day before he was deployed, Bradley told his mother that he felt "called to serve in the military for his country." His aunt described Bradley as "a responsible young man determined to do his best for the people he loved."

Bradley was killed while serving his country in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

He was a member of the 2nd Battalion, 152nd Infantry Regiment, 76th Infantry Brigade, Marion, IN. Master Sergeant Bill Wallen, King's supervisor, told local media, "he was a heck of a human being, he's what everybody else needs to be in this world." Staff Sergeant King leaves behind his wife Adrian and 15-month-old son, Daethan.

Today, I join Bradley's family and friends in mourning his death. While we struggle to bear our sorrow over this loss, we can also take pride in the example he set, bravely fighting to make the world a safer place. It is his courage and strength of character that people will remember when they think of Bradley, a memory that will burn brightly during these continuing days of conflict and grief.

Bradley was known for his dedication to his family and his love of country. Today and always, Bradley will be remembered by family members, friends and fellow Hoosiers as a true American hero, and we honor the sacrifice he made while dutifully serving his country.

As I search for words to do justice in honoring Bradley's sacrifice, I am reminded of President Lincoln's remarks as he addressed the families of the fallen soldiers in Gettysburg:

We cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here.

This statement is just as true today as it was nearly 150 years ago, as I am certain that the impact of Bradley's actions will live on far longer than any record of these words.

It is my sad duty to enter the name of Bradley D. King in the official RECORD of the Senate for his service to this country and for his profound commitment to freedom, democracy and peace. When I think about this just cause in which we are engaged, and the unfortunate pain that comes with the loss of our heroes, I hope that families like Bradley's can find comfort in the words of the prophet Isaiah who said, "He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces."

May God grant strength and peace to those who mourn, and may God be with all of you, as I know He is with Bradley.

SPECIALIST CODY A. PUTMAN

Mr. President, it is with a heavy heart and deep sense of gratitude that I honor the life of a brave young man from Lafayette. Cody Putman, 22 years old, was killed on April 11th while deployed in Baghdad on Operation Iraqi Freedom. With his entire life before him, Cody risked everything to fight for the values Americans hold close to our hearts, in a land halfway around the world.

Cody was a lifelong Hoosier, graduating from Twin Lakes High School in 2003. He is remembered for his love of

people, life, and adventure. "He was someone who was always looking to have a good time with others," said a former teacher. "He joined the military because of the teamwork." Cody enlisted in the Army after high school, and his valor over the course of his service in Iraq exemplifies Hoosier values and courage. A month before he died, Cody had been home on leave for 2 weeks vacationing with his family in Florida. Cody is survived by his father, Harry Putman, and his mother, Pam Mow. He also leaves behind his wife, Molly Putnam, 20, and 3-year-old daughter Madelyn.

Cody died while serving his country in Operation Iraqi Freedom. He was a member of the 1st Squadron, 40th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, based in Fort Richardson, AK.

Today, I join Cody's family and friends in mourning his death. While we struggle to bear our sorrow over this loss, we can also take pride in the example he set, bravely fighting to make the world a safer place. It is his courage and strength of character that people will remember when they think of Cody, a memory that will burn brightly during these continuing days of conflict and grief.

Cody was known for his dedication to his community and his love of country. Today and always, Cody will be remembered by family members, friends, and fellow Hoosiers as a true American hero, and we honor the sacrifice he made while dutifully serving his country.

As I search for words to do justice in honoring Cody's sacrifice, I am reminded of President Lincoln's remarks as he addressed the families of the fallen soldiers in Gettysburg:

We cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here.

This statement is just as true today as it was nearly 150 years ago, as I am certain that the impact of Cody's actions will live on far longer than any record of these words.

It is my sad duty to enter the name of Cody A. Putman in the official record of the United States Senate for his service to this country and for his profound commitment to freedom, democracy, and peace. When I think about this just cause in which we are engaged, and the unfortunate pain that comes with the loss of our heroes, I hope families like Cody's can find comfort in the words of the prophet Isaiah who said, "He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces."

May God grant strength and peace to those who mourn, and may God be with all of you, as I know He is with Cody.

SPECIALIST ERIC R. SIEGER

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, today I wish to pay tribute to SPC Eric R.

Sieger of Layton, UT, who died of injuries suffered while conducting operations in Iraq. He was a remarkable young man who overcame much adversity in his life. On March 9 of this year, he would have turned 19 years old.

Part of the 1st Cavalry Division, Specialist Sieger was also a member of a very special family. I understand that his parents, Wolfgang and Krista, have 15 children, 6 of whom were adopted, including the Specialist. Early life was not easy for the Specialist but that all changed when he was adopted at the age of 11 by the loving Sieger family.

I have been informed that Specialist Sieger enjoyed running, being with his friends, building and fixing things. He had a girlfriend whom he met while stationed at Fort Hood, TX. Shortly before his passing, Specialist Sieger was able speak to his mother on the phone. His mother said, "They spent most of the time laughing and joking with each other."

Specialist Sieger's father said, "He was dutiful in wanting to do what is right."

Undoubtedly, this led him to become a member of the Civil Air Patrol as a teenager and enlist in the Army at 17. Military service is a calling for other members of the Sieger family, as well. Currently, one of his sisters is also deployed to Iraq, another sister is preparing to deploy, and a brother is a member of the Air National Guard.

I would like to conclude my remarks by quoting the words of Specialist Sieger's mother and father. Krista Sieger stated, "He felt since he was in the Army, since he took the oath, he has to do everything he was asked to do. And he did." Wolfgang Sieger said, "I would call him a hero. He is definitely a hero in my sight. I honor him as a hero."

I do not know of any higher praise that parents could give a son in military service. Specialist Sieger and his family will always be in my prayers.

SERGEANT FIRST CLASS DOUGLAS C. STONE

Mr. President, I wish to honor one of Utah's fallen sons, SFC First Class Douglas C. Stone.

SFC Stone had a lifelong connection to our Nation's military. His father served in the Air Force. Yet, SFC Douglas Stone joined the Army Reserve later in life. As his mother Dolores Feigley said about her son, "I think he was the oldest at boot camp."

However, his maturity was only to be an asset to his country, which was affirmed when he became a full-time reservist. Over the past 6 years, SFC Douglas Stone assisted in the preparation of reservists from the 96th Regional Readiness Command for deployments in support of Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. As my good friend, MG Peter S. Cooke, the commanding officer of the 96th Regional Readiness Command said about SFC Stone "There wasn't a unit or individual sent from our headquarters that SFC Stone did not personally assist in preparing for their mobilization or deployment."

This was not the first time SFC Douglas Stone had gone in harm's way for his country. He also was a part of the fuel re-supply effort during the First Gulf War.

However, his life's most important work undoubtedly was as a family man. Sergeant First Class Stone was husband to his wife, Mary, and father to two boys Nathan, 13, and Cameron, 10.

SFC Douglas Stone was also a member of Fort Douglas's Honor Guard. I understand that Rick Edginton, one of his fellow Honor Guardsmen who participated at his friend's funeral said, "for me, probably one of the toughest moments was when I was standing at the head of the casket and I looked over to the side and I saw a note from his sister on the flowers that were there. It said, 'To Doug, my brother, and my Hero.'"

No truer words have been written.

SFC Douglas Stone was a hero. He served his country with pride and answered its call when it needed him most. All of Utah shall remember him and will be praying for this hero and his family.

SERGEANT BRANDON A. PARR

Mr. President, today I wish to pay tribute to SGT Brandon A. Parr. Sergeant Parr was a member of the 630th Military Police Company and gave his life with two other servicemembers when their vehicle was struck by an improvised explosive device.

There are certain pictures that define a time and a moment in our Nation's history. Such examples can be found in the raising of Old Glory over Mount Suribachi, Iwo Jima. I respectfully submit that a picture taken during Sergeant Parr's funeral should be added to that category. In that photo, Sergeant Parr's wife, Shannah, is seen holding the hand of their young son, Nicholas. Nicholas, standing on some steps, is wearing the camouflage uniform of an American soldier—a young son's tribute to his fallen father. This is an image that I will remember for all my days and a fitting tribute to a true hero.

Sergeant Parr enlisted in the Army in 2003, and this was his second tour in Iraq. He was involved in one of the most critical tasks in this war: training Iraqi police and providing security to the Iraqi people. By all accounts, Sergeant Parr preformed these assignments at the highest standards of our Nation's military.

Shannah Parr said of her husband, "He was very laid back and very funny. He made everyone feel good."

His mother, Teota Dangel said, "I think he would have gone (to Iraq) even if he knew this was going to be the outcome." Words like this can only be spoken of a true hero and patriot.

Sergeant Parr and his entire family will always be in my prayers.

CORPORAL STEPHEN KOWALCZYK

Mr. President, I wish to pay tribute to CPL Stephen Kowalczyk, a member

of the 1st Cavalry Division, who recently lost his life while on patrol in Iraq.

Upon learning of about his life, I was struck by all the adventures that Corporal Kowalczyk had undertaken. He had been the captain of the swim team at Macalester College, traveled extensively throughout Europe, the Middle East, including working as a handyman in Jerusalem. I understand that he even leapt from an iceberg and swam in the frigid waters of the Arctic Ocean. Clearly, this was a young man that seized all that life had to offer.

Three years ago, at the age of 29, he began a new adventure and joined the Army. According to his family he loved it.

During a recent memorial service in Iraq, one of his comrades SSG Richard Coombes stated: "He was a man who taught me that there was still beauty in our everyday life, even in Iraq. I looked at him and wondered if he had already figured life out. He was in such peace and harmony." CPT Kevin Bradley would often notice that Corporal Kowalczyk would look from the rooftops at the area around him. When asked why, he reportedly would reply, "You should see it up here. It's beautiful." Another friend remembered him as "a gentle, kind soul, I cannot think of anybody who did not love this man."

And yet he never forgot why he was deployed to Iraq—to help the Iraqi people. This commitment was reflected in the letters that he would write home asking for history books that he could give to Iraqis that he met, and pencils, notepads, and Hershey bars for Iraqi children.

What a fine man. What an extraordinary life.

I will always remember him and his family in my prayers.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. NELSON of Nebraska). The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that following my remarks, Senator DORGAN be recognized to speak.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I stand today in strong support of H.R. 1591, the congressional supplemental bill. In casting our votes on this important measure, all of us must ask a fundamental question: Do we support a change in course in Iraq or do we want more of the same?

This supplemental bill delivers over \$100 billion in necessary funding, an increase of \$4 billion over the President's request for our military forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, fully meeting the President's request. More important, the bill establishes a change in course for our policy in Iraq by transitioning the mission of American troops away from involvement in a growing civil

war to a more targeted mission, one focused on counterterrorism, training and equipping Iraqi forces, and force protection for American troops.

The supplemental bill that was voted on today offers a path away from the current quagmire in Iraq, a state of bloodshed and chaos which is straining the U.S. Army, diverting our attention from a resurgent al-Qaida in Afghanistan and elsewhere, and finally sacrificing too many of our finest men and women.

We must never forget the enormous personal sacrifices our troops are asked to make every day. As of today, 162 Pennsylvanians and more than 3,300 Americans as a whole have given their lives in Iraq, with tens of thousands more suffering lifelong injuries, including amputations, severe burns, and traumatic brain injuries. On Monday, nine members of the 82nd Airborne Division gave their lives when a suicide bomber infiltrated their outpost in Diyala Province, the deadliest single attack on U.S. forces in Iraq since December 2005.

We pray today for our fallen heroes—today and always—but we also pray for ourselves that we may be worthy of their valor.

Our troops have done all they can. They have deposed Saddam, and they fought insurgents and foreign terrorists. They spent the last 4 years partnering with their Iraqi counterparts in a courageous effort to establish the foundation for democracy and a free society. They have been asked to mediate disputes and protect innocent civilians as targets in a crossfire of a civil war.

So our troops have done their part. Now it is time for the Congress and the White House to do their part. As retired military generals, experienced diplomats, and scholars with intimate knowledge of Iraq have declared and as a bipartisan Iraq Study Group concluded just last winter, any success in Iraq requires a political and diplomatic solution and cannot be achieved through military might alone.

Just ask General Petraeus, who, upon assuming his new command in March, declared:

There is no military solution to a problem like that in Iraq, to the insurgency of Iraq . . . A political resolution of various differences . . . will determine, in the long run, the success of that effort.

GEN Barry McCaffrey recently returned from his latest trip to Iraq. One of our most widely respected former military officers, General McCaffrey fought in Vietnam with distinction, commanded a division in the gulf war in 1991, and led U.S. operations in Latin America. He submitted a formal report on his trip, which is very sober reading. One line stands out for me, and I quote from General McCaffrey's report:

No Iraqi Government official, coalition soldier, diplomat, reporter, foreign nongovernmental organization, nor contractor can walk the streets of Baghdad, nor Mosul, nor

Kirkuk, nor Basra, nor Tikrit, nor Najaf, nor Ramadi, without heavily armed protection.

This supplemental bill provides the Congress and the White House a chance to do their part to ensure success in our mission in Iraq. It brings to an end the "stay the course" mentality that defined our approach for the past 4 years in at least three ways.

First, the supplemental revises our mission in Iraq away from policing a civil war toward training and equipping Iraqi security forces, protecting U.S. forces, and conducting targeted counterterror operations.

Second, it initiates a phased redeployment of our troops no later than October 1 of this year, with a goal of removing all combat troops by April 1 of next year. These steps were called for in the bipartisan Iraq Study Group and represent the will of the American people. I am pleased that the Congress is finally following suit.

Third, the supplemental at least holds the Iraqi Government accountable by setting measurable and achievable benchmarks on the Iraqi Government for ending the sectarian conflict, political reconciliation, and improving the lives of ordinary Iraqis.

If the Iraqi Government refuses to meet these benchmarks, they will put at risk future U.S. assistance and the continued presence of U.S. troops. We have repeatedly seen past benchmarks established by the Bush administration and the Iraqi Government come and go without progress and without consequence. Just this week, a revealing article in USA Today highlighted the growing lack of confidence among Iraqi Parliamentarians in the al-Maliki government, and one legislator was quoted as saying:

This government hasn't delivered and is not capable of doing the job.

This bill, once and for all, establishes a series of accountable benchmarks.

Finally, the supplemental recognizes the toll this war has taken on our uniformed military, especially the Army and Marine Corps. It establishes a set of troop-readiness standards that establish minimum levels between deployments for our troops and limits the duration of those deployments.

The legislation includes a Presidential waiver authority, but it would require the President to certify that the continued strain on our military forces is in our national interest. These provisions will force the President to think long and hard about the impact of the Iraq war on the readiness of our military to handle other pressing challenges, including the need to fight and kill al-Qaida terrorists wherever we find them.

The congressional debate that has helped produce this supplemental bill has been attacked by the President and his supporters. However, our Secretary of Defense last week described our debate as helpful in "communicating to the Iraqis that this is not an open-ended commitment."

Two of my distinguished colleagues, on a recent visit to Baghdad, explicitly