

1989. Then we left the Afghans to fend for themselves. In short order, they had a civil war. The Taliban rose to power and provided a safe haven for al-Qaida. Osama bin Laden established training camps where he trained some 20,000 terrorists in the late 1990s; graduates of those camps came here and killed 3,000 of our fellow citizens on 9/11.

Perhaps, at the end of the Cold War, it was difficult to imagine the impact of the U.S. leaving Afghanistan. The same cannot be said about leaving Iraq. We have to prevail in Iraq, and we can if we don't choose to surrender.

In closing, I have a question for those on the other side.

If my Democratic colleagues believe our current struggle against Islamic jihadists in Iraq is such a mistake; if you honestly believe that you were lied to or misled into initially supporting this war and that there is no useful purpose for continuing; if you believe that the lives of those in uniform who have made the ultimate sacrifice were truly wasted; if you believe that al-Qaida and the threat of Islamic fascism confronting America is merely something invented by a small band of neoconservatives, or; if Islamic fascism is simply an ideological movement that can be appeased and reasoned with; then why are you seeking to continue funding our fight in Iraq for even another day?

If you believe that Iraq is simply a mistake gone bad, then you should at least have the courage of your convictions and act accordingly. Vote to end the funding now.

Don't string along those putting their lives on the line for you to make some sort of weak political statement.

This may well be our "Profiles in Courage" moment. I implore you to do the right thing, not the currently popular thing. Support our men and women in uniform, and do it now.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. ENSIGN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the time on the Republican side be allocated as the sheet I will send to the desk indicates, and I further ask that quorum calls be charged to both sides.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. OBAMA). Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

U.S. TROOP READINESS, VETERANS' HEALTH, AND IRAQ ACCOUNTABILITY ACT, 2007—CONFERENCE REPORT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to the conference report on H.R. 1591, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Committee of Conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 1591), "making emergency supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2007, and for other purposes," having met, have agreed that the House recede from its disagreement to the amendment of the Senate, and agree to the same with an amendment and the Senate agree to the same, signed by a majority of the conferees on the part of both Houses.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will proceed to the consideration of the conference report.

(The conference report is printed in the proceedings of the House in the RECORD of Tuesday, April 24, 2007.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana is recognized.

TAKE OUR DAUGHTERS AND SONS TO WORK DAY

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I would like to speak just for a few moments, not about the pending business, which I know is extremely important and that debate will go on throughout the day and perhaps over the next several days as we try to make decisions about supplemental spending for the Gulf of Mexico and the importance of the emergency that is still underway there, and as we try to debate the best way to find success in Iraq.

I wanted to take a moment to speak about another issue that is important today to many Americans. In fact, we are celebrating that day on Capitol Hill. It is called Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day.

I have been honored over the many years with my cochair, Senator KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON, who is on the floor of the Senate today, to cohost this event for the Senate. We have many colleagues and staff members who participate in bringing their children and grandchildren and friends and neighbors to the Capitol to work to see the work of the Senate and the Capitol—how it happens, who makes it happen, and the significance of it. These children come from all over our country and take this experience back to their classrooms and into their homes and neighborhoods and share with their friends throughout the year.

I thank Ms. Magazine for starting this. Over 35 million adults and children will participate today. So in skyscrapers all over America, and on farms out in our rural areas, in small businesses and restaurants and small little boutique hotels, and even in home offices, children will be working with their parents or with their grandparents understanding the value of work, understanding and exploring options for themselves as they grow, and trying to make choices about how they can contribute significantly to this economy and to being part of the world community.

So I am pleased today to be able to submit for the RECORD the names of 14 young ladies who are with me today. I am not going to take the time to read their names, but I will submit them for the RECORD. They are from New Orleans,

LA, and some from Manderville; some are from Washington, DC, friends of the family who are here; and others are from outlying areas such as Maryland and Virginia who have joined us today to be part of the Senate.

Already this morning some of these girls have participated in closing the gap with the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation that met on Capitol Hill out on the west lawn of our Capitol this morning to talk about the great effort that is being made to address breast cancer, particularly in this country, and to not only find cures but to offer preventive measures to help women and families stay healthy in our country. They have already participated in a press conference and will be joining us later today as we work through our offices in and around the Senate complex.

I wanted to welcome them to the Senate. I will submit their names to be printed in the RECORD, and I encourage anyone in the Capitol complex, if you are not participating today, to think about next year and what you could do to contribute to make this day a special day for some child in either your family or in your community who could use an extra boost or some insight into a possible career for themselves.

I thank Senator REID for making the tour of the Senate possible today for the young girls and boys who got to spend some time on the floor earlier this morning, and I thank minority leader MITCH MCCONNELL for arranging the special tours for that as well.

Mr. President, I again thank Ms. Magazine for an extraordinary effort. I know the children enjoy getting a day off from school, but it is more than that, and I have enjoyed participating these many years.

I ask unanimous consent that the list to which I referred be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

Morgan Daigle, 11, New Orleans, LA, St. Dominic.

Christine Evans, 10, Washington, DC, National Cathedral School.

Katherine Evans, 10, Washington, DC, National Cathedral School.

Charlotte Ganucheau, 13, Mandeville, LA, Our Lady of the Lake.

Sofia Gonzales, 13, New Orleans, LA, Metairie Park Country Day School.

Jamie Hauptmann, 11, Mandeville, LA, Lake Harbor, Middle.

Lena Jones, 12, Washington, DC, St. Peter's Inter-parish School Capitol Hill.

Gabrielle Kehoe, 11, New Orleans, LA, St. Pius X.

Kristen Landrieu, 12, New Orleans, LA, St. Dominic.

Natalie Mufson, 13, Washington, DC, Georgetown Day School.

Selin Odabas-Geldiay, 13, Washington, DC, Georgetown Day School.

Erica Sensenbrenner, 14, New Orleans, LA, Dominican High School.

Hannah Sensenbrenner, 12, New Orleans, LA, St. Dominic.

Eliza Matthews

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas is recognized.

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, I rise to speak on the Iraqi supplemental. I want to discuss this briefly with my colleagues. I will vote against the conference report with a deadline in it. A conference report with a deadline in it, if it passes, and sending it to the President to sign—he is not going to sign it, but if he does sign it, if he would sign it—would be the day al-Qaida would declare victory. The day the deadline is set would be the day they would declare victory. I think it is the wrong way for us to go, and that is why I will be voting against the supplemental.

I am very pleased to support the President in his efforts not to set a deadline. I want to take the brief time I have to talk about a way forward because I think there is a bipartisan way forward. Once we get through this, and once this is forced upon the President, once he vetoes it, and once the veto is upheld—and I think these are motions we should not be going through because they take away precious time from focusing on a way forward, on a political solution that involves both sides of the aisle—we should focus on federalism in Iraq. It is something Senator BIDEN has spoken often about on the Democratic side, and I have spoke about on this side: federalism that will require a longtime presence by the United States in Iraq.

I have spoken several times on this floor about how Iraq is more than three groups in one country: a Kurdish group, a Sunni group, and a Shia group. It has been held together for much of its history—not altogether but in much of its history—by exterior forces that have not wanted it to fly apart, who still don't want it to fly apart. I think we should recognize these realities as we did in the former Yugoslavia, as we are today in Sudan where the south is going to vote to secede, and recognize these political forces and put in place a federated system: one country, three states, Baghdad as a Federal city where powers devolve to the states, and recognize that it will require a long-term U.S. military presence to ensure that it will work. It is a route forward, and it is a route forward that we can agree upon as a body. It is a route forward that has allowed for the Iraqi Constitution, with a distribution of oil revenues equally distributed throughout the country, to be able to help hold things together. It is a route forward that can get us to a political equilibrium, that can get the violence down, that can give each of the groups their area, their region, and allow us to move forward. It requires a long-term U.S. military presence such as what happened in Bosnia and the Dayton Accords, where 15 years later we are still there and we are going to be there for some period of time because if we are not, they are going to go back to the violent ways they have had, and they have done previously.

This is a realistic route that both sides of the aisle, that both parties, and the executive and legislative branches, could embrace.

I met last week with the Vice President about it. I talked with the National Security Adviser about it. Many of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are saying: What is the plan? What is the exit plan? How do we get out? Here is a route to be able to deal with this. But they have to admit, as well, on their side that a timeline, a deadline will not work. We cannot do that. We cannot hoist it upon the President, and it will not work in that region. As soon as you set that deadline, as I said, al-Qaida will declare victory and people in the region will start looking for security in other places. They will be going to militias and different groups, and it will further fragment the country.

If we would just set our partisanship aside for a little while and think about this, we would recognize that this is the situation we are in and this is the only viable solution forward. We don't want to bring back a dictator or allow one back into Iraq. We don't want Iraq to devolve into a full-scale civil war with a terrorist state taking place in that country. We don't want to turn it over and just have the Shia run the whole place and run over the Kurds and run over the Sunni in the region. That is not realistic.

The other options are not viable and will not work. This is a route forward. I urge my colleagues that this prospect, this federalism that is enshrined in the Iraqi Constitution—the Iraqi Parliament passed a federalism law last year—the Kurdish regions in northern Iraq show that it is possible for Iraq and deepens its commitment to a Federal system. I urge my colleagues to embrace this after this is vetoed.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia is recognized.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, could I ask the Senator from West Virginia to yield for a unanimous consent request?

Mr. BYRD. Yes.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be recognized immediately following the remarks of Senator BYRD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The Senator from West Virginia is recognized.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Texas.

It has been 4 years since the President sent our troops into Iraq, 4 long years. That is longer than it took to win World War II. More than 3,300 troops have sacrificed their lives in Iraq, and nearly 25,000 have been wounded—many severely.

With passage of this conference agreement, Congress will have appropriated more than \$450 billion for the war in Iraq. Did my colleagues hear that? Four hundred and fifty billion dollars. That compares with the \$296

billion which the United States spent on World War II. Yet in the 4 years since our troops succeeded in removing Saddam Hussein from power, the President has failed—and I say this with all due respect when I speak about the President—the President has failed in his mission to bring peace and stability to the people of Iraq. The troops had the courage and the strength to win the war, but the President has not had the wisdom to win the peace. It is time—past time—for a new direction in Iraq.

The agreement before us today provides that new direction. But rather than admit the need to change course, the President—and I say this with all due respect—continues to try to mislead the American public about the war in Iraq.

He recently asked Congress to “put partisanship on hold.” But then he, the President, voiced the incredible assertion that the attacks on 9/11 are linked to the war in Iraq. That is not true, and the American people know it.

The President complained that Congress is holding funding for the troops hostage to funding for domestic needs. President Bush claims that Democrats are adding porkbarrel spending to a bill intended for the troops. The President has charged that Democrats are “legislating defeat” in Iraq.

President Bush has tried to scare the pants off the public by suggesting that our bill could result in death and destruction in America. What utter nonsense. What hogwash. This Senate must not be a rubberstamp for this or any President. Under the Constitution, Congress has a duty to question the war policies of this or any President. We must listen to the voices of the people, and the American people have sent a very clear message to Washington: It is time to start to bring our troops home from Iraq.

The Congress has responded, crafting a new direction that will spur the Iraqi Government to pursue real political reconciliation in that country. The American people do not support an open-ended U.S. military occupation in Iraq. It is time for the truth; it is time for the White House to stop the fear mongering and face the truth.

In the book of John, chapter 8, verse 32 of the King James version of the Holy Bible are these words:

And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.

The Congress is not holding funding for the troops hostage to domestic porkbarrel spending. The \$6.9 billion for rebuilding the gulf coast after Hurricane Katrina is not pork barrel spending. Ask the citizens of New Orleans. The \$1.8 billion for the VA to provide first-class health care to our wounded veterans is not porkbarrel spending. Ask the troops who are waiting for care, and ask their families. I know \$20 million to repair Walter Reed Hospital is not pork barrel spending. The \$650 million for the SCHIP child health program to deal with the shortfall in 14 States is not porkbarrel

spending. Ask the parents with sick children. The \$2.25 billion for securing the country from terrorist attack, including port and border security, transit security, funds to improve screening for explosives at airports, and/or screening cargo on passenger aircraft is not porkbarrel spending. It is homeland security to prevent the death and destruction which President Bush warns about.

This country must not forsake critical domestic needs because of this President's single-minded obsession with his failed mission. Congress has appropriated more than \$38 billion for rebuilding Iraq, and this agreement adds another \$3 billion. I simply do not understand why this President—our President—is eager to commit billions of dollars to rebuild Baghdad but absolutely opposes additional money to rebuild the gulf coast here in America. Why does President Bush decry needed funds for the Veterans' Administration to build a first-class health care system for our brave troops?

Porkbarrel spending? I think not. The conference agreement that is before the Senate today totals \$124 billion. It is lower than the House bill. Yet essential funding for gulf coast recovery, veterans medical care, homeland security, and agricultural disaster relief remains.

The conference report also includes an increase in the minimum wage—the first increase since 1997. It is needed, it is fair, and it is long overdue.

There is also \$4.9 billion in tax incentives for small businesses that are fully paid for in the bill. Small business is the backbone of our economy and these incentives will help economic growth.

This bill includes more than \$100 billion for the Department of Defense—nearly \$4 billion above the President's inadequate request. It protects the troops by including \$1.2 billion above the President's low number for mine-resistant vehicles.

This bill cares for the troops by providing \$2.1 billion more than the President for health care, including more resources for troops with traumatic brain injury. Porkbarrel? I think not.

The President—our President—claims this is a partisan bill. The President claims Congress is trying to micromanage the war, substituting our judgment for the judgment of our generals. The President knows better.

The Constitution says that “the Congress shall have power”—do you know what that means? The Congress, that is us—“the Congress shall have power to . . . provide for the common Defence.” It is the Congress—yes, it is the Congress—that is given the sole power to declare war. The Congress is sworn to “raise and support Armies.” The Congress has heard the voices of the people, and we have responded as we are elected to do.

This conference agreement provides a new directive for the war in Iraq. It is patriotic, not partisan, to help the President to see the truth—the truth.

It is our duty. It is a duty born of love for this great country, the Constitution, and the American people.

If the President decides to veto the bill, he will be holding funding for the troops hostage to his stubborn insistence on going into Iraq and the resulting disaster caused by his, the President's, war policies.

I encourage all Members to vote for this conference report. We can send a strong message to the White House. We can help this President face the truth. Four years after our troops removed Saddam Hussein from power, the President's policies simply are not working. They must change. We must come together as a country to repair the damage caused by this horrendous war—this horrendous war—and chart a new direction in Iraq.

I thank the Chair, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senator from Texas is to be recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, will the Senator yield?

Mrs. HUTCHISON. I will be happy to yield.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, how much time is remaining on both sides?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On the majority side, including time reserved for the leader, there is 53 minutes. And on the minority side, including the time of the leader, there is 74 minutes.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the speakers be in the following order: that following Senator HUTCHISON, I be recognized for 5 minutes, then Senator LIEBERMAN, then to Senator DURBIN for 5 minutes, to Senator INHOFE, and then to Senator KENNEDY for 5 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. INHOFE. Reserving the right to object, and I won't object, I am wondering why we are confining the time to 5 minutes if we have that many minutes remaining. If the Senator wishes to expand the time—

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I inform the Senator that I was limiting the Senators on our side to 5 minutes. The Senator from Oklahoma has unlimited time. I did not give time to speak on the Senator's side.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Parliamentary inquiry: There is a unanimous consent agreement already on our side.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is correct.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. What is the amount allocated for Senator INHOFE?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous agreement, Senator INHOFE is provided 5 minutes.

Is there objection to the request? Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, does the time start now?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Yes. The Senator from Texas.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, when Tom Brokaw wrote the book “The Greatest Generation,” it re-

minded America what is great about our country. It reminded us that men and women have sacrificed through the years for our country to make sure it was free for the next generation.

Can you imagine in the middle of World War II the Congress mandating the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Europe and the Pacific, oblivious to the facts on the ground or the absolute necessity to win? Can you even imagine in the middle of the Cold War if Congress had required the withdrawal of troops from the same parts of the world, thinking that if we withdrew our troops, the Communists would do the same and peace would prevail?

If earlier Congresses had done what it appears this Congress is trying to do, freedom would have died in Europe, it would have died where it was in Asia, and who knows what would have happened in the future in America.

Today we have to ask ourselves: Are we worthy of the sacrifices so many have made in the past? Are we going to stand for freedom and fight for future Americans to have the same opportunities we have had because so many brave men and women have sacrificed?

There are those who say this isn't a world war; it is a civil war; it is over there, and we can't do anything about it. This is a tough time, there is no question. Every one of us grieves when we see the killing of innocent people, Iraqis or Americans. But make no mistake about it, this is a world war. Al-Qaida is in Iraq. General Petraeus said that yesterday. They have all the evidence. They know what al-Qaida is doing there. They are attacking Americans. They are attacking Iraqis. They are trying to take over Iraq so they will have the capability to spread their terrorism throughout the world.

Does that mean they are in a civil war or are they an enemy we must face? If we don't face it there, we will face it in our own country. General Abizaid, the former Commander of U.S. CENTCOM, said to the Armed Services Committee: If we leave, they will follow us home. If we don't stand for freedom against this enemy, we will see it again. We will see it on our own shores, and we will see it in other parts of the world.

It would be unimaginable to me for Congress not to fund our troops and to send the mixed message out of Washington to the enemy, to our allies in such an important conflict that Congress isn't sure if America has the will to stand and fight for freedom. And make no mistake about it, that is what is at stake in these votes that are happening on Capitol Hill.

I have heard people say: Oh, we are going to vote on this every month because it is good for politics. They may think it is good for politics, but I say the American people are going to get it. They are going to understand if we look weak in the Congress on standing and fighting the enemy wherever it is to keep Americans secure, they will see what happens and they will question if

we are worthy of the sacrifices of the greatest generation.

I wondered when that book came out: If America were ever attacked, would we stand and fight for freedom? I hope the answer is yes. I hope the Congress will wake up and see that setting deadlines and sending the signal to the enemy that we are weak is not worthy of the sacrifices of the past.

I hope Congress will do the right thing, strip this language, send the money to the troops, and show that we, too, will stand for freedom for our children.

I thank the Chair. I yield the floor.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I rise today in strong support of this supplemental appropriations conference report, and let me begin by thanking Senator BYRD, the chairman of our Appropriations Committee, who has worked diligently throughout the process to bring us to this point today where we are addressing the critical infrastructure needs of this country as well as moving forward and changing course in Iraq.

I also thank and commend our majority leader, Senator REID, for his courage and his diligence in speaking out to get us to a point where we will be sending a message to the President and to the country that we are willing to be courageous and change course in Iraq.

The agreement before us takes us on a responsible path on many of the most pressing issues of the day—the war in Iraq, as we have talked about and I spoke about on the floor yesterday, moving forward with the needs of our veterans and our injured servicemembers, homeland security, and the needs of our hard-hit communities here at home.

I realize my colleagues across the aisle would prefer that Congress obediently approve the President's request, but we are not. Instead, we are providing a funding bill that meets the needs of the American people and those bravely serving for us overseas and all of those here at home.

Last November, on November 7, the American people called for an end to the rubberstamp Congress, and today we are here to deliver. This is not, as some have tried to say, simply a war-funding bill. Instead, it provides funding for critical needs here at home in addition to the \$100 billion in funding that is directed to our troops who are serving us so honorably overseas.

In recent weeks, there has been a lot of heated rhetoric and plenty of mischaracterizations about this important bill. Much of that has focused on the critically necessary language that is included in this bill that will transition our mission in Iraq and begin to redeploy our troops.

As Senator BYRD stated, there is much more in this bill. We need to pass this legislation because we need a new direction in Iraq, but we also need to pass this bill because it provides everything our troops need to complete their mission. It provides billions of dollars

more to take care of them when they come home, and it will, finally, help American communities recover and rebuild.

In addition to funding for the troops overseas, this conference agreement provides more than \$5 billion to ensure that our returning troops and veterans get the critically important healthcare they have earned and deserve and which we now so vividly see is needed.

It provides \$6.9 million for the victims of Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita. Senator LANDRIEU has been on the floor many times to talk about those families who have been forgotten on the gulf coast. We have not forgotten them in this bill, and this must get to the President and be signed to take care of those families.

We provide \$2.25 billion in homeland security investments, including funds for port security and mass-transit security, for explosives detection equipment at our airports, and for initiatives in the 9/11 bill that recently passed here in the Senate. These are needs which we cannot forget, and we include them in this bill.

We provide \$3½ billion to provide relief for our farmers and our ranchers across the country. There are many families who are struggling and who have suffered from drought and agricultural disasters. For too long, we have forgotten them in this country or ignored them or blocked their needs. The Senate today is saying we have not forgotten.

Finally, this conference agreement includes emergency funding for forest firefighting, a critical need throughout the West; low-income energy assistance, drastically needed in many of our communities; and pandemic flu preparations that all of us know we cannot forget.

I was on the floor yesterday to talk about much of the funding, but critically important is the funding for our troops and our veterans when they come home. We all vividly saw the Walter Reed scandal just a few weeks ago. We provide the funding to make sure our soldiers, whether they are at Walter Reed or any of our facilities across the country, get the best of care, from traumatic brain injury to post-traumatic stress syndrome.

Of course, again, we do have the Iraq language, which is so critical. I hope our colleagues, as we move this bill to the President, will remind him and the country that this bill is essential for our troops, for those of us here at home, and for the future of this country. We urge him to read the bill and to sign it.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, will the Senator yield?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia is recognized. Mr. BYRD. I thank the Chair.

The Senator said it well. The Senator could not have said it better. Senator MURRAY is right.

I thank Senator MURRAY, and I thank the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut has 10 minutes allocated in his own right.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, the supplemental appropriations bill we are debating today contains language that would have Congress take control of the direction of our military strategy in Iraq. Like most Senators of both parties, I support the appropriations in this bill. But because I strongly oppose its language on Iraq, I will vote no.

Earlier this week, the Senate majority leader spoke at the Woodrow Wilson Center and laid out the case for why the bill now before this Chamber, in his view, offers a viable alternative strategy for Iraq. It was the most comprehensive recent argument in support of this position, and so I wish to address myself to its content respectfully and point by point.

I have great respect for my friend from Nevada. I believe he has offered this proposal in good faith, and therefore I wish to take it up in good faith and examine its arguments and ideas carefully and in-depth because this is a very serious discussion we are having this morning for America and its future security.

In his speech Monday, the Senate majority leader described the several steps this new strategy for Iraq would entail. The first step, he said, is to:

... transition the U.S. mission away from policing a civil war ... to training and equipping Iraqi security forces, protecting U.S. forces, and conducting targeted counter-terror operations.

I ask my colleagues to step back for a moment and consider this plan. When we say that U.S. troops shouldn't be policing a civil war, that their operation should be restricted to the narrow list of missions, what does this actually mean? To begin with, it means our troops will not be allowed to protect the Iraqi people from the insurgents and militias and terrorists who are trying to terrorize and kill them. Instead of restoring basic security, which General Petraeus has effectively argued should be the focus of any counterinsurgency campaign, it means our soldiers would, instead, be ordered, by force of this proposed law, not to stop the sectarian violence happening all around them no matter how vicious or horrific it becomes. I fear if we begin to withdraw, it will become both vicious and horrific.

In short, it means telling our troops to deliberately and consciously turn their backs on ethnic cleansing, to turn their backs on the slaughter of innocent civilians—men, women, and children singled out and killed on the basis of their religion alone or their ethnicity. It means turning our backs on the policies that led us correctly to intervene in the civil war in Yugoslavia in the 1990s, the principles that today lead many of us to cry out and demand intervention in Darfur. To me, this makes no moral sense at all.

It also makes no strategic or military sense. Al-Qaida's own leaders have

repeatedly said that one of the ways they intend to achieve victory in Iraq is to provoke civil war. They are trying to kill as many people as possible, precisely in the hope of igniting sectarian violence because they know this is their best way to collapse Iraq's political center, overthrow Iraq's elected Government, radicalize its population, and create a failed state in the heart of the Middle East that they can use as a base. That is why al-Qaida blew up the Golden Mosque in Samarra last February, and that is why we are seeing mass-casualty suicide bombings by al-Qaida in Baghdad today. The sectarian violence the majority leader says he wants to order American troops to stop policing, in other words, is the very same sectarian violence al-Qaida hopes will take it to victory. The suggestion that we can draw a bright legislative line between stopping terrorists in Iraq and stopping civil war in Iraq flies in the face of this reality. I don't know how to say it any more plainly. It is al-Qaida that is trying to inflame a full-fledged civil war in Iraq. So we cannot both fight al-Qaida and get out of the civil war. They are one.

The majority leader said on Monday that he believes U.S. troops will still be able to conduct targeted counterterror operations under his plan. Even if we stop trying to protect civilians in Iraq, in other words, we can still go after the bad guys. But, again, I ask my colleagues, how would this translate into reality on the ground? How would we find these terrorists, who do not gather on conventional military bases or fight in conventional formations?

By definition, targeted counterterrorism requires our forces to know where, when, and against whom to strike, and that, in turn, requires accurate, actionable, real-time intelligence. This is the kind of intelligence which can only come from ordinary Iraqis—the sea of people among whom the terrorists hide. That, in turn, requires interacting with the Iraqi people on a close, personal, daily basis. It requires winning individual Iraqis to our side because they conclude we are there on their side, gaining their trust, and convincing them they can count on us to keep them safe from the terrorists if they share valuable information about them. This is no great secret. It is at the heart of what is happening in Iraq today and is part of the Petraeus plan.

In sum, on this point, you can't have it both ways. You can't withdraw combat troops from Iraq and still say you are going to fight al-Qaida there. If you believe that there is no hope of winning in Iraq or that the cost of victory there is not worth it, then you should be for complete withdrawal as soon as possible.

There is another irony in the Iraq language in this bill. For most of the past 4 years, under former Defense Secretary Rumsfeld, the United States did not try to establish basic security in Iraq. Rather than deploying enough troops necessary to protect the Iraqi

people, the focus of our military has been on training and equipping Iraqi forces, protecting our own forces, and conducting targeted antiterrorist sweeps and raids—in other words, the very same missions proposed by the proponents of the legislation before us.

That Rumsfeld strategy failed, and we know why it failed. It failed because we didn't have enough troops doing the right things to ensure security, which in turn created an opening for al-Qaida and its allies to exploit and allowed sectarian violence to begin to run rampant. Al-Qaida stepped into the security vacuum, as did the sectarian militias, and through horrific violence created a climate of fear and insecurity in which political and economic progress became impossible.

For years, many Members of Congress saw this and spoke to it. We talked about it. We called for more troops and a new strategy—and, for that matter, a new Secretary of Defense. Yet now, when President Bush has come around, when he has acknowledged the mistakes that have been made and the need to focus on basic security in Iraq and to install a new Secretary of Defense and a new commander in Iraq, now his critics in Congress have changed their minds and decided that the old failed strategy—the Rumsfeld strategy—wasn't so bad after all, because that is what would be adopted in the language on Iraq in this bill. What is going on here? What has changed so that the strategy we criticized and rejected in 2006 suddenly makes sense in 2007?

The second element in the plan outlined by the majority leader on Monday is the phased redeployment of our troops no later than October 1, 2007. Let us be absolutely clear what this means. The legislation would impose a binding deadline for U.S. troops to begin retreating from Iraq. That withdrawal would happen regardless of conditions on the ground, regardless of the recommendations of General Petraeus—in short, regardless of reality, on October 1, 2007. As far as I can tell, none of the supporters of withdrawal have attempted to explain why October 1 is the magic date, what strategic or military significance this date holds. Why not September 1? Why not January 1 or April 1? October 1, 2007, is a date as arbitrary as it is inflexible. It is, I contend, a deadline for defeat.

How do proponents of this deadline defend it? On Monday, Senator REID gave several reasons. First he said a date for withdrawal puts “pressure on the Iraqis to make desperately needed political compromises.”

But will it? According to the legislation now before us, the withdrawal will happen, regardless of what the Iraqi Government does. How, then, if you are an Iraqi Government official, does this give you any incentive to make the right choices? On the contrary, there is compelling reason to think a legislatively directed withdrawal of American troops will have exactly the opposite effect than its sponsors intend.

I ask the Chair, how much time have I used?

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BROWN). The Senator from Connecticut has consumed the 10 minutes he was allocated.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. I gather Senator CORNYN has yielded his 5 minutes to me?

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

Mr. LIEBERMAN. I thank the Chair.

This, in fact, is exactly what the most recent National Intelligence Estimate on Iraq predicted. A withdrawal of American troops in the months ahead would “almost certainly lead to a significant increase in the scale and scope of sectarian conflict, intensify Sunni resistance, and have adverse effects on national reconciliation.”

That is the NIE, broadly supported and embraced by proponents of the Iraq language in this legislation.

Second, the majority leader said withdrawing our troops will “reduce the specter of the U.S. occupation which gives fuel to the insurgency.”

My colleague from Nevada, in other words, is saying the insurgency is in some measure being provoked by the very presence of American troops. By diminishing that presence, presumably the insurgency will diminish.

But I ask my colleagues, where is the evidence to support this theory? I find none. In fact, all the evidence I find supports the opposite conclusion. Since 2003, and before General Petraeus took command and began implementing our new strategy there, American forces were ordered on several occasions to pull back from Iraqi cities and regions, including Mosul, Fallujah, Tel'Afar, and Baghdad. What happened in these places? Did they stabilize when the American troops left? Did the insurgency go away? Of course not.

On the contrary, in each of these places where U.S. forces pulled back, al-Qaida and sectarian warriors rushed in. Rather than becoming islands of peace, they became safe havens for terrorists, islands of fear and violence.

So I ask advocates of withdrawal, on what evidence, on what data have you concluded that pulling U.S. troops out will weaken the insurgency there when every single experience we have had since 2003 suggests that withdrawal, the kind of withdrawal mandated by this legislation, will strengthen the terrorists and insurgents and increase violence?

I ask my colleagues to consider the words of Sheikh Abdul Sattar, one of the leading tribal leaders in Anbar Province, who is now fighting on our side against al-Qaida because he is convinced we are on his side. This is what he told the New York Times when asked last month what would happen if U.S. troops withdraw? He said:

In my personal opinion, and in the opinion of most of the wise men of Anbar, if the American forces leave right now, there will be civil war and the area will fall into total chaos.

This is a man whose father was killed by al-Qaida, who risks his life every day to work with us, a man who was described by one Army officer as “the most effective local leader in Ramadi I believe the coalition has worked with . . . since 2003.”

In his remarks earlier this week, Senator REID also observed there is “a large and growing population of millions—who sit precariously on the fence. They will either condemn or contribute to terrorism in the years ahead. We must convince them of the goodness of America and Americans. We must win them over.”

On this I completely agree with my friend from Nevada. But my question to him and others supporting this language is this: How does this strategy you propose in this bill possibly help win over this population of millions in Iraq who sit precariously on the fence?

What message, I ask, does this legislation announce to these people who are the majority in Iraq? How will they respond when we tell them we are not longer going to make an effort to protect them and their families against insurgents and death squads? How will they respond when we declare we will be withdrawing our forces, regardless of whether they are making progress in the next few months toward political reconciliation? Where will their hopes be for a better life when we withdraw the troops that are the necessary precondition for the security and stability and opportunity for a better life that the majority of Iraqis clearly yearn for?

Do my friends believe this is the way to convince Iraqis and the world of the goodness of America and Americans? Does anyone in this Chamber believe that by announcing a date certain for withdrawal we will empower Iraqi moderates, the mainstream, or enable Iraq's reconstruction, or open more schools for their children or more hospitals for their families or provide more freedom for everyone? With all due respect, this is a fantasy.

The third step the majority leader proposes is to impose “tangible, measurable, and achievable benchmarks on the Iraqi government.”

I am all for such benchmarks. In fact, Senator MCCAIN and I were among the first to propose legislation to apply such benchmarks on the Iraqi government.

But I don't see how this plan will encourage Iraqis to meet these or any other benchmarks, given its ironclad commitment to abandon them—regardless of how they behave.

We should of course be making every effort to encourage reconciliation in Iraq and the development of a decent political order that Sunnis, Shiites, and Kurds can agree on.

But even if today that political solution was found, we cannot rationally think that our terrorist enemies like al-Qaida in Iraq will simply vanish.

Al-Qaida is not mass murdering civilians on the streets of Baghdad because

it wants a more equitable distribution of oil revenues. Its aim in Iraq is not to get a seat at the political table.

It wants to blow up the table—along with everyone seated at it. Al-Qaida wants to destroy any prospect for democracy in Iraq, and it will not be negotiated or reasoned out of existence. It must be fought and defeated through force of arms. And there can be no withdrawal, no redeployment from this reality.

The fourth step that the majority leader proposed on Monday is a “diplomatic, economic, and political offensive . . . starting with a regional conference working toward a long-term framework for stability in the region.”

I understand why we are drawn to ideas such as those that are in this legislation on Iraq. All of us are aware of the justified frustration, fatigue, and disappointment of the American people with Iraq. All of us would like to believe there is a better solution—quicker, easier—to the challenges we face in Iraq. But none of this gives us an excuse to paper over hard truths of which I have tried to speak. We delude ourselves if we think we can wave a legislative wand and suddenly our troops in the field will be able to distinguish between al-Qaida terrorism and sectarian violence or that Iraqis will suddenly settle their political differences because our troops are leaving or that sweet reason alone will suddenly convince Iraq and Syria to stop destabilizing Iraq, stop enabling the terrorists and insurgents who are killing too many Americans and Iraqis there today.

What we need now is a sober assessment of the progress we are beginning to make and a recognition of the significant challenges we still face. There are many uncertainties before us, many complexities, many challenges. Barely half of the new troops General Petraeus requested have even arrived in Iraq.

In following General Petraeus's path, there is no guarantee of success, but there is hope and a new plan for success. In rejecting General Petraeus's path, as this legislation would do, there is a guarantee of failure and, I fear, disaster. The plan embedded in this language contains no reasonable prospects for success. It is a strategy based on catch phrases and bromides rather than military realities and all that is on the line for us in Iraq.

It does not learn from the many mistakes that have been made in Iraq. Rather, it promises to repeat them. Let me be absolutely clear. In my opinion, Iraq is not yet lost, but if we follow the plan in this legislation, it will be lost and so, I fear, will much of our hope for stability in the Middle East and security from terrorism here at home. That is why I will vote no.

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, we are now in our fifth year of this conflict in Iraq, and throughout that time I have met with commanders of our Armed Forces, listened to their experiences

and recommendations, and after much consideration I have come to the conclusion that we are not on the right path. While some of my colleagues believe that we should support President George W. Bush, who continues to make decisions that place our men and women in the Armed Forces in harm's way, I disagree.

The past few months have been among the deadliest for our military personnel. We have seen 79 U.S. soldiers killed in February, 82 in March, and 85 so far this month. To the more than 3,300 U.S. soldiers that have been killed and the over 24,000 wounded since the conflict began, to our men and women in the Armed Forces and their families who are valiantly serving our country and to the American people, I say to all of you, we must change our course.

To stay the course is to welcome disaster. Iraq lies like the proverbial clay pot broken in shards on the ground. It is shattered into the fragments of warring factions, clans, and religious groups. Afghanistan, still the center of the war on al-Qaida, is becoming progressively more dangerous as our attention remains focused on Iraq. Al-Qaida and the Taliban are rebuilding their forces and terrorists have extended their attacks to North Africa and Western Europe. We are facing, as our military leaders tell us again and again, a “thinking enemy,” one that learns and adapts. Should we not also learn and adapt? Can anyone doubt that our strategy needs to change?

Some have painted this conflict as simply a war against al-Qaida in Iraq. Let us not make the mistake of fooling ourselves. Al-Qaida is stoking the flames but it is the internal divisions among the Iraqis themselves which has made it the bonfire it is today. If the Iraqis unite, they can defeat al-Qaida as they have demonstrated in some provinces already. But as everyone, including the President and our military leaders, have observed, the Iraqis themselves must form a reconciliation government. American soldiers are not a thread that can permanently stitch together the broken parts of Iraq. The Iraqis themselves are the masters of their own fate.

The legislation before us today is a call for a new strategy. It requires that we change our present course. It makes clear that the war in Iraq can only be won by Iraqis. It is their will and their will alone that must determine the fate of their country. Americans cannot do the fighting for them. A democratic Iraq will not be established unless the Iraqis do it for themselves. We cannot put the shattered pieces of Iraq together. Only the Iraqis can do that.

Today, with the Senate passage of H.R. 1591, the U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Care, Katrina Recovery, and Iraq Accountability Appropriations Act, 2007, we will be providing \$100 billion for the Department of Defense, primarily for continued military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. It also

includes a \$1 billion increase for the National Guard and Reserve equipment and \$1.1 billion for military housing. Mr. President, \$1.789 billion would be provided for the Department of Veterans Affairs to specifically target treatment for veterans of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom, reduce the backlog of benefit claims, and ensure that facilities are maintained at the highest level. In addition, \$6.9 billion would be appropriated for the victims of Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita, \$650 million would be provided for the State Children's Health Insurance Program, \$2.25 billion in homeland security investments, including funds for port security and mass transit security, and \$3.5 billion to help relieve pressures that farmers and ranchers experienced due to severe drought and agricultural disasters.

In addition to funding these important efforts, the legislation includes an important step in setting the proper course in Iraq for our military servicemembers and their families by providing them with a road map to success. By outlining the benchmarks that must be met by the Iraqi government and clarifies our military involvement in Iraq. It defines our mission in Iraq by steering our military away from policing a civil war to training and equipping Iraqi security forces, protecting U.S. forces, and conducting targeted counterterror operations. A phased redeployment of our troops would begin no later than October 1, 2007, with a goal of removing all combat forces by April 1, 2008, except for those carrying out security, training, and counterterror operations. This bill holds the Iraqi government accountable by setting benchmarks that must be met for security, political reconciliation, and improving the lives of the Iraqi people. It is no longer acceptable for this Administration to set arbitrary benchmarks that have no consequences attached to it. It is time for the Iraqi government and regional leaders to work together to promote democracy in Iraq. It is time for the United States to take the necessary steps that illustrates our willingness to relinquish control and allow the Iraqi government and the Iraqi people to control their own destiny. And it is time for the Iraqi people to set their own path to victory and democracy.

The American people and more importantly, our servicemembers and their families, deserve to have the administration define our mission in Iraq. The President must also give a clear directive to the Iraqi government that it must demonstrate the will to overcome the civil unrest that is taking control of their country. Unfortunately, the President has indicated that he will veto this important legislation. By vetoing this legislation, this administration is sending the wrong message. It is preventing our troops from receiving the funds they need to continue their mission in Iraq and Af-

ghanistan. It is preventing victims of Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita from rebuilding their lives and farmers and ranchers from receiving relief due to severe drought and agricultural disasters. Moreover, it is preventing our veterans from receiving the health care and benefits that they deserve.

It is time for this administration, this President, to lead us out of the morass in Iraq. This legislation sends the right message to our servicemembers, to the Iraqi government and its people, and to the American people. I urge the President to do the right thing and enact H.R. 1591, the U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Care, Katrina Recovery, and Iraq Accountability Appropriations Act, 2007.

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, today I will vote for the Iraq-Afghanistan emergency supplemental bill. I believe that this bill supports our troops, our veterans and their families, and should be signed by the President.

But first I would like to say that as we continue the debate on this legislation and on the best way forward in Iraq, I come to the floor today with two key principles in mind.

One, we should honor the bravery and courage of our troops. America's finest men and women have done an extraordinary job—too often without the needed equipment and support. But honoring our troops means more than just singing their praise. It means making sure that every American in Iraq is adequately trained and equipped; it means guaranteeing every veteran access to all available benefits and services; and it means setting a policy that is as wise as our soldiers are brave.

And two, we should work to heal the deep divisions which this war has caused at home. Not since Vietnam has the American public been so divided. I am concerned that the bitterness and the harshness of the debate clouds good judgment on the future direction in Iraq.

It is important for us to remember that, no matter how contentious this debate may become, every Senator shares the same goal: peace and stability in the Middle East and a safe return home for our troops. While we may disagree on the best path to that end, we must continue to work together for a constructive change in our policy. It is important to remember what binds us together—so that we will not be torn too far apart.

I would now like to comment on the bill before us today.

Specifically, the bill includes: More than \$100 billion for our troops on the ground in Iraq and Afghanistan; more than \$5 billion to help ensure that our veterans and their families can receive the health care they need and deserve when they return home; nearly \$7 billion to rebuild the gulf coast and help the victims of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita so that they can finally rebuild their homes, communities and livelihoods; and \$3.5 billion in disaster assistance to help our farmers and ranch-

ers across the Nation recover from 7 years of drought capped by this winter's devastating blizzards.

The bill sends a direct message to the Iraqis that our military commitment is not open-ended. We hold the Iraqi government accountable through measurable and achievable benchmarks for security, political reconciliation and improving the lives of ordinary Iraqis.

The bill also launches a new diplomatic, economic and political offensive and takes steps to begin to rebuild our military.

Finally, it sets an April 1, 2008, goal of redeploying U.S. troops not engaged in carrying out security, training and counterterror operations in Iraq.

I support this new direction for Iraq. This new direction recognizes the reality that success in Iraq is contingent upon a strategy of military, political and diplomatic progress.

I am disappointed that the President has said he intends to veto this legislation. But I remain hopeful. I believe that we must continue to seek a new course in Iraq. I believe we can and should do that by achieving a bipartisan consensus on the best path to success.

I know most of my Republican colleagues do not support this bill. But I believe they sincerely want to join in finding a solution to the difficult problem that confronts us in Iraq. The Iraq Study Group provides a model for how we can work in good faith, across party lines. And I believe that the group's recommendations can and should be our blueprint for a compromise that can gain broad support here in the Senate.

So next week, I will be back on the floor to discuss with my colleagues how we can implement those recommendations, working with the President.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, this morning I had the honor of saluting members of the Maryland Army National Guard as they departed to begin training for their upcoming deployment to Iraq. The 58th Brigade Combat Team, including the Headquarters Company from Pikesville, MD, the 1st Battalion of the 175th Infantry from Dundalk, MD, and the 1st Squadron of the 158th Cavalry Regiment, are leaving their families and communities to answer our Nation's call. As the Senator from Maryland and the Senator for Maryland, I have promised them that I will do everything I can to support them while they are on the battlefield, help care for their families while they are gone, and ensure they have the medical care, education, and job training benefits they need when they return.

I support the conference report on the fiscal year 2007 emergency supplemental appropriations bill because it will help us keep our promises to America's citizen soldiers and their families. Unfortunately, President Bush continues to threaten to veto this bill. I hope it will not come to that. I

urge the President to work with this Congress to meet the pressing needs of our men and women in uniform.

I support this emergency supplemental bill because it: Fully funds the needs of our warfighters on the battlefield; adds \$466 million to ensure veterans get health care they need when they come home; and requires the President to immediately change our mission in Iraq; and sets the goal of bringing our troops home by no later than April 1, 2008.

This bill states clearly that Congress and the American people will continue to support and protect our troops. Our troops must understand that Congress will never abandon them, not while they are fighting on the battlefield and not when they come home. The best way to support our troops is to bring them home—swiftly and safely.

I am not new to this position. I never wanted to go to war in the first place. I was one of the 23 who voted against this war, 4 years ago, on October 11, 2002. I opposed giving the President unilateral authority to launch a preemptive attack. I said the United States had to exhaust our diplomatic options. I encouraged the administration to stick with the United Nations U.N., to let the U.N. meet its responsibility to deal with the threat from Saddam. The day of the vote, I said, we don't know if we will be greeted with flowers or landmines. Well, now we know: When we got to Iraq, there were no weapons of mass destruction, but the destruction happened, and it happened fast.

The United States went to war with Iraq, but today, we are at war within Iraq. Saddam is gone, but we are still there, mired in a civil war. No one could ask more of our troops. They are brave and courageous and have fought valiantly. And it is time to bring them home.

We need a way forward in Iraq. The Iraq Study Group gives us 79 recommendations as a way to go forward, but the President has completely ignored this report. Surely out of 79 recommendations, there are 50 we can agree on. The Iraq Study Group report calls for new and enhanced diplomatic and political efforts in Iraq and a change in the primary mission of U.S. forces in Iraq to enable the United States to begin to move our forces out of Iraq responsibly. It provides a direction for the U.S. and Iraqi Governments to follow that could lead to withdrawal of American forces by the first quarter of 2008.

This is exactly the approach called for by this supplemental bill, which will have most of our troops out of Iraq by March 31, 2008. What are we voting for? This bill contains a binding resolution that directs the President to promptly transition the mission of U.S. forces in Iraq and begin a phased redeployment within 120 days. It sets a goal of bringing U.S. combat forces home by April 1, 2008, except for a limited number of troops essential for force protec-

tion, training, and equipping Iraqi troops, and targeted counter terror operations.

This resolution also says success in Iraq depends on the Iraqi Government's ability to meet important benchmarks, including the training and equipping of Iraqi security forces so they can control the capitol city of Baghdad; giving Iraqi military commanders the authority to conduct operations without political interference; disarming sectarian militias and ensuring that Iraqi security forces are loyal to Iraq's Government; drafting and implementing legislation to ensure the equal division of Iraqi oil revenues; drafting and implementing legislation to reform the deBaathification process; implementing a fair process for amending the Iraqi constitution to ensure minority rights are protected; and implementing new rules to protect minority rights in the Iraqi Parliament.

I support this Iraq resolution. It says what the Iraq Study Group has already told us: the problems in Iraq cannot be solved by the U.S. military—they require a political solution by the Iraqis and diplomatic engagement with Iraq's neighbors. It says Congress and the American people will not only support the troops but continue to protect them as well.

I want to end this war, and the resolution in this bill will do just that. Yet in ending the war, it is my responsibility as a Senator to ensure that our troops are brought home not only swiftly but safely. I will not vote to end funding for the pay that supports military spouses and children, body armor and armored humvees our troops need for survival, tourniquets and surgical hospitals on the battlefield, jet fuel for the airplanes that take injured troops from Baghdad to Germany and then home, or the medical care they need when they get here.

In the last few weeks, we have all been shocked and awed by the conditions facing our wounded warriors. We know that more than 22,000 Purple Hearts have been awarded in Iraq. Yet our troops are being twice wounded. We know that acute care for our injured troops has been astounding, with historic rates of survival from even the most brutal battlefield injuries. Yet, while we have saved their lives, we are failing to give them their life back. Outpatient care, facilities, social work, case workers, disability benefits—the whole system is dysfunctional.

This supplemental includes an additional \$20 million to improve conditions at Walter Reed Army Medical Center and an additional \$900 million for research and treatment of traumatic brain injury, post-traumatic stress disorder, and other physical and mental trauma. It also adds \$466 million for veterans' health care, including \$53 million for new polytrauma facilities and services, \$10 million for 100 additional caseworkers to aid troops and their families as they transition from active duty, \$25 million for pros-

thetic research and \$120 million for mental health treatment.

We know this is only a downpayment for our troops and veterans. We need to overhaul the disability benefits system that is outdated and adversarial. We need a better system for transitioning our troops from active duty to the Veterans' Administration, to ensure they get the health care, job training, and educational benefits they deserve. We need to hear the recommendations of the Dole-Shalala Commission on how to fix the problems in our military and veterans hospitals. And I look forward to working with Senator MURRAY, Senator LEVIN, and Senator INOUE on a comprehensive reform package that will ensure our troops have the medical care they will need for the rest of their lives.

This supplemental supports our troops, follows the will of the American people, and follows the advice of the Iraq Study Group. It is time to change our direction in Iraq and bring our forces home. Let's send in the diplomats and bring our troops home safely and soon.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I offer for the record, the Budget Committee's official scoring of the conference report to H.R. 1591, making emergency supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2007.

The conference report includes \$124.153 billion in net, new discretionary budget authority for 2007, of which \$100.681 billion is for defense activities and \$23.472 billion is for non-defense activities. The additional budget authority will increase outlays by \$31.935 billion in 2007. Of the total spending authority provided, H.R. 1591 designates \$124.789 billion in budget authority as emergency spending, which will increase outlays by \$31.926 billion.

The conference report to H.R. 1591 is subject to several points of order. First, the conference report includes emergency funding that would cause the \$86.3 billion cap on 2007 emergency funding to be exceeded. This cap was included in S. Con. Res. 83, the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2007, and was made applicable by the deeming resolution included in section 7035 of P.L. 109-234. Funding above the cap counts against the subcommittees' allocations and would cause them to exceed their allocations. As a result, the conference report is subject to a point of order under 302(f) of the Congressional Budget Act. Second, the small business tax relief provisions included in the conference report reduce revenues by \$4.465 billion over the 2006-2010 period. Because the Congress is over the revenue aggregates under the 2006 budget resolution, the conference report is subject to a point of order under section 311 of the Congressional Budget Act. It should be noted that the tax provisions are fully offset over the 2007-2012 and 2007-2017 periods. Finally, the conference report is subject to a point of order under section 402 of H. Con. Res. 95, the concurrent resolution

on the budget for fiscal year 2006, for including a number of emergency designations for spending on nondefense activities.

I commend the distinguished chairman of the Appropriations Committee for bringing this legislation before the Senate. I ask unanimous consent that the table displaying the Budget Committee scoring of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

HR. 1591, THE CONFERENCE REPORT TO H.R. 1591, MAKING EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2007

(Fiscal year 2007; \$ millions)

	Defense	Non-defense	Total
Conference Report:			
Emergency:			
Budget Authority	\$100,681	24,108	124,789
Outlays	26,665	5,261	31,926
Nonemergency:			
Budget Authority	0	-636	-636
Outlays	0	9	9
Total:			
Budget Authority	100,681	23,472	124,153
Outlays	26,665	5,270	31,935

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, it is irresponsible for Congress to operate this way.

With the provisions in this bill, Congress is deserting our commitments to our military leaders and telling them that none of it matters, the war is over and your mission is done. Congress, with this bill, is reneging on the war and sending our men and women in uniform a demoralizing message.

I am committed to giving our military, led by General Petraeus, time and resources to try to calm Baghdad.

I understand the deep national unrest over the course of the war. I do not support an open-ended commitment in Iraq. The Iraqi government must do more.

But effectively abandoning our military effort at this time poses a treacherous threat to the United States and the region.

We should do right by our troops, give them the resources they need and work with the Iraqis toward solutions that will bring our Armed Forces home at an appropriate time.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines have performed valiantly in Iraq in the face of great adversity. The costs of this war have been great to them and our Nation. Over 3,300 brave American servicemembers have been killed in Iraq over 30 from my own State of Connecticut.

To date, over \$500 billion has been approved by Congress for military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, not including the \$95.5 billion included in the conference agreement being debated today or the \$141.7 billion in additional funding already requested by the administration for fiscal year 2008.

In addition, because of the war, our forces have been drained of critical combat gear and training time, adding another element to the costs of this

war—our military's combat readiness. Two-thirds of the Army in the United States and 88 percent of our National Guard are reporting 'not ready' for duty, largely due to equipment and training shortfalls.

Now, as we have entered the fifth year of the Iraq war, it is long past time for a course correction. Rather than continue abetting the administration's efforts to escalate our entanglement in Iraq's civil war, it is time for Congress to assert itself and heed the American people's call for change.

The conference report before us today takes the first steps toward that change. While I wish it would have included stronger language to immediately begin withdrawing combat troops from Iraq and limiting the mission there to counterterrorism, training and equipping Iraqi troops and force protection for remaining U.S. personnel, it does for the first time set some new goals for this administration and the Iraqi Government that will mandate a change of course. For the first time it demands real accountability from the President to take action to restore our military's readiness which has been hollowed out as a result of his policies. And this bill finally provides critical resources for combat gear and protective equipment that the Bush-Cheney-Rumsfeld administration has consistently shortchanged in their budget proposals.

Regrettably, as my colleagues know, the President has already said that he will refuse to sign this legislation into law. He has announced his intention to veto this bill because after 4 years of a disastrous war policy, escalating combat deaths, and growing instability in the region, he insists that his is the only way. It is disheartening that President Bush does not see or will not admit that his policy in Iraq is a failure.

In plowing ahead on the current course in Iraq, the President has rejected the advice of experts from across the political spectrum, from the Baker-Hamilton Report, and from members of Congress, all of whom have urged him to change the course in Iraq, to diminish our military footprint there, and to start a surge of diplomacy in the region. Like all my colleagues, I want to see success in Iraq. I wish that the President's policies were working. I wish that U.S. combat forces were able to restore security to Baghdad and to other parts of Iraq. I wish that the President had not mismanaged this war from day one. I wish that we had deployed enough troops on the ground to secure the peace at the outset. I wish that Secretary Rumsfeld hadn't run the Coalition Provisional Authority like a staffing agency for Republican political operatives, displacing countless U.S. Foreign Service professionals in the beginning of the war. I wish we hadn't disbanded the Iraqi Army and that we hadn't allowed looting. And I wish that our surge of 30,000 more men and women in uniform

into Iraq could be successful in stabilizing that country.

But now is not the time for wishful thinking. Now is the time to address the real facts on the ground. This conflict cannot be resolved by increased military action. It requires a coherent, broad-based strategy to promote the political reconciliation necessary to secure the future for Iraq.

The bill before us begins that process. If the President determines that the Iraqis are not making progress on key political, security, and economic benchmarks, then, under this legislation, the redeployment of American troops would begin this summer. If, on the other hand, the President determines that the Iraqis are complying with the benchmarks set forth in the legislation, then the redeployment of American forces would begin later in the fall of 2007. These reasonable and responsible timetables and benchmarks will force the President to change his strategy and will incentivize the Iraqi Government to take difficult but necessary steps toward reconciliation, power sharing, and security.

This bill also allows for a limited ongoing presence of U.S. forces in Iraq for the specific purposes of training and equipping reliable Iraqi security forces, carrying out counterterrorism operations within Iraq, and providing force protection, because we understand that these vital components will be necessary to ensure a stable and secure Iraq even after our combat troops have been redeployed. Iraqis will continue to need some limited American assistance, and it is in our and Iraq's national interests for that limited support to continue.

Exactly 1 day after President Bush disingenuously charged the Democratic Congress for causing what he called "unacceptable" delays in troops returning home, Secretary Gates announced that he was immediately extending the tour lengths of those units sent to Iraq to 15 months—3 months longer than before. In addition, 13,000 National Guard troops from Arkansas, Indiana, Oklahoma, and Ohio, as well as other States, were recently told to prepare to be deployed to Iraq.

As a result of 4 years of war in Iraq, our Army has been stretched to its breaking point.

It is time to say, "enough is enough." And with this supplemental bill, Congress is taking a big step in that direction. This bill holds the President directly responsible for units being deployed who are not "fully mission capable", by requiring him to waive requirements that mandate that units fully restock their depleted equipment inventories and restore their mission readiness prior to deployment. It includes funding for critical equipment, including mine-resistant, ambush-protection vehicles which would dramatically lower the number of injuries and casualties sustained by our troops. And it includes billions of dollars for health care for our wounded veterans, many of

whom return home with debilitating and life-altering injuries. They have sacrificed everything for this Nation, and at the very least we owe them the best health care available.

Sadly, there is no magic formula for fixing the myriad problems in Iraq, as the Baker-Hamilton Commission rightly pointed out. But it is critical that Iraqis make progress on reconciliation and security and that the Government improves the living conditions of its citizens. Iraq's neighbors and regional leaders must also play a role in finding such a solution. The United States and Iraq's neighbors all have long-term interests in the region, and a broken Iraq does not advance those interests.

With this supplemental bill, Congress is offering the President an opportunity to change our course in Iraq, to listen and respond to the will of the American people, to support the men and women sacrificing their lives there, and to provide for a responsible change in strategy in Iraq.

It is also vital that we make America more resilient here at home. This bill begins to do just that, in providing \$325 million to protect the millions of Americans who ride public transportation each day.

Our Nation's public transit systems are inadequately prepared to minimize the threat and impact of potential terrorist attacks. Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the Federal Government has invested nearly \$24 billion in aviation security—protecting the 1.8 million people who fly on an average day. At the same time, our National Government has invested only \$386 million, before the 110th Congress began, in transit security to protect the 14 million people who ride transit on an average workday. Put another way, since 2001, our Nation has spent over \$7.50 per passenger on aviation security but less than one penny per transit rider on transit security. I am not suggesting that we ought to be investing equally, but clearly this is not the appropriate balance.

As chairman of the Senate Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee, I have made improving our national security a top priority. The very first hearing that I held as chairman focused on increasing the security of our Nation's 14 million daily transit passengers. The very first legislation that the committee considered during my chairmanship was the Public Transportation Terrorism Prevention Act of 2007, which was reported by the Banking Committee unanimously on February 8. The legislation authorizes the distribution of \$3.5 billion in security funds, over the next 3 fiscal years, on the basis of risk directly to transit agencies.

The Public Transportation Terrorism Prevention Act of 2007 was included as title XV of the 9/11 bill, which the Senate passed on March 13. Senator SHELBY and I worked with Senator BYRD and Senator COCHRAN to include language in the legislation to allow for

such sums as necessary to be appropriated in this fiscal year to address the critical needs of our Nation's transit systems. The \$325 million included in this appropriations act is a significant investment toward our goal of better securing our Nation's rail and transit systems. This investment builds on the \$175 million that was included in the fiscal year 2007 continuing resolution. I once again thank all of the members of the Banking and Appropriations Committees who have worked so hard to advance us to where we are today.

This bill also continues congressional efforts to help the citizens of Mississippi and Louisiana rebuild their lives after the catastrophic effects of Hurricane Katrina by including more than \$1.3 billion to fund flood and storm damage reduction projects in affected areas.

Finally, I want to take a few brief moments to discuss the minimum wage increase provision included in this bill. It has been nearly 10 years since millions of hard-working men and women have seen their wages go up. During that time, inflation has eroded the purchasing power of families being paid the minimum wage. In fact, the real value of the minimum wage has declined \$4 below what it was nearly 40 years ago, in 1968. It is currently at its lowest inflation-adjusted level in more than 50 years. During the past 10 years, while the minimum wage remained unchanged, the cost of housing, food, health care, education, transportation, and energy has increased.

We cannot reduce poverty if we don't tackle raising the minimum wage. It is simply outrageous that so many Americans live in poverty, and it is long overdue that we take action to reduce the inexcusable and unconscionably high levels of poverty in this country. The language of the Fair Minimum Wage Act, which is included in this bill, will provide a three-step increase in wages over 26 months from the current level of \$5.15 per hour to \$7.25 per hour. This additional \$4,400 per year would allow a low-income family of three to buy 8 months of rent, 15 months of groceries, 19 months of utilities, 20 months of childcare, or more than 24 months of health insurance.

I urge the President to seize this opportunity to make America and Iraq stronger and safer. I sincerely hope he will reconsider his decision to veto this bill when it arrives on his desk. Such a veto would be an affirmation of the status quo in America, a status which this Nation can simply no longer afford.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, the pending emergency supplemental appropriations bill includes a number of items within the jurisdiction of the Finance Committee. I would have preferred that the Senate had considered these matters on legislation that the Finance Committee had reported. I believe in the committee process. In the future, I will try to minimize the occa-

sions on which Finance Committee legislation travels on legislation reported by other committees.

But the House of Representatives included the minimum wage and small business tax provisions in the House-passed version of this supplemental appropriations bill. So it was only appropriate that the full Senate respond. The Senate Appropriations Committee added matters related to health care, so it was only appropriate that the conference committee on this supplemental appropriations bill address those issues, as well.

I appreciate that the conference committee on this supplemental appropriations bill deferred to members of the Finance Committee in the formulation of these Finance Committee tax and health matters in the conference report on this bill. I particularly thank Chairman BYRD for his assistance in this regard.

Some have been concerned that an increase in the minimum wage would burden small businesses. Small businesses are a vital source of job creation, economic opportunity, and technological innovation.

There are about 23 million small businesses in America. Businesses with fewer than 500 employees represent more than 99 percent of all businesses in America. They pay more than 45 percent of American private payroll. They have generated 60 to 80 percent of net new jobs annually over the last decade. They employ 41 percent of high-tech workers.

Small business is particularly important in my home State of Montana. Small businesses are the backbone of our communities.

We have the opportunity to help small businesses through tax incentives that stimulate their rates of formation and growth. That is why Chairman RANGEL and I worked together to combine the House and Senate small business tax packages to achieve a comprehensive small business tax package.

This is a responsible package that will help small businesses in the context of an increase in the Federal minimum wage.

The nonpartisan Joint Committee on Taxation has made available to the public a technical explanation of the bill. The technical explanation expresses the committee's understanding and legislative intent behind this important legislation.

The small business tax package provided a more than 3-year extension of the work opportunity tax credit, or WOTC. WOTC allows employers a tax credit for wages that they pay to economically disadvantaged employees. The final small business tax package also expands WOTC to allow the credit for employers who hire disabled veterans, a proposal that was part of both the Senate and House packages. The package includes the Senate's proposed expansion to allow the credit for employers who hire employees in a county

that has suffered significant population loss.

The small business tax package also includes a 1-year extension of section 179 expensing. Section 179 allows small business owners to purchase and write off more equipment each year for use in their trade or business. Section 179 expensing was included in both the Senate and House small business tax packages. The final small business tax package also increases the amount allowed to be expensed in 2007 from \$112,000 to \$125,000, a proposal in the House version.

Enhancement of the tip credit, family business tax simplification, and waiver of limitations under the alternative minimum tax on WOTC and tip credits are three other House proposals included in the final small business tax package.

Enhancement of the tip credit for certain small businesses will prevent a decrease in the amount of business tax credit that restaurant and other service-oriented business owners may claim for the Social Security taxes that they pay on their employee's tips despite an increase in the Federal minimum wage.

The family business tax simplification proposal ensures that when a married couple jointly owns a small business, both spouses will receive credit for paying Social Security and Medicare taxes.

The waiver of individual and corporate AMT limitations on WOTC and tip credits would allow business owners to take the WOTC and tip credits under AMT.

The Senate's S corporation package is also included in the final small business tax package. The S corporation package includes several simplifications and modifications to rules governing community banks and other small businesses that operate as S corporations.

The small business tax package includes several tax incentives included in both the Senate and House small business tax packages to help recovery of small business and low-income housing in areas hit by Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma.

The small business tax package is a responsible package that is completely offset. The package includes offsets that were included in both the Senate and the House small business tax packages, such as modification to the interest suspension rules for IRS and a proposal to discourage the practice of transferring investments to one's child for the purpose of avoiding higher tax rates.

The package also includes modifications to the collection due process for employment taxes, an expansion of preparer penalties, and a new penalty on erroneous refund claims. These offsets were part of the administration's fiscal year 2008 budget proposal to improve tax compliance.

The small business tax package does not include the Senate's 15-year depre-

ciation proposal for improvements made to leaseholds, retailer-owned businesses, and restaurants. Nor does this final package include the Senate's proposal to expand availability of the cash method of accounting.

These proposals both have merit. They were included in the chairman's mark when the Finance Committee wrote the Senate's small business tax package. These proposals enjoy the support of many Senators, including Senators KERRY and SNOWE. But there simply was not enough room in a \$4.8 billion conference package to include the 15-year depreciation and cash method of accounting proposals, as they have a combined estimated pricetag of nearly \$7.4 billion. But this will not be the last bill in which the Senate can address these important proposals.

If and when the President vetoes this bill, and it comes back again, we need to preserve the integrity of this balanced compromise. Congress should not litigate this tax package over again. I urge my colleagues to support this package.

This bill also accomplishes key urgent health priorities.

The bill includes emergency funding for the State Children's Health Insurance Program, or CHIP. This fiscal year, 14 States will run short in their Federal CHIP funds by a total of about \$624 million. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that 700,000 children will lose CHIP coverage unless Congress acts.

This bill fills the gap in Federal CHIP funds. It ensures that all States can meet the demand for CHIP coverage for all those now eligible for coverage this year.

I thank Chairman BYRD and Chairman HARKIN for their help on this provision. Keeping children from losing their health coverage is a critical national priority. I will work with my colleagues to ensure that the final supplemental bill includes this provision.

Another provision originally offered by Senator DURBIN puts a 1-year hold on rulemaking relating to Medicaid payment rates for public hospitals and nursing homes. In January, the Secretary of Health and Human Services proposed a rule that would make sweeping changes to reimbursement rates for public facilities. The rule also proposed major changes to how States can define which governmental facilities can pay a State's Medicaid share.

The Nation's Governors have weighed in against the Medicaid rule, as have many hospitals and nursing homes. They are concerned that this rule would do immediate harm to our Nation's safety net by cutting Medicaid reimbursement for publicly owned facilities that serve our most vulnerable citizens.

I am concerned this rule goes too far in implementing new policy, making changes that are better made by Congress.

It is Congress's job to make major changes to the law. A 1-year morato-

rium will give the Finance Committee enough time to study this issue and determine the right approach in legislation to limit opportunities for fraud and abuse of Medicaid, while protecting the vulnerable individuals and vital safety net providers who rely on Medicaid payments.

Some have raised concerns about the original Durbin amendment moratorium. They said that it should not have been included in an appropriations bill and that it could undermine oversight of Medicaid at the Department of Health and Human Services. I agree that we should keep Finance Committee issues within the committee. In this case, however, the Department is poised to act before July of this year. We need to take action now, before it is too late.

I also agree that protecting against fraud and abuse in Medicaid is a priority. Not one taxpayer dollar should be misspent. That is why the revised version of this amendment clarifies that the moratorium has no effect on all other Medicaid integrity enforcement activity at the Department of Health and Human Services.

This final version also removes the increase in the Medicaid prescription drug rebate that was used to offset the cost and replaces it with other Medicaid policies that will save Federal dollars. The new version includes provisions that will lower the incidence of fraud in Medicaid drug prescribing and preserve access to affordable prescriptions for 100,000 seniors covered by Wisconsin's Pharmacy Plus program.

I think this is the right approach. It provides a shorter moratorium that allows the Finance Committee to act and preserves oversight on fraud and abuse at the Department of Health and Human Services.

I will work with Senator DURBIN and members of the Appropriations Committee to ensure that this version stays in the final bill.

Once again, I thank Chairman BYRD for his help in reaching this good outcome. And I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

RETAIL IMPROVEMENTS

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I would like to followup on the comments Chairman BAUCUS made about the depreciation of retail improvements and engage in a colloquy with Senators SNOWE and BAUCUS. Under current law, improvements made to rented retail property are depreciated over 15 years. Improvements made to owned property are depreciated over 39 years. The current tax treatment of improvements to retail property results in an inequity. There is no justification to treat these improvements differently for tax purposes based on whether the property is owned or rented. Unfortunately, this provision was not included in the small business tax package.

Ms. SNOWE. I join Senator KERRY in my disappointment that this provision that would benefit retail operations

like Greenacres Kennel Shop in Bangor, ME, was not included in the conference agreement of the supplemental appropriations bill. The provision originated from legislation, S. 271, that I introduced with Senators LINCOLN, HUTCHISON, and KERRY to provide relief and equity to our Nation's 1.5 million retail establishments, most of which have less than five employees. This bill will simply conform the Tax Code to the realities that retailers on Main Street face. Despite the fact that small businesses are the real job-creators in our Nation's economy, the current tax system is placing an entirely unreasonable burden on them when trying to satisfy their tax obligations. What is most troubling is that companies that employ fewer than 20 employees spend nearly \$1,304 per employee in tax compliance costs, an amount that is nearly 67 percent more than larger firms. As a result, I was most pleased when the chairman and ranking member included this modest proposal as part of the small business tax relief package. Unfortunately, the provision did not survive conference negotiations with the House.

Mr. KERRY. I agree with the comments made by Senator SNOWE, and we have heard first hand how important this provision is to small businesses. During the January Finance Committee hearing on small business tax issues, Mr. Dave Ratner, owner of Dave's Soda and Pet City of western Massachusetts, testified about the need for retail owners to be able to depreciate improvements over 15 years instead of 39 years. He eloquently explained why owners and renters should be treated in the same manner and how difficult it is for small businesses to compete with large retail chains. Senator SNOWE and I would like to work with you to address this inequity.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I understand and share the concerns expressed by Senator KERRY and Senator SNOWE. I agree that owners and renters should receive the same tax treatment for improvements.

There are many small businesses in Montana in which the owners would like to make improvements. And this provision would be extremely helpful.

Just this week, I received an e-mail message from Scott Brown, the owner of The Base Camp in Helena, MT. Scott told me how this provision would help him and other Montana retailers to be more competitive.

I will continue to work with my colleagues to find additional opportunities to address this important provision.

Mr. KERRY. I look forward to continuing to work with you on this important provision which helps small businesses. We need to provide equal tax treatment for depreciated property regardless of whether it is owned or rented.

Ms. SNOWE. I concur with Senator KERRY and appreciate his support for this proposal that simply would bring

equity between retail operations. Frankly, this provision should have been included when Congress first extended accelerated depreciation for leasehold improvements. This is not a new provision but, rather, it simply perfects current law. Though disappointed by the absence of the provision in the conference agreement, I appreciate the chairman's commitment to this issue and hope he will continue to work with Senator KERRY and me, as well as the other cosponsors of S. 271, to see that the provision receives full and fair consideration as the process to finally enact small business relief continues to move forward.

I yield the floor.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent in the order that has already been placed, following Senator KENNEDY, Senator ISAKSON be recognized, and then the following Senators be recognized on our side, alternating with Republicans, for 4 minutes each: Senator: CARDIN, MENENDEZ, WEBB, SCHUMER, FEINSTEIN, JACK REED, and Senator INOUE.

Mr. INHOFE. Parliamentary inquiry, please: I ask the Senator from Washington, that takes place after the Senator from Illinois and I are recognized, is that correct?

Mrs. MURRAY. That is correct.

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

The assistant majority leader is recognized.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, this is a war which never should have started and on this President's watch may never end. But the face of this war is not the face of President George W. Bush, nor is it the face of any Member of Congress. The face of this war can be found in the grief of children, wives, mothers, in 3,333 homes across America where a folded American flag and fading photograph are daily reminders of a fallen soldier.

The face of this war can be found in a hospital room in the Midwest where a 22-year-old soldier sits in a wheelchair. When you walk in the room he notices you and watches you, but he cannot speak. He is a victim of traumatic brain injury, the signature injury of this war. His powers of communication are very limited. We hope that will change, but it may not.

Seated next to this 22-year-old soldier in the hospital room is a 21-year-old wife, holding the picture of a 2-year-old daughter. For 10—20—30—or 40 years, this may be his life and her life. The face of this war can be found in hundreds of counseling sessions that are now treating thousands of soldiers who returned, haunted by the demons of this war or fighting post-traumatic stress disorder. The face of this war can be found in the wives and mothers at home, anxiously awaiting the return of their soldier, paying the bills, caring for the kids, hoping their marriage will survive.

Today we send the President a chance to change the course of this

war, a chance to finally demand accountability from the Iraqis, and a chance to honor our great men and women in uniform by bringing them home in an orderly, sensible, safe way.

When the President receives this bill early next week, I hope he will ask himself some basic questions. How many lives? How many wounds? How many soldiers must America sacrifice, waiting for the Iraqis to accept their responsibility?

Time and again the Iraqis have failed to shoulder the burden of leadership. They have set their own timetables and deadlines to finally bring political order to their country, and have failed time and time and time again. Instead of being held to the task of governing their own country, some in this Government make excuses and say let's send in some more soldiers and buy them some more time. As the Iraqis fail, brave Americans fall—victims of IEDs, victims of car bombs, victims of a civil war that has its roots in an Islamic battle that has gone on for 14 centuries; victims of Iraqi politicians who delay making the hard political decisions which might bring stability to their country.

The law we send the President will give him a chance to start anew, an opportunity to finally accept change—a moment in history where he can accept the reality of this grim and deteriorating war in Iraq.

The President has already predicted he is going to take this bill and veto it. But we hope there will be 1 moment—1 moment of prayerful reflection before he puts that pen to paper. In that moment, if he closes his eyes in prayer, I hope he sees the faces I have spoken of, of these fallen soldiers, of these battered warriors, of these men and women and families who have given more than we can ever ask of anyone in this country, and I hope he will realize, with that pen in his hand, he can honor them, honor this country, and bring this war to an end.

I reserve the remainder of my time and yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma is recognized.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, it is very difficult for me to believe some of the things I am actually hearing right now. In fact, I don't believe them after General Petraeus has made such a fine presentation to us. There are a few things in the closed session that we cannot talk about, but I have taken those out. The things we can talk about—in answer to a question, you said: Can you talk about some of the positive things that have happened?

He is talking about Anbar. I am now quoting: Anbar has gone from being assessed as being lost to a situation that now is quite heartening because of the decision by a number of Sunni Arab tribes to join the fight against al-Qaida; the reduction of sectarian murders in Baghdad, that is down by approximately a third; progress in Anbar is almost something that is breathtaking—the killing of the security

Amir of al-Qaida in eastern Anbar Province; the detention of the Khazali network; we have picked up the Shabani network head in Iraq. That is the explosively-formed projectile element in Iraq that gets them from others in Iraq, these are the explosively-formed projectiles.

It goes on and on. He talks about the progress in Ramadi.

My only wish is that so many of those who are detractors would have had the opportunity and had taken the opportunity to go and spend the time in the area of operations, in the whole area out there. But I can recall so many things that people just are not aware of here.

I remember being in Tikrit. Tikrit is where they had the Iraqi security forces building that was blown up. Forty of them were either—these are Iraqi security trainees—40 either were killed or were injured so that they would not be able to go back to the fields. You know, the families—you do not hear about this—of all 40 of these supplied the one who had died with another member of the family. In other words, they have this commitment that is so strong.

I asked the general yesterday, I said: Are you still getting the family support that I witnessed when I was over there?

He said: It is even stronger now. They are lined up and talking about it.

The Iraqi security forces in Fallujah—now, that was a great experience that I had, having the honor of being there during two of their elections. The Iraqi security forces go out and vote the day before the rest of the public votes for two reasons: one, so they can provide security for the public when they vote, and the second reason is that they go out there knowing that is the risky time. They are willing to risk their lives, and several of them in the Fallujah area died just in the process of voting.

I remember sitting down with the general—his name is General Mahdi—and he was one, I have to say—he was the brigade commander for Saddam Hussein. He hated Americans. He was the one who said—when they came in there after the fall of Saddam Hussein—he was still the brigade commander for the Iraqis until the marines came to Fallujah and started training with the Iraqi security forces. He made the statement—he said: We became so close to the marines—this is the general who had been Saddam Hussein's brigade commander. He said: We became so close to the marines that when they rotated out, we got together and we all cried.

We went from there on up, flew in a Black Hawk, and the easiest way to get around there is to fly low and fast over the Triangle, only to see the little kids down there waving American flags. I just wonder, if something like this is passed and we are telling all of those kids down there and we are telling the Iraqi security forces that are doing so

well right now in their advanced training, that they are now on the point of these invasions that are taking place, the defenses that are taking place all throughout Iraq, that we are saying that we are the cut-and-run guys, we built up your hopes, we now see an improved Iraq, we see hospitals are opened, we see manufacturers that are making clothing, we see girls who are going to school when this has never happened in the history of Iraq, we have seen all of this progress, but we are going to dump on you now.

So I just hope that we can stand back from the politics and do the right thing and get a good resolution—defeat this bill, get it vetoed, get a good resolution so we can finish what we started and give General Petraeus a chance to finish what he has started so successfully. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts is recognized.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, will the Chair notify me when I have 15 seconds remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair will notify the Senator.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, first of all, I wish to congratulate our Democratic leader for his bold and decisive leadership and his determination to bring our troops home from Iraq in an orderly, responsible, and safe way. Those who are disparaging him are engaged in nothing more than a ploy to change the focus of the debate.

HARRY REID is an effective and capable leader. What the American people and our soldiers in Iraq need is new leadership from the White House and a new policy in Iraq that requires the Iraqis to take responsibilities and our troops to begin to come home.

A timeline for the withdrawal of combat troops is the only realistic way to encourage the Iraqis to take responsibility for their future. The Bush administration supported deadlines for three Iraqi elections and for writing of the Constitution as part of its strategy to ensure that Iraqis would make essential decisions. Yet the administration remains emphatically opposed to any timeline for the withdrawal of our military. The administration should follow the logic of its past action and embrace, rather than reject, a timeline. It should stop defying the will of the American people who want to bring our troops home to the heroes' welcome they have earned.

The President is wrong to threaten to veto this legislation, he was wrong to get us into this war, wrong to conduct it so poorly, wrong to ignore the views of the American people, and wrong to accuse those of us who are working to change course as harming our troops. Now he is wrong to threaten to veto this bill, delaying funds and keeping our troops in a civil war with no end in sight to our commitment. Instead, President Bush should be listening to the American people and working with Congress to bring this tragic war to an end.

Instead of continuing to defy the will of the American people and Congress by threatening to veto the legislation, he should be putting the Iraqis on notice. He must make it clear to the Iraqi Government that it is time for them to take responsibility for their country and resolve their political differences. The American military will not police Iraq's civil war indefinitely. It is time to end the loss of American lives and to begin to bring our soldiers home. For the sake of our troops, we cannot repeat the mistakes of Vietnam and allow this to drag on long after the American people know it is a mistake.

We have Presidents who make mistakes. President Johnson was wrong in escalating in Vietnam. President Nixon was wrong to continue that escalation, and we saw the loss of 58,000 American lives. Presidents make mistakes.

This President has made this mistake. The American people were right in Vietnam and brought that war to an end, and the American people are right now. No one in the administration can tell the American people in good faith and in good conscience that we are making progress in Iraq. Iraq is sliding deeper into civil war, and our military cannot solve their problems. It is time the President listen to the Iraq Study Group, the Congress, and the American people and work with us to bring our troops home.

Mr. President, yesterday the United Nations issued a progress report on the progress of violence in Iraq. I ask unanimous consent that sections of that report be printed at the appropriate place in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

SUMMARY

1. The Government of Iraq continued to face immense security challenges in the face of growing violence and armed opposition to its authority and the rapidly worsening humanitarian crisis. A number of large-scale insurgency attacks had devastating effects on both the civilian population and Iraqi law enforcement personnel, and continued to claim lives among Multinational Force (MNF) personnel. Civilian casualties of the daily violence between January and March remained high, concentrated in and around Baghdad. Violent deaths were also a regular feature of several other cities in the governorates of Nineveh, Salahuddin, Diyala and Babel. The implementation of the Iraq-led Baghdad Security Plan (Khittat Fardh al-Qanun) on 14 February saw an increase in Iraqi and MNF troop levels and checkpoints on the streets of Baghdad, expanded curfew hours and intensified security operations and raids. The challenge facing the Government of Iraq is not limited to addressing the level of violence in the country, but the longer term maintenance of stability and security in an environment characterized by impunity and a breakdown in law and order. In this context, the intimidation of a large segment of the Iraqi population, among them professional groups and law enforcement personnel, and political interference in the affairs of the judiciary, were rife and in need of urgent attention.

2. In its previous reports on the human rights situation in Iraq, UNAMI regularly cited the Iraqi Government's official data,

including the Ministry of Higher Education's statistics on killings among academics and the Ministry of Interior's statistics on killings among police officers. It is therefore a matter of regret that the Iraqi Government did not provide UNAMI access to the Ministry of Health's overall mortality figures for this reporting period. UNAMI emphasizes again the utmost need for the Iraqi Government to operate in a transparent manner, and does not accept the government's suggestion that UNAMI used the mortality figures in an inappropriate fashion.

3. Evidence which cannot be numerically substantiated in this report nonetheless show that the high level of violence continued throughout the reporting period, attributable to large-scale indiscriminate killings and targeted assassinations perpetrated by insurgency groups, militias and other armed groups. In February and March, sectarian violence claimed the lives of large numbers of civilians, including women and children, in both Shi'a and Sunni neighborhoods. One of the most devastating attacks occurred on 3 February when a truck packed with a ton of explosives detonated, killing an estimated 135 people and injuring 339 others in a busy market in the predominantly Shi'a district of al-Sadriyya of Baghdad. While government officials claimed an initial drop in the number of killings in the latter half of February following the launch of the Baghdad Security Plan, the number of reported casualties rose again in March.

4. In its previous reports, UNAMI expressed its concern that many Baghdad neighborhoods had become divided along Sunni and Shi'a lines and were increasingly controlled by armed groups purporting to act as protectors and defenders of these areas. Efforts to find a long-term and durable solution to mass displacement will necessitate a reversal of this trend, enabling civilians to return to their homes safely and voluntarily. According to figures from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), an estimated 736,422 persons were forced to flee their homes due to sectarian violence and military operations since the bombing of the al-Askari shrine in Samarra' on 22 February 2006. Of these, more than 200,000 were displaced since December 2006. Together with 1.2 million IDPs displaced prior to 22 February 2006, they are in need of continuous assistance, including shelter and improved access to the Public Distribution System (PDS). Additionally, Palestinian refugees residing in several neighborhoods in Baghdad continued to be victims of the deteriorating security situation. According to a Palestinian human rights organization and other Palestinian sources, 198 Palestinians were killed in targeted assassinations or attacks on their residential compounds since 4 April 2003. Many Palestinians responded to continuing threats and attacks by leaving their homes and seeking refuge in camps along the Iraq-Syria border.

5. UNAMI notes again the serious trend of growing intolerance towards minorities, whose representatives continued to lodge complaints about discrimination, intimidation and individual targeting on religious and political grounds. The 2005 Iraqi Constitution protects the "religious freedoms" of all of its citizens. Of equal concern are ongoing attempts to suppress freedom of expression through tighter control of the broadcast media and printed press. UNAMI noted several incidents of harassment, legal action and intimidation against journalists addressing issues of corruption and mismanagement of public services in the Region of Kurdistan. Across the country, attacks against journalists and media outlets continued, resulting in a high number of casualties among media workers.

6. UNAMI remained concerned at the apparent lack of judicial guarantees in the handling of suspects arrested in the context of the Baghdad Security Plan. While in his public statements Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki pledged that the government would respect human rights and ensure due process within a reasonable time for those under arrest, there were no references to any mechanisms for monitoring the conduct of arresting and detaining officials. The new emergency procedures announced on 13 February contained no explicit measures guaranteeing minimum due process rights. Rather, they authorized arrests without warrants and the interrogation of suspects without placing a time limit on how long they could be held in pre-trial detention. The use of torture and other inhumane treatment in detention centers under the authority of the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Defense continues to be of utmost concern. UNAMI re-emphasizes the urgent need to establish an effective tracking mechanism to account for the location and treatment of all detainees from the point of arrest.

7. During this reporting period, UNAMI further expanded its monitoring and reporting activities in the three northern governorates under the authority of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), where the security situation remained stable. Infringements to freedom of expression, including press and media freedoms, were of serious concern. Equally serious was the lack of due process with regard to detainees held by Kurdish security forces (Asayish), the majority on suspicion of involvement in acts of terrorism and other serious crimes. Hundreds have been held for prolonged periods without referral to an investigative judge or charges brought against them. UNAMI also noted the absence of serious measures by the KRG authorities to address the growing level of violence against women, including prompt investigations and criminal prosecution of perpetrators.

"Civilian casualties of the daily violence between January and March remained high concentrated in and around Baghdad." [page 3 of U.N. report.]

"By late February, government officials announced that the number of such killings had decreased, which they attributed to the success of the Baghdad Security Plan. Despite this announced decrease, the number of victims was nevertheless high, with up to 25 bodies still being found on some days during this period in Baghdad. March again witnessed a rise in the number of casualties, with reports of large number of bodies found in Baghdad, al-Ramadi, al-Hilla, Kirkuk, Mosul, Khalis, Tikrit and Himreen." [page 8 of U.N. report.]

"Despite reports from Iraqis in late February that security had somewhat improved, there were a series of indiscriminate attacks targeting civilians, and the rate of kidnappings remained high." [page 7 of U.N. report.]

Large-scale suicide and car bomb attacks were carried out between January and March, with several incidents claiming the lives of more than 50 people each [page 6 of U.N. report].

According to the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, more than 200,000 Iraqis have been displaced since last December. [page 4 of U.N. report.]

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I am very pleased that this conference report includes the minimum wage bill. After 10 long years, we will finally be able to send a minimum wage increase to the President. It's long overdue, and it's yet another reason why the President should sign this important bill.

The minimum wage bill passed the House and Senate by overwhelming margins in January and February of this year. Under it, minimum wage workers will get a raise of \$2.10 per hour. Those who work full time will earn an additional \$4,400 a year.

That's enough to pay for utilities that might otherwise be shut off, to put gas in the car so you can get to work, or to pay for after-school care for a son or daughter who might otherwise be left home alone.

In many ways, including the minimum wage increase in this bill on Iraq couldn't be more appropriate. The minimum wage represents the values our troops are fighting for—basic fairness. It's about what we stand for as a Nation.

Americans believe that hard work should help you build a better life for your family. They believe that a job should keep you out of poverty, not force you to live in poverty.

Our troops are away fighting to provide a better future for the people of Iraq. We'd like to think that our men and women in uniform don't have to worry about the economic security of their families here at home. But many of our fighting forces have husbands or wives back at home who are struggling to make ends meet.

Ten percent of military spouses earn between \$5.15 and \$7.25 per hour. 50,000 military families will benefit from an increase in the minimum wage to \$7.25 per hour. Our troops are overseas putting their lives on the line for their country, and we should provide fair opportunities for their spouses who are working hard here at home.

I hope we can provide these families—and all other struggling families across the country—with the fair wages they deserve as soon as possible. I hope the President will do the right thing for our troops and for America's minimum wage workers by signing this important bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, at the beginning of my remarks, I wish to associate my remarks with the Senator from Connecticut, Mr. LIEBERMAN. I think his point-by-point rebuttals to previous declarations were appropriate and were right on point.

I will not talk long, but I rise to explain precisely why I will vote against this supplemental. In fact, there are a number of reasons I will vote against it—140,000 reasons are the men and women deployed right now on behalf of the United States of America and the civilized world.

It is right for the Senate to debate this war. It is right for us to ask questions. But it is wrong to hold hostage the money that supports those troops. We should separate the money from the debate. We should never hold hostage the money for our troops who are, on order of the President of the United States, defending our country and what we stand for.

There are almost 3,300 reasons I will vote no; that is, the sacrifices that have already been made on behalf of the United States of America, those troops who have fought and those who have given the ultimate sacrifice, troops like Diego Rincon, the first soldier from Georgia to die in Iraq, and LT Noah Harris, a famous Georgian who sacrificed his life as well. I have known those families. I have gone to those services. I understand the sacrifice, and I know how they feel of the pride of their sons who fought on behalf of this noble cause.

There are six additional reasons—my grandchildren. This is the ultimate war between good and evil. This is but one battle in a war that will determine the future security of the world. Make no mistake, there have been mistakes made, but it would be a horrible mistake to not confront terror or the agents of terror, because if we do, they have won.

Unlike any other war ever fought by the United States, we are fighting a group of people who don't want what we have, they don't want us to have what we have: the Bill of Rights; the right for me to express myself and Senator KENNEDY to do the same without fear or without cowering; the right for the press to call it as they see it; the right to worship as you see fit; the right to bear arms. The 10 basic rights of the Bill of Rights are precisely what they want to take away, not only from us but from the rest of the world.

Terrorists want us to cower in fear and want to run the world based on that principle. To pass a supplemental appropriations bill that couches the support of our troops based on arbitrary deadlines that only serve to benefit the very people we fight is just plain wrong.

I relish debate of this war every day on the floor and hope we will continue. The way you avoid making mistakes in the future is debating those things which have happened in the past. But it would be the worst of mistakes to withhold funding from our troops or condition it upon arbitrary deadlines and circumstances in another country, at another time, at another place.

Mr. President, I end my remarks by thanking those brave men and women who have sacrificed and those who are sacrificing now and the families of those troops, many of them families who live in my State of Georgia. I will vote for the supplemental appropriations of our troops unconditionally and separate our debate of other issues to another document. But I will not support holding hostage our troops or their money.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland is recognized for 4 minutes.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, 2½ hours ago, along with Senator MIKULSKI, I attended a mobilization ceremony for members of the Maryland National Guard who are being deployed to Iraq.

All Marylanders are proud of the service of our members of the National Guard who have been called up and have served in Iraq and Afghanistan and are now being called up. It was an emotional morning as these soldiers said goodbye to their families.

I can tell you, they are ready. They are ready to serve our country. They will serve with great distinction. I told our soldiers and their families I would do everything I could as a Senator to make sure they had all of the resources so they can carry out the mission that has been assigned to them as safely and as effectively as possible. That is one reason I will vote for this conference report. I told their families I would do everything I could to help support their needs and to support the needs of military families around this Nation and to support the needs of veterans around this Nation, to take care of their support services, including their health care needs. That is another reason I will be voting for this conference report.

We need a change in our mission in Iraq so our soldiers can achieve a mission that is in the best interest of this country. That is another reason I am supporting this conference report. It spells out a mission that is in the best interest of this Nation and can be achieved. We need to change our role in Iraq. We need to get our soldiers out of the middle of a civil war, to focus on the war against terror, to help the Iraqi people take care of their own needs, to bring our troops home. That is another reason I will be supporting this conference report.

We need measurable and achievable benchmarks for the Iraqi Government so they can secure their own country to undertake political reconciliation and to provide basic needs for ordinary Iraqi citizens, another reason I will be supporting this conference report.

We need a political framework to include all the Iraqi stakeholders in order to provide a political answer to the problems of that country, another reason I support this conference report.

The President of the United States has threatened a veto. That would only delay the delivery of much needed funds to our forces, delay a change in direction in Iraq, and undermine the need for political reform in Iraq itself. We have our responsibility. Our first responsibility is to act and to pass this supplemental appropriations bill.

I urge colleagues to support this appropriation. It is in the best interest of the country.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey is recognized for 4 minutes.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, a lot has been said about this bill. Let's get the facts straight before we cast a vote. This administration has said: If you vote for this bill, you don't support the troops. Nothing could be further from the truth. This bill is the ultimate definition of supporting the troops. The

truth is, a "yes" vote ensures our troops are equipped and prepared to defend themselves, moves them out of another country's civil war, and provides health care that has been lacking for those who return home injured. This is not about surrender, this is about our best chance for success.

A vote against this \$124 billion spending bill is a vote against the \$100 billion for our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. A vote against this bill is a vote against a billion-dollar increase to get desperately needed equipment to our National Guard and Reserve who fight abroad and protect us at home. A vote against this bill is a vote against \$3 billion for the purchase of 8,500 mine-resistant, ambush-protected vehicles to protect our soldiers from deadly roadside bombs. A vote against this bill is a vote against nearly \$3 billion to help reform an overburdened veterans health system struggling to take care of our returning wounded. A vote against this bill is a vote against \$900 million to research and treat posttraumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injuries, two of the most critical issues facing wounded soldiers. A vote against this bill is a vote against more than \$650 million in emergency funding for children's health care coverage. Without this funding, we are closing our doctors' doors to our Nation's children. A vote against this bill is a vote against \$6.9 billion for the victims of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita who are still struggling to rebuild their homes and their lives more than a year after the storms hit.

A vote against this bill is a vote against allowing States to have stronger standards to protect chemical security plants. A vote against this bill is a vote against over \$2 billion in homeland security initiatives, including mass transit, port security, and other measures that passed in the 9/11 bill in the Senate.

Quite frankly, I don't have faith in President Bush's escalation, a plan with benchmarks but no real consequences. I have said again and again, benchmarks without consequences are just aspirations. We have seen countless misguided plans from this administration, but the Iraqis have never been held accountable.

We were told that by the end of 2006 a provincial election law would be approved. That benchmark has not been met. We were told the Iraqis would approve a law for deBaathification, but that benchmark has not been met. We were told the Iraqis would create a law to help restrain sectarian militias. That benchmark has not been met. We were told that Iraqis would establish a law to regulate the oil industry and share revenues, but that benchmark has not been met. We were told that by March the Iraqi Government was supposed to hold a referendum on constitutional amendments, but that benchmark has not been met.

Time and time again, the Iraqi Government has fallen short, and time and

again this administration has looked the other way, basing their plans on the hope that the Iraqi Government will step up.

Continuing this failed policy in Iraq based on the mere hope that things will improve is not good enough. The broken promises must stop.

Some on the other side of the aisle point out that the President is the Commander in Chief. I remind my friends that the Constitution puts the Congress in charge of appropriating funds. Congress has the power, the right, and the obligation to make sure we spend the taxpayers' money wisely. What we are saying today with this bill is no more blank check for the Iraq war.

This bill sends a strong message to the Iraqis that it is their responsibility to take control of their own country and that our involvement in Iraq is not indefinite. As Thomas Friedman has written: It is time to decide "we will no longer play host to a war where we are everyone's protector and target."

We must put in motion a plan to bring a responsible end to this war. I urge all colleagues to vote for the supplemental, a vote that takes care of our troops, a vote to responsibly bring our troops home, and a vote for a new direction in Iraq and here at home.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, the title of this bill, "The U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Health, and Iraq Accountability Act," doesn't say much for the contents of this legislation because it has gone way beyond that with a lot of material that has nothing to do with the title. The Finance Committee matters definitely don't fit into this bill.

As the distinguished chairman of the Appropriations Committee, Senator BYRD has said on so many occasions the Founding Fathers vested the great power of the purse in the Congress. Likewise, the other great power, the power to raise taxes, is vested in Congress. The power of the purse, appropriations, is our power. We are directly accountable to our constituents for our spending actions. In that vein, I deeply respect the deep traditions of the Appropriations Committee.

As former chairman and now ranking member of the Finance Committee, I also deeply respect the division of power. The power to tax is our power as a committee, and we are directly accountable to our constituents for our taxing actions. We should mix the jurisdiction of the two great money committees—Finance and Appropriations—rarely, if at all. It should only occur if at all when the senior members of the tax writing and appropriations committees agree. Mixing tax writing and appropriations jurisdiction should not occur. As a leadership power play, those kinds of actions demean the committees.

Fortunately, the leadership respected this division of jurisdiction between

the tax writers and appropriators over the last 6 years. Unfortunately, early on in the tenure of this new Democratic majority and their leadership, we have seen a dramatically different course of action for purely partisan reasons.

The Democratic leadership inserted into this sensitive supplemental appropriations bill two major matters that involve Finance Committee jurisdiction. So the first lesson we have learned is that the line between the tax writing committee jurisdiction and appropriations jurisdiction will not be observed. That will only undermine each committee and break down the committee process. The second lesson is the "I told you so." Shortly after the Senate acted on the minimum wage and small business tax relief bill, I said I had learned something from the Democratic leadership, as they were in the minority over the last 6 years. It was a lesson the Democrats taught us while they were in the minority. That lesson is, get a preconference agreement. Put another way, if you are in the Senate minority, as we are now, don't agree to a conference unless you secure an agreement for fair treatment in advance. That is something that worked well for the Democrats while they were in the minority, something we ought to have learned, and we have learned.

Now let me say I appreciate all the consultation and courtesy that Chairman BAUCUS has given me. He worked with me and I worked with him to get the minimum wage, small business tax relief bill through the committee. But the composition of the final package that is before us is heavily weighted toward an extension and modification of the work opportunity tax credit—and I support that credit—and the benefits of that policy are delayed. Small businesses need tax relief to be in sync with the time of the minimum wage kicking in. Both of these outcomes do not reflect a proportionate agreement between the House and Senate bills. The arbitrary ceiling on the amount of tax relief was not a fair balance. This agreement confirms that a preconference process—learning that from the Democratic minority of the last 4 years—is necessary to ensure that a conference agreement will reflect the priorities of both bodies. I will reiterate my point to the Republican leadership again on that. This process proves that we need a preconference agreement before agreeing to go to conference in the first place.

Now I will return to the substance of the deal, Mr. President. I am hearing from a lot of small business folks who are going to be paying the minimum wage. They want to retain their current workforces, hey have to look to the bottom line. They are very disappointed that the arbitrary \$5 billion limit meant that important tax relief measures were tossed out. I am referring to a simplification of the cash method of accounting. That proposal

would cut down on a lot of paperwork small businesses currently have to do. I'm also referring to faster depreciation rules for new restaurant buildings, and I am referring to faster depreciation rules for retailers and owner-financed building improvements. All of these proposals would help with the coming cash crunch that these small businesses will be facing.

I am not hearing from a lot of the big business folks who were targeted by the loophole closers and antitax shelter measures. Because of House opposition and fealty to the \$5 billion number, those reasonable revenue raisers were tossed out the window.

This was a missed opportunity. It was a missed opportunity for a Congress that started with a supposed reform mission to send a message to K Street in DC and Wall Street in New York City. That message would've been simple. Don't engage in tax shelters like the so-called "SILO" transactions. Don't move your company headquarters offshore to minimize your American tax responsibilities like the so-called "inversion" transactions. For high-paid CEOs, don't rely too much on non-qualified deferred compensation arrangements. Nope, you can kiss that opportunity goodbye.

When it came to the small business tax relief package, K Street and Wall Street big business won and Main Street small business lost. Not a good outcome. Hopefully, once this bill is vetoed and we return to the minimum wage/small business tax relief package, Main Street small business will come out on top.

Now I am going to turn to the other Finance Committee material in this time-sensitive appropriations bill. I am referring to Medicaid proposals in the conference agreement. There is a provision in the conference agreement that would prevent CMS from implementing the cost-limitation rule.

Certainly, a one-year moratorium is an improvement over the two-year moratorium that was in the bill as passed by the Senate, but the language in the bill still encourages states to push the envelope on payment schemes.

If CMS gets a waiver or state plan amendment that has authority to do with the rule, I don't think CMS has the authority to turn it down. Neither does CMS.

And after trying to work it out with the sponsors of the provision for the last couple of weeks, I don't think they want CMS to have any authority either.

Why? This is a provision written for the benefit of a special interests so they can avoid real scrutiny of their financing arrangements.

This provision will encourage states to offer payment schemes that CMS has previously disallowed as being inappropriate.

It will encourage litigation if CMS tries to assert that they do still maintain jurisdiction.

This is just bad public policy.

The inspector general has investigated and reported to congress on why there are problems in the areas the rule addresses.

We have not had the first hearing on why the rule doesn't work and must be stopped.

This is a tremendous mistake and should not be in the bill.

The way that this provision is paid for is equally noxious.

The extension of the Wisconsin pharmacy plus waiver is an unnecessary earmark. Every State but Wisconsin has changed their pharmacy assistance program as the MMA required.

But why hasn't Wisconsin? It's very simple. They want the Federal dollars that Medicaid provides and the rebates they get from drug companies.

That it is an earmark is bad. But the way the language is written is really offensive. The language is written in a way that games Medicaid's budget neutrality test. It's written to guarantee that it appears to save money.

The reality is that Wisconsin will be providing many poor seniors with less of a benefit than they could get through part d. Wisconsin charges greater cost-sharing than Medicare for low income seniors.

It truly is another missed opportunity. They could have paid for this with a provision we would have gladly supported.

But again, the special interest won out. We could have struck a provision that the House Rules Committee stuck in the tax bill in the middle of the night last December that creates an unfair advantage for certain private fee-for-service Medicare Advantage plans.

Senator Baucus and I thought this was terrible policy, we said so on the floor, and have wanted to change it. Plans based in Illinois and Nevada are among the plans it advantages most. So for some reason, striking the provision didn't make it into the bill. It's a corporate giveaway that should be eliminated.

Legislating to prevent CMS from cleaning up intergovernmental transfers scams on this appropriation bill sets a bad precedent. That is clear. It's legislation on Medicaid and, that is a basic part of the jurisdiction of the Finance Committee.

If the Senate proceeds in this manner, then nothing then would prevent the Senate legislating changes on other Medicaid and Medicare issues on appropriation bills without the benefit of hearings or committee action on those subjects.

Invading the Medicaid and Medicare jurisdiction of the Finance Committee is a mistake.

It is almost impossible to cope with Medicaid and Medicare legislation on appropriation bills. These are complex issues that are best dealt with by the committee of jurisdiction.

This bill is going to be vetoed. The Appropriations Committee will return

to its work to fund the troops in the field. We ought to focus on that. On minimum wage/small business tax relief, we need to go to regular order. Let's arrive at a pre-conference agreement on the House and Senate bills and go to conference and hash it out with a real conference. Unlike this situation, the chairmen and ranking members of both tax writing committees should be conferees. In that setting, we can arrive at a bipartisan agreement that passes the House, Senate, and be signed by the President. On the Medicaid provision, it ought to be crafted by the committees of jurisdiction and incorporated in a vehicle controlled by those committees.

After the veto, let's get this right. I would ask the leadership to get out of the way of the tax writing committees and let us do our work on our schedule in line with our committees' objectives.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia is recognized for 4 minutes.

Mr. WEBB. Mr. President, there is a lot of emotion in the Congress today, as there is in the country, on this issue. There is a lot of rhetoric flying back and forth. Some of it is inaccurate. The first thing we need to say is that this is not an issue of the Congress denying anything to the people of the Armed Forces. We are exercising our constitutional power to appropriate. We are sending the President a \$100 billion check. If he chooses not to cash that check, it is up to him to come up with the reasons why, not us.

There is also a lot of rhetoric going around over the past couple of days about defeatism and surrender and accusations of betraying the troops. We need to calm down a bit. There is no one in this Congress who wants anything more than to support those people who have been put into harm's way. I believe people should be very careful on this floor to discuss political motivations of our military which reflect very closely the political views of the country at large. Poll after poll shows that.

In respect to accusations about defeatism and surrender, the question becomes: Defeat by whom and surrender to whom? We won this war 4 years ago. The question is, When do we end the occupation? Iraq has been in turmoil for thousands of years. It will be in turmoil of one kind or another long after we leave. The U.S. military is not going to change the societal makeup of Iraq. The Maliki government is not going to bring peace among Iraq's competing factions without the strong, over diplomatic cooperation of other countries in the region. Despite the rhetoric to the contrary, these other countries, all of them, do have an incentive in seeing a stable Iraq.

This administration claims that our deciding to withdraw from the internal problems of Iraq will embolden the enemy. Then the question becomes:

Just which enemy? Do they mean the enemy that attacked us on 9/11? We all know that was Osama bin Laden. He not only was not in Iraq, but he was opposed to the continuation of Saddam Hussein's regime because it was a secular government.

Do they mean Saddam Hussein, whose ouster was their justification for beginning this war? Do they mean the remnants of the old regime, which was their catch phrase when the occupation began? Do they mean al-Qaida? Let's remember, there were no al-Qaida operations in Iraq before we invaded, and there will be very little motivation for al-Qaida to continue in Iraq once we have left. Not only that, but the Iraqis themselves are quite capable of standing up to al-Qaida without our help. They do not want al-Qaida in Iraq. That is why they are cooperating with our forces in Anbar Province right now. And they kept al-Qaida out of Iraq before we got there. Or do they mean what this administration continually calls the insurgency, as if there were a monolithic group of defeatable guerrilla forces? We keep hearing about this insurgency. Well, which one? The Sunnis? The Shia? Ask yourselves again, against whom are the insurgents operating? Some are operating against us. Why? Because we are there and they want us to leave, as a vast majority of the Iraqis say in poll after poll. Some are operating against other ethnic factions in Iraq. But to what extent is that the responsibility of the United States military, to try to end ethnic rivalries that go back hundreds of years? Or perhaps, as defined by this administration, we are talking about the factions within the factions that are busily trying to kill each other, just as the factions in Lebanon were trying to kill each other more than 20 years ago, when we put the marines in the middle of that violence.

Some say our withdrawal from Iraq would create chaos in the region. I have long advocated a withdrawal that should be accomplished under the umbrella of a strong diplomatic effort that involves regional cooperation. But I must regrettably say, for those of us who warned against invading Iraq and decapitating that existing Government, the chaos the administration is now predicting is exactly the chaos their invasion has brought us in the first place—instability in the region, a loss of American prestige, a rise in the influence of Iran, an increase in terrorist activity.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. WEBB. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent for 30 more seconds.

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

Mr. WEBB. Mr. President, I wish to say I am very disappointed in some of the provisions in this report. I must say that candidly. At the same time, I believe, very strongly, the reservations

I have pale in comparison with my disappointment in the failure of leadership that has brought us into Iraq in the first place—a leadership that refuses to find a suitable turning point which will bring us out.

This administration must be confronted. It must understand the American people have grown tired of this disastrous, one-dimensional approach to a crisis that demands innovative answers. It is for that reason I support this measure.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

The Senator from Utah is recognized for 8 minutes.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, today I rise to speak on a question that continues to weigh rather heavily on my heart. I am reluctant to ask it since such a question would never have been asked, or even contemplated, by previous generations of Americans. But it is a question that now must be asked since it is central to our future: Do we, as Americans, have the resolve to see our commitments through? It is a question we must confront in a number of policy arenas that will directly affect the way we, our children, and our grandchildren will live in this new century. Do we have the resolve and the courage to meet our commitments and confront the looming crisis of Social Security?

Do we have the resolve to balance our Nation's budget? Do we have the resolve to endow our children with a proper education so they can master and push the limits of science, thereby providing our Nation the means to compete in an increasingly competitive world economy?

However, at this point in our Nation's history, the crucial question concerning our resolve as a nation does not relate to matters of domestic policy. It relates to our commitments beyond our borders. It is the central and critical component in determining who will prevail in the global war on terrorism. Will we, our coalition allies, the people of Iraq and their elected Government, emerge victorious? Or will we renounce and abdicate our commitments and responsibilities to the Iraqi people—leaving them to a fate controlled by terrorists and leaving our future security as a nation in peril?

Generations ago that, unto itself, would be a stain on the honor of this country; but these are different times.

Turning our back now will only provide our enemies with a new base of operations, and unlike Afghanistan, this base contains vast oil wealth. Imagine al-Qaida with billions of dollars to do with as Osama bin Laden wishes. I wonder what they will buy with all that money. Remember, shortly after the liberation of Kabul, there were numerous media reports that al-Qaida was working on chemical weapons.

So, with that in mind, I again ask: Do we have the resolve to see our commitments through?

As we seek to answer this question, I am reminded of events that occurred

during the summer of 1940. The Nazi armies, seemingly invincible, had conquered Western Europe. France, the Netherlands, Poland, Denmark, Norway, and Belgium had all fallen.

The British Army, after its rescue from Dunkirk, no longer possessed sufficient numbers of artillery and tanks to defend against the blitzkrieg. All that stood between Hitler and complete victory was the English Channel and 650 fighters of the Royal Air Force.

Then Hitler offered a deal. In exchange for a "free hand in Europe," the Nazis would provide "guarantees" that they would not invade Great Britain.

Despite the fact that the British Army lacked sufficient equipment to effectively repulse an invasion, Prime Minister Churchill resolved to keep his nation's commitment to the people of Europe. He would not abandon them.

His words, which I will paraphrase, still echo today:

The Battle of France is over . . . the Battle of Britain is about to begin. Upon this battle depends the survival of . . . Western civilization. . . . The whole fury and might of the enemy must very soon be turned on us. Hitler knows that he will have to break us . . . or lose the war. If we can stand up to him, all Europe may be free. . . . But if we fail, then the whole world, including the United States . . . and all that we have known and cared for, will sink into the abyss of a new Dark Age made more sinister, and perhaps more protracted, by the lights of perverted science. Let us, therefore, brace ourselves to our duties and so bear ourselves that . . . men will say—This Was Their Finest Hour.

This is the lesson that history teaches us: that resolution to see your commitments through is what great statesmen and nations are made of—that peace and justice can only be restored through bold action.

So what do my colleagues on the other side of the aisle offer, knowing full well this lesson of history? In a word: defeat. In his own words, the Democratic leader said on the floor of the Senate, on April 19, the "war is lost." To be fair, the leader did attempt to temper his words by saying:

As long as we follow the President's path, the war is lost. But there is still a chance to change course and we must change course. No one wants us to succeed in the Middle East more than I do. But there must be a change of course.

So what plan, or new course, does the Democratic leader or other Democrats offer? How can we, in his words, "succeed in the Middle East"?

His answer can be found in the conference report to this bill. But I warn anyone who attempts to read this legislation, first you must wade through billions in spending allocated to projects and programs that have nothing to do with the war before you learn how our Democratic colleagues plan to "succeed in the Middle East."

What is their plan for victory? Well, their legislation states that no matter what happens, the bulk of our forces will begin to withdraw after July 1, or if the President makes certain certifications, after October 1.

So what is their strategy? I believe Winston Churchill would have charac-

terized the Democratic strategy as: guaranteed defeat.

Is this resolve?

Is this determination to see our commitments through?

No.

This is the worst case of capitulation to appeasement since Neville Chamberlain spoke the words "peace in our time."

What is needed now is leadership. Now, at this critical moment in history, great nations need to follow Churchill's advice, yet the Democrats offer us only Chamberlain's.

The Democratic leaders previously stated, in 2005:

[A]s far as setting a timeline . . . that's not a wise decision because it only empowers those who don't want us there, and it doesn't work well to do it.

Wide and sound words. That was real leadership. Unfortunately, that was when the polls supported their position to stand firm. Now the Democratic leaders have reversed themselves because the polls have told them that is what they should do.

Two days ago, during an interview on CNN, the Senator from Nevada was asked if he would believe the words of our new commander General Petraeus "that there is progress going on in Iraq, that the so-called surge is working. Will you believe him when he says that?"

What was his response? "No, I don't believe him, because it's not happening."

Now, I find this to be an incredible remark. Less than 3 months ago, the majority leader had joined a unanimous Senate and voted in favor of General Petraeus. But this was more than just another confirmation vote. The major subject of his confirmation hearing and the subsequent debate on the Senate floor was the new strategy the general had outlined.

So what is the new strategy? Simply put, General Petraeus is executing one of the tenets of a classic counterinsurgency strategy by providing and maintaining security to the local population and neighborhoods in Baghdad. Only when this is achieved will the Iraqi Government be able to continually offer basic services such as clean water and electricity, which are the backbone of any modern society.

This, in turn, creates conditions where the Iraqi people can begin to develop a growing economy and where families feel safe to send their kids to school. As these goals are achieved, more and more of the population will desire even greater stability and will support and work toward creating Iraqi Government institutions and security services that maintain and enhance this new, secure environment.

How is this different from the past? Previously, U.S. forces would clear an area of insurgents, but, unfortunately, soon thereafter, our forces would leave and the insurgents would return. Now, under General Petraeus's plan, American and Iraqi security forces will

maintain security in the cleared neighborhoods of Baghdad. To date, over 50 security force units, based in what are called garrisons, can be found in the neighborhoods of the city, and even more are planned.

That is why the additional forces that we are sending to Iraq are vital. It is not more for more's sake, but to maintain a secure environment for the Iraqi people and to help them stand up for themselves.

Based upon the briefing that the Senate received yesterday from General Petraeus, and information I have examined as a member of the Senate Intelligence Committee, I can report that we are seeing signs of progress.

Frankly, I believe the changes that have been made in the last 3 months are remarkable and need our full support, and it is readily apparent we do not yet have all the promised forces deployed and in Iraq.

So let us return to the question that I asked when I began my remarks: Do we, as Americans, have the resolve to see our commitments through? Or will we falter?

That is what the vote on this conference report will demonstrate. Will we stand with firm resolve behind our commitments and see our new strategy through? Or do we adopt a policy of appeasement and hope that al-Qaida, and those who wish us harm and seek to destroy the values that we hold so dear, do not follow us home to our country?

What side of history do you wish to be on? Based on America's history and our resolve that has seen us through so many difficulties in the past, I believe the American people do not want retreat, they want success and security.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

The Senator from New York is recognized for 4 minutes.

Mr. SCHUMER. Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, we can do both: fund the troops and change our mission in Iraq. That is what this supplemental does, and we urge you, Mr. President, to look into your heart, reconsider, and sign it.

The American people, bipartisan majorities in both Houses of Congress, military experts, and the Iraq Study Group all agree the only way to succeed is to change our mission. Only President Bush and his small band of advisers think we should stay the course.

What is more, the President wrongly thinks the only way to support our troops is for everyone to rubberstamp his policies. That is not what the American people want. The American people want a change in mission. They want a new direction, not more of the same failed policies.

I have talked to generals and to NCOs. They do not want us to rubberstamp the President's policies. They want a debate because everyone knows the present direction is failing. Everyone knows we need a change of

mission—except the President and his small group of advisers who are clustered down there at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue and refuse to listen—stubbornly refuse to listen—to the experts, to the American people, and to so many others.

First, let me tell you what this supplemental does. The first thing it does is fund our troops. It fully supports our troops. It allocates more dollars for them than the President has asked for.

Second, it provides reasonable and meaningful guidelines to protect our troops by ensuring that all units that are sent overseas to fight are ready, trained, and equipped to fight. It will require the Department of Defense to adhere to its own guidelines to ensure that every unit that is deployed is “fully mission capable.”

Why would President Bush want to send our troops to Afghanistan and Iraq, into fierce battles, without the training and equipment needed to get the job done and come home safely? But when he says he will veto this bill, he will veto that provision.

Third, this legislation shows both the United States and Iraq how to change the failing strategy.

What has happened is simple. Our mission in Iraq has devolved so that most of what we do is patrol, police, and stand in the middle of a civil war. The Sunnis and the Shiites have hated each other for centuries. Their enmity goes way back. They will continue to not like each other, not work with each other, fight with each other long after we are gone—whether it is 3 months or 3 years. Yet most of the time our troops—our brave men and women—are simply caught in the middle of a civil war. We have not chosen a side; we are just in the middle.

The original purpose in Iraq was to fight terrorism. Our supplemental says, let's go back to that original purpose: counterterrorism, as well as force protection, and training the Iraqis. But to continue to spend most of our time, effort, and lives—lives—patrolling a civil war makes no sense.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TESTER). The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent for 30 seconds.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I yield the Senator 30 additional seconds.

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

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, in conclusion, again, there is a simple answer to our problems in Iraq, which is mission change. We can both support the troops and change the mission. That is what the American people want. That is what the experts tell us. I believe that is what most of our soldiers want. I urge support of this supplemental and again urge the President to reconsider and sign it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri is recognized.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, our job in this body right now for all of us is to

fight and win the war that radical Islam terrorists have declared upon us.

As I see it, Congress has three choices. First, Congress can and should provide the money it needs to support the troops. That is the only proper choice. There is money in this supplemental for additional mine-resistant armored protection vehicles—vehicles the Army reports will reduce casualties by 70 percent. Each day this Congress neglects to fund the troops and pass a bill that can be signed into law is an additional day our troops are without that protection.

Second, if you want to stop this war, Congress can vote to cut off funding. However, doing so would tell the troops that even though 77 Members of this body said we should fight this war to keep America safe, we would now be telling all of our brave men and women in Iraq, their families, and the families of those who gave their lives, we did not mean it, that we did not want to finish this job, and that when the going gets tough, America gets going—out. We will tell America we are no longer concerned about keeping our homeland safe from a new 9/11, about denying al-Qaida the safe haven it has declared it is seeking in Iraq to prepare for new attacks on America. While that choice is deadly wrong, it is an honest choice under the constitutional power given to the Congress.

Third, and most deplorable, Congress is delaying the funds by forcing vote after vote, while attempting to score political points, and trying to micromanage the war, even though war management is the President's constitutional responsibility.

Most sadly, this is the course of action the Democratic leadership has chosen—a course that will result in “death by a thousand cuts.”

Those who are attempting to end the war precipitously, politically, because they think it will score them seats in Congress or perhaps even the White House, are putting polls and politics ahead of our national security. Democratic leaders have stated they intend to pick up seats as a result of what they have referred to as a lost war. These comments were not just broadcast here in the United States; this talk about war loss was picked up and broadcast gleefully by al-Jazeera to our enemies and the world.

The Los Angeles Times has reported a top House Democrat has said: Our goal is to keep giving them—Republicans—votes on Iraq.

The article goes on to say:

Democratic strategists also believe that repeated votes on the war will allow the party to expand its congressional majorities in next year's elections by continuing to link GOP lawmakers with the President and his war policies.

I am sure our troops in the field appreciate very much that some of the Democratic leadership are working to win the war—not the war against our sworn enemies blowing up our troops and killing Iraqi children who rely on

our protection but against fellow Americans in coming elections. Where is their strategy to win, to leave Iraq a stable and safe country?

As I have said, the other side's leadership, by embracing a policy of repeated votes and delaying funding, is denying our troops the resources they need. Their enemy should be al-Qaida and its murderous insurgents, not the President and Republican opponents.

Substituting Congress for General Petraeus's leadership and telling him how to run a war from 8,000 miles away is a disaster. General Petraeus is executing a new plan, a plan essentially recommended by the Baker-Hamilton Iraq Study Group, which last fall our colleagues on the other side of the aisle said we should follow. But now even if some generals in Congress think they are smarter than General Petraeus and can devise in legislation a better plan, which I strongly doubt, I am very doubtful they can adjust that plan to conditions on the battlefield. This is a sad reflection of how vested the Democratic leaders are in defeat—defeat for President Bush but defeat for our troops and our safety in Iraq.

Congress attempts to put artificial political timetables on the management of the war and does nothing to accomplish the mission. The Baker-Hamilton commission explicitly rejected timetables for withdrawal, because they recognized—the bipartisan group recognized—it was a disaster, and many Democratic leaders have previously stated a legislative timetable, laying out this strategy in legislation, is absolutely unacceptable. What the political timetable does is give al-Qaida the encouragement and information it needs to know when and where and how to attack our troops.

This January, in open session, leaders of our intelligence community came before the Senate Intelligence Committee to answer questions about establishing a political withdrawal and the consensus was alarming.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. BOND. I understand I had 7 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator did. He is down to 1 minute.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, the intelligence community said withdrawing forces before we can provide security will result in chaos: more killing among Iraqis, an al-Qaida safe haven, and a possible regionwide declaration of war.

We need a political solution in Iraq, not in Washington, to allow the leaders in the national unity government to come together, but to get that, we need to repel the terrorists, we need to rebuild the Iraqi security forces. What won't help General Petraeus is direction from armchair generals in Congress.

What I would say to those who want to direct the war is: If you want to run it, you will own it. When a newly revitalized al-Qaida carries out a renewed

9/11 scale attack, you will own that one, too.

Mr. President, hundreds of thousands of soldiers and their families at home will remember that. I suggest we support our troops.

As my colleagues know, I hail proudly from the Show-Me-State.

If all of the rhetoric in Washington about supporting the troops is true and I suspect it is, then I suggest that the Congress show our troops that we do support them, get them the funds and give them a chance to succeed.

Comments like "The war is lost" do not help our troops, but they do embolden the enemy.

Our actions should inspire our troops and the millions of Iraqi citizens who actually trust that Americans will not embrace defeat.

Our action should not be one that inspires al-Qaida and the murderous insurgents.

We should not pass legislation that provides our enemy the clear path to their victory, a victory which some in this body have already awarded them.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I thank Senator BOND for his remarks. As the senior Republican on the Intelligence Committee, I know he has knowledge and information and passion maybe some of the rest of us don't have the benefit of.

Mr. President, I rise today to oppose final passage of the emergency supplemental funding bill.

It troubles me to oppose this bill because our troops need this money right now to continue operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, and around the globe.

But there are so many things I find objectionable in this final bill that I cannot support it.

The bill still includes over \$21 billion in unrequested items—\$425 million for rural schools, \$3.5 billion for agricultural assistance, and even an additional \$910 million more than the President requested in FEMA disaster relief for communities impacted by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

It is not that these programs are bad or wrong, because many of them aren't—in fact, most of this assistance is very valid. We desperately need that FEMA money on the gulf coast to repair our communities as many communities are still struggling to get back on their feet.

But this is an emergency supplemental that is supposed to focus on the urgent needs of our military in fighting the war on terror. We should not be including money for a multitude of requirements that may be important, but are not urgent.

I'm also very troubled that this bill micromanages the President's ability and constitutional mandate to serve as Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces.

Through this bill, the Congress says to General Petraeus: "Thank you very much, General. We unanimously think that you're the right man for the job—we just don't believe you when you tell

us what you need to do that job, or when you tell us how things are actually going on the ground."

It tells our enemies: Just wait a few months, and the place is yours.

It tells our friends: When the going gets tough, don't count on America to stick around.

And it tells President Malaki: Good luck with that democracy and freedom thing you are working on. Let us know how it turns out.

This is exactly the wrong message at the wrong time to send—not only to the terrorists in Iraq, but to terrorists and rogue states around the globe.

The stakes only get higher from here. I'm convinced that surrender in Iraq will embolden these terrorists and ultimately threaten the security of our shores.

Don't get me wrong—I, too, want our servicemen and women to come home as soon as possible. I pray that not 1 more American has to pay the ultimate price in this struggle.

I agree that the Iraqi Government must step up to the plate as soon as possible, and take responsibility for the security of their country.

I have always supported the establishment of benchmarks to ensure that expectations are clear, and progress against those expectations can be measured.

What I don't agree with is telling the President and the Generals on the ground how to do their job.

But this bill is even worse than that—this bill is like a bait and switch: we'll give the money today for operations in Iraq, but you need to come home tomorrow because we don't support operations in Iraq.

Which one is it? Do we support our troops and their mission, or not?

If my colleagues on the other side of the aisle want our troops to come home tomorrow, they can make that happen. It is easy. The Constitution of the United States gives the legislative branch the power of the purse.

You can cut off money today—you can vote against this bill today.

When you start marking up the fiscal year 2008 Defense appropriation, you can cut off Iraq funding there as well.

But what we have here is political theatre. This is a "do nothing" Congress at its worst.

The President has been very clear many times—he is going to veto this bill because of the withdrawal timeline and all the excess projects. And in the Congress, there will not be enough votes to overturn that veto. Then what?

I guess we'll get to talk about this matter again next week or the week after. But at some point, very soon, our inaction is going to cause some real harm—and I hope that the real harm doesn't include the loss of more American lives around the world.

If we can't get moving and fund our troops with no strings attached, we are eventually going to impact the safety and capability of our military, not just in Iraq, but around the globe.

This should not be about the President. It should not be about the Congress. This is about funds for our troops—the men and women in uniform—who are in Afghanistan and Iraq right now, doing the job they were directed to do. They need this money. They need the equipment the money would provide to do the job, and that should be our focus.

This funding was requested by the President on February 6, almost 3 months ago, and through this political theater we are fixed to embark upon a vote we know will not become law, one that will surely be vetoed by the President. This legislation is dead before arrival. Why don't we acknowledge that and find a way to get the job done without delaying even more, forcing our military to move funds around, to borrow from Peter to pay for Paul. It will have a negative effect on our men and women in the Navy and the Air Force and the rest of the military.

We could have turned this over to our senior members of the Appropriations Committee, my colleague from Mississippi and the other appropriators, including the Senator from Washington State, and said: Look, work through this. Let's get something we can support in good conscience.

There are more problems with this than just artificial deadlines. The \$21 billion in domestic spending was added beyond—I believe that is approximately right—what the President asked for. Some of it is needed and justified. I know my colleague from Mississippi and the Appropriations Committee on both sides of the aisle and on both sides of the Capitol could have worked through that and come up with a bill to get the job done. It is not that some of these adds are not good and justified. The President asked for funds for Katrina recovery, and I think maybe some funds have been added to that beyond what he asked for. This is important to me and my State, but I refuse to be trying to get funds that may be immediately needed for a disaster on the back of our troops and to delay it even more. Surely there is a way we can come to an agreement on how to achieve this result.

This is an emergency supplemental. Some of the things that have been added—not just money but language—don't relate to an emergency domestically or in terms of what our troops need. That language should be stricken. We make grand speeches here on the floor about how we should not legislate on appropriations, yet things have been added in a number of categories, not just the minimum wage and small business tax cuts that don't get the job done.

This is a classic case of micro-management where the Congress is trying to set dates. We have an alternative. If we want to use the power of the purse to stop the war on terror and our efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan, vote no. Vote no. Vote against this. Don't provide the troops the funds they

need or any of this other money. If you want to do that, go right ahead. There is a procedure. But here we are trying to set ourselves up as the final judges.

General Petraeus was here yesterday telling us what is going on. He was honest. He didn't say it is perfect. There was a change in strategy. It is being implemented and carried forward. We voted 100 percent for General Petraeus, and now we are saying: Oh, well, sorry about that, General. We are going to try to tell you when to do what, not wait until we get more reports from you. Wait months, our enemies are told, and the place is yours. When the going gets tough, can you count on the Americans to see it through in a responsible way? This is the wrong message at the wrong time.

Mr. President, I am an incurable optimist. Let's get it done. Let's let it go on through. The President will veto it. But next week, can we get together and do the right thing for our country and for our troops? I beg my colleagues on both sides of the aisle. We have made our political points, our political statements. Then let's get our job done. Let's do the right thing for America, not the right thing for Republicans or Democrats but the right thing for our troops.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that on our side the Senator from Louisiana, Ms. LANDRIEU, be recognized; following her, going back and forth, then Senator FEINSTEIN for 4 minutes, and then Senator JACK REED for 4 minutes.

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

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I have a book which is a poignant and wonderful account of life in Louisiana after the storms. It is called "1 Dead in Attic," written by Chris Rose, a reporter for the Times Picayune. The title refers to the unique system for identifying what happened in people's homes during the storm. The notation, sprayed on the wall for everyone to see, would explain whether there were pets or people or, in this case, someone no longer living. This symbol—this information—remains spray painted on the sides of many houses to this day.

In this book, Mr. Rose describes 2005:

This was the year that defines our city, our lives, our destiny. Nothing comparable has ever happened in modern times in America, and there is no blueprint for how we do this. We just wing it. Do good works. Save someone or something.

* * *

If there was no New Orleans, America would just be a bunch of free people dying of boredom.

A photographer for from England noted:

I witnessed the destruction of one of the finest cities in America, her soul bared and exposed, her inequality and inefficiency laid out for all to see. And through it all I saw the grace, courage and dignity of her citizens, forced to flee their homes, their lives, their history. I trust her soul will be repaired.

I want to thank Chairman BYRD for his many courtesies and assistance in this bill. I also want to thank his staff for all of their hard work and long hours. I also want to thank Senator COCHRAN, who has done so much for the people of the gulf and who shares so much of the hard work on the recovery with me and the other gulf coast Senators. In fact, the entire Senate appropriations Committee—my fellow Senators and their staff—have been so supportive of us through this process—and I thank them.

There are many provisions that will help the ongoing recovery efforts in my state and along the rest of the gulf coast included in this bill.

I intend to vote for this bill because it provides critical resources and removes obstacles to the recovery of the gulf coast. In addition, the bill provides funding necessary to support our troops in Iraq.

Hurricane Katrina hit the gulf coast in August of 2005 and Hurricane Rita followed on its heels just a few weeks later. While a great deal of time has passed, and a lot of progress has been made, this recovery will take many, many years.

As you have heard me say on many occasions, the damage to the gulf coast is unimaginable. Sometimes I think that people forget just how unimaginable the damage was. Mr. President, 1,836 people were killed. To put this in perspective, this means that 1 out of every 3 people who work here in the Senate would have lost their lives 6008 people work for the Senate. Mr. President, 650,000 people were displaced. It would be as if every single solitary person in the District of Columbia were displaced from their homes and neighborhood.

Over 275,000 homes were damaged, with over 205,000 of those in Louisiana alone—again, this is the equivalent of every home in the District of Columbia being flooded, damaged, or destroyed, and 240,000 jobs were lost. Here in DC, we are lucky, there are more jobs than there are residents. However, were a similar disaster to strike DC, every other person employed in the District would have lost their job. Also, 875 schools were destroyed and there was \$82 billion in property damage.

If you want to try an experiment at home, paint a chalk line at a point 3 feet from the floor and imagine that everything below that line submerged in water.

But we are coming back from that awful year. It is a long, hard struggle but there are signs of hope. Our people are rebuilding their homes. There are now over 223,000 people living in Orleans Parish—about 43 percent of the pre-storm population—and over 450,000 in Jefferson. Our businesses are reopening. Visitors are returning. Our schools are rebuilding—better than before. We are creating a new health care system for the 21st century in Louisiana.

However, much work remains. This bill will help so very much with those

ongoing efforts. I want to thank all of you for supporting these measures.

Some out there have taken issue with this funding. This assistance to the gulf coast is not "extraneous". It is necessary. However, the President has called this spending "excessive non-emergency spending". This is simply untrue.

This bill provides about \$3 billion in additional direct aid to the gulf coast. We spend \$8.6 billion per month in Iraq, which is \$286 million per day. So, we are providing the people of the Gulf Coast with the equivalent of 10 days of the funding for the war. To date; we have spend \$470 billion in Iraq and Afghanistan. In Iraq only, we have spent \$379 billion.

Mr. President, you tell Cameron Parish where all 6 of their grade schools were closed until October 31, 2005 and 62 percent of all school facilities were destroyed that their teachers don't deserve a little extra money and that providing \$30 million for bonuses and incentives for the grade schools in Mississippi and Louisiana is too much.

You tell Dillard University, which had \$115 million dollars in physical damage and lost \$26 million in revenues—which counts Ellis Marsalis and Reavis Ortiz among its alumni—whose campus is not far from the lower levee breach of the London Avenue Canal and which suffered extensive flood damage in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and whose main hall, Nelson Hall, was destroyed by a fire, during the flood, whose students took their normal classes at The New Orleans World Trade Center and The New Orleans Hilton Riverside Hotel until this fall, that \$30 million in assistance—to be divided among the 27 universities that were closed in Louisiana and Mississippi—is "excessive".

You tell small businesses in St. Bernard—where there were 1,400 businesses before the storm and only about 400 have re-opened and less than 70 percent of the population has returned—that \$25 million for economic injury loans is "extraneous" or unnecessary. Even Wal-Mart has not reopened in this Parish.

You tell the people of Jefferson Parish, St. Bernard Parish, Plaquemines Parish, and Orleans Parish that their levees should not be repaired and that their homes and businesses will remain vulnerable to the next storm and that an additional \$1.3 billion for their safety is too much.

What is included in the Emergency Supplemental is FAIR funding, waiver of the 10 percent match. This bill eliminates the red-tape associated with so much of the Federal money. This supplemental includes the FAIR Funding Act language which will waive the local cost share for FEMA public assistance. This is FAIR. Hurricanes Katrina and Rita were the first and third most costly disasters in the history of this country and the Federal Government has waived this local share requirement in 32 different disas-

ters since 1985, including Hurricanes Andrew and Iniki.

Forgiveness of CDs is included. This bill will also correct a grave inequity and allow for our community Disaster loans to have the same treatment as all others.

Levee money is included. In addition, this bill will shore up a shortfall that has been identified by the Army Corp of Engineers. They have estimated that they will be short \$1.3 billion dollars this year for necessary levee work in Louisiana. However, instead of asking for money to alleviate this shortfall, the administration merely wanted to rob Peter to pay Paul. However, this committee has wisely decided to provide additional money for this necessary work. Unfortunately, I do not believe that this will be sufficient to meet the ongoing needs—or will be enough to restore, repair and rebuild our levee system.

There is support for our education system. The Universities in Louisiana have been critical to our rebuilding efforts. They have fought to come back and about 80 percent of the students have returned. More importantly, the universities have provided resources and leadership during the rebuilding of the region. In Louisiana, they are also helping our grade schools stand up—forging new and stronger partnerships with our new school system.

Our universities suffered over a billion dollars in damages as a result of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. In the 4th supplemental passed last Congress, we provided \$40 million dollars for higher ed assistance—of which \$33 million went to Louisiana universities. In this bill, we appropriate another \$30 million, every penny of which is necessary.

We also provide \$30 million in order to reward the teachers who give their hearts out trying to bring normalcy to our children and prepare them for the future.

I appreciate the continued assistance that this committee and my colleagues in the Seanate have given to the people of the Gulf Coast—and the hope that this legislation provides to them.

Mr. President, it is not often I disagree with my good friend from Mississippi, but I will say the people of the gulf coast don't think they are riding on the backs of the troops; they think they are the troops. The Guard and National Reserve who were in Iraq who are from Louisiana, 3,000 fighting in Iraq, only to come home to have their homes destroyed, have their jobs lost. They don't think it is too much to ask of the President to include \$3 billion in a \$24 billion bill—\$3 billion for the gulf coast recovery, which is domestic emergency funding that has been included in every supplemental, even when the Republicans drafted a bill where there was money for domestic emergencies. The people of the gulf coast don't believe \$3 billion is too much to ask.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent for 30 seconds.

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

Ms. LANDRIEU. We are spending \$8.6 billion a month in Iraq, which is \$286 million a day. In this bill, we are asking the gulf coast to have 10 days—10 days of funding for the troops who are fighting in Iraq who lost their homes in the gulf coast. I don't think it is excessive. I ask the President to rethink his veto policy.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California is recognized for 4 minutes.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, in 1999, when George Bush was a candidate for the Presidency and President Clinton was Commander in Chief, George Bush had this to say about American troops in Bosnia:

Victory means exit strategy, and it's important for the President to explain what the exit strategy is.

Well, the Congress has been asking for an exit strategy year after year for 4 years now. In fact, President Bush has no exit strategy. So the United States is bogged down in an impossible situation: "Shock and awe," followed by ineffective follow-on efforts. Today, in the fifth year of this war, the United States is enmeshed in what has become a vicious and terrifying civil war. It cannot be won through the use of American military force. This war can only be won through political accommodation between Sunni and Shia, which means only the Iraqis can settle it, which means only the Iraqi Government can settle it. To this date, they appear to be unable to do what needs to be done to stop this conflict.

So without an exit strategy, the war goes on, the killings continue, and the casualties rise. Nearly 25,000 Americans injured, with tens of thousands of Iraqis killed and injured, and hundreds of thousands of people displaced from their homes by this war. Estimates put Iraqi civilian deaths in the first 3 months of this year at more than 5,500 in the Baghdad area alone.

On Monday, two truck bombs killed nine members of the 82nd Airborne Division and wounded 20 more. It was the deadliest day of combat in the division's history since the Vietnam war.

I fear that unless Congress acts and puts forward that exit strategy, this bloodshed will continue year after year. That is intolerable.

Today, we have before us a measure that offers a solution and a strategy to fill the void left by the administration. The Iraqi supplemental spending bill responsibly funds our troops and changes the course in Iraq.

Most importantly, it sends a message to the Iraqi Government that the U.S. commitment is not open-ended, that benchmarks will measure the progress, and that political accommodation is crucial.

Under this legislation, the Iraqi Government would be judged on how it disarms militias, pursues Sunni-Shia reconciliation initiatives, establishes fair

oil-sharing laws, reforms debaathification laws, and protects the rights of minorities. This is as it should be.

This legislation ensures that our troops have sufficient rest and training and are provided well-maintained equipment. This is as it should be.

It allows for a redefined mission for American forces limited to antiterrorism operations, training Iraqi forces, and protecting American civilians and members of the Armed Forces. This is as it should be.

It begins the process of bringing our troops home. Into the fifth year of a war, this, too, is as it should be.

The American people spoke in a clear voice. Today, the United States Senate will as well.

Thank you, Mr. President. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I rise to express my strong opposition to this measure before the Senate, and I will cast my vote against it.

This measure places undue constraints on the utilization of our brave military, together with our allies working with us and, indeed, constraints on the utilization of the Iraqi military, which likewise has followed through with a brave performance with our forces.

This is a very complex situation on the battlefield, and in the government, with respect to Iraq. Last fall, with other Senators, I returned from my eighth visit to Iraq and I said the complexity of the battlefield has forced the sovereign nation of Iraq to “drift sideways.” Regrettably, it continues, in my judgment, to drift. Our forces, and indeed our allies in that country, have fought bravely and are following through on their mission to try and bring about a greater degree of security in Baghdad.

While I expressed some concerns about the “surge” operation when it was announced on January 10, it is an ongoing operation now. We are losing life and limb daily, and we must allow our troops to be properly funded to carry out their missions.

Now, we heard yesterday from General Petraeus, and in my judgment, he gave a very factual, pragmatic, professional military opinion, showing objectivity. He is to be commended and our forces bravely fighting under his command should likewise be commended as well.

I want to bring to the attention of my colleagues a comment made by our distinguished Secretary of Defense, Secretary Gates, during his trip. He said, “our commitment to Iraq is long-term, but it is not a commitment to have our young men and women patrolling Iraqi streets open-endedly.” In no way does he question the long-term need for our Nation to show its resolve and commitment to give security to this region of the world. But he clearly says it is not open-ended.

We cannot ask our forces, nor the Iraqi forces, to risk life and limb during their missions, unless the Iraqi legislature and the government of Iraq begins to give an equal or greater measure of commitment to perform their responsibility to achieve political solutions. A military solution, we all acknowledge, will not alone achieve a strong, survivable, sovereign Iraq. A political solution and a framework of legal reconciliation is essential.

And we must, at this point in time, bring to light a serious potential problem, which I have been told, that the Iraqi legislature might possibly take a 2-month recess during July and August. That is not acceptable. An action of that consequence would severely hinder those of us, myself and others, who are looking at the greater issue beyond Iraq as to the impact on this region if the combined efforts of our country and other nations fail.

We are seeing some progress as it relates to the international group of nations coming together, the border nations are scheduled to meet a second time. It is through only political reconciliation measures and bold leadership by the Prime Minister and each and every Member of the Iraqi Legislature, that this conflict can bring forth a stable, sovereign government, that is fully functioning, and is capable of providing for its own security. In so doing, Iraq will then be able to play an integral role in the security of this region.

Further, we must again, and again, signal to Prime Minister Maliki and to each of the Members of the Iraqi Legislature that they must do their job in a timely manner because every day Iraqi and American lives are being lost in their heroic effort to provide the security for the Iraqi government to function.

Finally, while I will vote against this report, I pledge to work with other Senators on how to rewrite the next bill, following the veto process, for these funds are essential for our troops and as we draft the next bill, we must we must assure the world of our resolve and commitment to the region.

I yield the floor so that others may speak.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island is recognized.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, we must change the mission of our military forces in Iraq. We have to concentrate on training Iraqi forces so they can assume the burden of this hostility. We have to continue our efforts in counterterrorism to strike those international terrorists wherever they may be. And we have to protect our forces at all times. But we cannot continue an open-ended commitment and involvement in a civil war. That is essentially what the President is urging us to do.

This appropriations bill provides more resources for our military than was requested. It also funds extremely important domestic concerns, including the Veterans’ Administration, so we can keep faith with those veterans

who have served and will continue to serve; and also, as my colleague from Louisiana pointed out, we have to begin to reconstruct our gulf coast. It is ironic that we are pouring billions into Baghdad, helping them build all sorts of utilities, and still Americans languish along the gulf coast.

It also includes the Murtha standards of readiness on our forces as they deploy, to ensure that no American unit goes into the war zone without proper equipment, proper training, and appropriate personnel. The President has the ability to waive this under certain circumstances, so we are not unduly constricting his ability as Commander in Chief.

Then, of course, this legislation has benchmarks so that the Iraqi Government can stand up to their task. I think the one common theme that I have heard in this body is, ultimately, this is a political struggle and, ultimately, the Iraqi Government will make the decisions that are so important to the success of their efforts, which will allow us to begin a phased redeployment. But their record is very discouraging when it comes to their government.

Leon Panetta published an editorial a few days ago in the New York Times. He points out the Iraqis promised to achieve by the end of last year and the beginning of this year the approval of a provincial election law but, so far, no progress; approval of a law to regulate the oil industry and share revenues, and a draft is circulating, but it has not been approved by the parliament; approval of a debaathification law to reintegrate officials of the former regime and have a reconciliation, but there has been no progress; approval of a law to rein in sectarian militias, but no progress there either.

By March, the Government promised to hold a referendum on constitutional amendments. No progress.

By May, the Prime Minister committed to putting in place the law controlling militias, with no progress; the approval of the amnesty agreement, with no progress; and the completion of all reconciliation efforts. No progress.

If the Iraqi Government is unwilling to stand up to the demands they must face, then I think we can legitimately—and, indeed, we must—tell them very strongly that we will not support an open-ended commitment to that Government, that we will change our mission and refocus our resources.

It is interesting to me that our Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of State, those who travel to Baghdad, stand up and say this: Tell them what we are doing here is important, critical, and will happen, unless the Iraqis change. But in Washington, we are criticized for doing this.

I think the reality in Baghdad has to be the same as here. We have to move forward with this legislation to change the course, protect our soldiers in the field, and to allow a chance for success in Iraq.

I think we are all committed, we hope, to a policy that will lead us and the people of Iraq to a much better day. I believe supporting this initiative will do that.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time of the Senator has expired.

The Senator from Mississippi is recognized.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, this conference report is the wrong response to the President's request for the supplemental funding that is urgently needed by the Department of Defense.

While most of the funds—over \$109 billion—are appropriated to wage the global war on terrorism, to continue operations in Afghanistan, and to support Iraqi security forces, the conference report also includes funding for continuing the recovery from Hurricane Katrina and ensuring that our veterans receive the care they deserve.

I am very disappointed this bill includes language that sets forth a timetable for the withdrawal of troops from Iraq. We should be providing the President with a bill he can sign so our military forces can receive the funding they now need.

I recently brought to the attention of the Senate a letter I received from the Joint Chiefs of Staff on April 2 describing the urgency of an appropriations bill and their concerns about further delays of funding. It has been now over 3 weeks since that letter was received.

It is very clear that delay is occurring, and it is undermining the ability to manage the responsibilities of the Department of Defense. We are talking about life-and-death situations and the ability to obtain equipment, armaments, and the training that is necessary by our Armed Forces to carry out their mission.

The Joint Chiefs pointed this out in their letter:

Without approval of the supplemental funds in April, the Armed Services will be forced to take increasingly disruptive measures in order to sustain combat operations.

In addition, they stated:

These restrictions increase the burden on servicemembers and their families during this time of war.

I cannot support this effort to dictate the management of this very serious threat to our Nation's security interests. The opponents of the President's efforts to win the battle against the terrorists should not be permitted to hijack this supplemental appropriations bill. The responsible thing for us to do is to send this conference report to the President so he can veto it. We can then revise it so it can be enacted without the offensive language.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, it is my understanding that there is 8½ minutes remaining on this side; is that correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is correct.

Mr. REID. I yield 4 minutes to Senator INOUE.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Mr. INOUE. Mr. President, I believe that all Members of this body support the Defense appropriations section. The only area of concern and contention is that which refers to Iraq.

I think all of us agree that our forces today are bogged down in Iraq. They are caught in the middle of a civil war, and we need a change in plans. This war has dragged on too long and, incidentally, longer than our involvement in World War II. Staying the course is not working, and I, for one, am not convinced that it ever will.

The only way we can succeed in Iraq is if the Iraqis fundamentally change the dynamic. The language in the conference agreement embraces this idea of offering a new plan. This new plan eventually should allow for forces to be withdrawn from Iraq.

The proposal establishes a goal—and I repeat the word “goal”—of redeploying most of our forces from Iraq by next March. It does not mandate that all the troops are removed. To the contrary, it allows that forces remain in Iraq to protect U.S. and coalition personnel. It also stipulates that U.S. forces can continue to train and equip the Iraqis so they can better defend themselves, and it directs that we may continue targeted counterterrorism operations in Iraq.

This is a balanced plan. It recognizes that we still have responsibilities in Iraq and will continue to do so even a year from now, but it will force the Iraqis to fight their own civil war if they insist on doing so.

We all know there are very few military objectives to be achieved in Iraq. We defeated the Iraqi Army 4 years ago. We should keep that in mind. I still recall the huge banner on the carrier that said: “Mission Accomplished.” Yes, the military mission was accomplished. We won that part of the war, the part the military can win. We failed in not preparing for the aftermath of direct conflict, and now we are enmeshed in an untenable position.

Our military has performed remarkably. They have achieved their military objectives. But the plan to rely on the military to achieve political objectives has not worked, and what we desperately need is a political solution. And in the end, how many truly believe we will emerge victorious with a Jeffersonian democracy on the banks of the Tigris River? What is victory? I have asked this question many times. What will constitute victory? And no one has answered that question. Or we can embrace a new plan that begins to reshape our forces in Iraq to provide those missions that our military is best suited for with a goal, not a mandate, but a goal of redeploying the remaining forces.

If Iraq is to succeed, it must assume responsibility for its own destiny. It must decide if it wants to stop the civil war. We cannot do that for them. This is a very modest proposal, but one that is caught up in the emotion of the debate. This conference report offers a

plan, one that has much greater chance of success than staying the course.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time of the Senator has expired.

Mr. INOUE. May I have 30 seconds?

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

Mr. INOUE. It does not mandate a timetable for ending our involvement in Iraq but provides a new way ahead which will ensure better protection for our forces and a greater chance for the Iraqis to succeed.

This is a good, balanced package. It includes the best from each of our bills. It funds the critical needs of our military and provides a way ahead for our forces in Iraq.

I urge all my colleagues to support this conference agreement.

I thank the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, 3 months ago, President Bush set a new course in Iraq. He proposed a plan to secure Baghdad and its resident population, and he asked GEN David Petraeus, one of our best military minds of this generation, to carry out the mission. A Democratic-controlled Congress approved the general without dissent and wished him well.

Then something strange happened. Soon after sending General Petraeus into the field of battle, the Democratic leadership began its own change in course. It decided this new mission was over before it even had time to work.

We were told in January by some of our Democratic colleagues to listen to the generals. Yet this week, with our top general in Iraq here to report on progress, most of those on the other side of the aisle covered their ears. The Speaker of the House skipped General Petraeus's briefing altogether, didn't even go listen to him.

This posture may be calculated to impress opponents of the war at home, but it frustrates our troops abroad, and today the Democratic leadership does further damage by passing a war spending bill that has no chance—no chance—of being signed into law, a bill that calls for withdrawing U.S. troops without regard to conditions on the ground, a bill that says we leave in October if the Iraqis have made progress and that we leave in July if they haven't.

Let me say that again. This bill says that we leave in October if the Iraqis have made progress and leave in July if they haven't. Either way, we are gone.

It should not be this way. We should uphold our end of the bargain and pass a bill that funds our troops and gives us a reasonable period of time to judge this new strategy.

The Iraq Study Group has outlined the stakes. They said premature withdrawal would “almost certainly produce greater sectarian violence and further deterioration of conditions. The near-term results would be a significant power vacuum, greater human suffering, regional destabilization, and

a threat to the global economy. Al-Qaeda would depict our withdrawal as a historic victory. If we leave and Iraq descends into chaos, the long-term consequences could eventually require the United States to return."

That is the Iraq Study Group which has been so frequently cited by our good friends on the other side of the aisle.

Bin Laden knows the stakes, too. In a letter last year, bin Laden had this to say: America's defeat in Iraq would mean defeat in all its wars.

Yesterday, the commander of a senior Afghan Islamist group said bin Laden is personally involved in attacks on Americans in Iraq. General Petraeus went even further. He said al-Qaida has declared war on all of Iraq.

I call on my friends on the other side to have an open mind and listen to the general. We must give this plan for winning the military component of our strategy in Iraq a real chance to succeed. Without it, there is no political solution. Just 4 months old and operating at half its ultimate strength, the Baghdad security plan is already having an effect. Military leaders say the increased violence around Baghdad is a sign that the terrorists are shaken. The latest attacks were meant to be dramatic and to be visible. They were meant to force our withdrawal and ultimately our humiliation.

George Orwell said:

The quickest way to end a war is to lose it.

This is a road we must not take. This legislation is tragic. If the Iraqis make progress, we leave; if they don't, we leave. This is not a choice, it is a mandate for a defeat that al-Qaida desperately wants.

It is not too late to change course. I ask my colleagues to be as patient as our soldiers and marines—and, indeed, the terrorists—and draft a bill that does not arbitrarily circle a date on the calendar and trigger withdrawal without regard to conditions on the ground. Then we can tell our troops that help is on the way, that they can finish this mission, and that they will return with honor. If not, if we give up, we will truly have reason to fear because if we cannot win this most important battle, how will we ever win the war?

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, all time has expired on the other side; is that correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is correct.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, this is meritorious legislation, important legislation. First, I thank Senator BYRD, the chairman of our Appropriations Committee, and his staff for working so hard to get us where we are. I thank Congressman OBEY, chairman of the comparable committee in the House of Representatives.

I know that my friend, the distinguished senior Senator from Mississippi, does not agree with the Iraq

language, but I express my appreciation to his staff. This bill has in it more than the Iraq language, and his staff has worked with us all the way to get that done. I extend my appreciation for his usual gentlemanly way of doing everything he does here.

Also, because she worked so hard on a lot of things that she was assigned to do by Senator BYRD, Senator PATTY MURRAY has done an outstanding job on this bill. She is in the Chamber, and I express my appreciation to her for her usual fine work but especially her fine work on this matter.

The individuals I have just mentioned have delivered to us a tremendous conference report, one we can all be proud to send to the President and we should send to the President. This conference report honors and provides for our courageous men and women in uniform. This conference report doesn't forget the emergencies Americans face at home while the war rages abroad. This conference report makes us more secure by charting a new, more sustainable course in Iraq so we can find a responsible end to the war and return our focus to the global challenges that lie ahead.

President Bush requested \$91.5 billion for continued military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. We provided every penny of that request, but, Mr. President, more. Our bill matches the President dollar for dollar on the equipment and training he requested for the 140,000 troops in Iraq and the 20,000 deployed in Afghanistan, including hundreds of troops deployed from the State of Nevada.

This conference report doesn't stop there because we recognize the President's request shortchanges our troops and our security in a number of critical areas. For example, with the roadside bombs that have accounted for over half of the fatalities suffered by our troops in Iraq, Democrats have added \$1.2 billion for mine-resistant vehicles. This is important.

My friend—and he is my friend—the distinguished Republican leader, said we should live up to our end of the bargain. Our end of the bargain? We have done pretty well, spending over one-half trillion dollars in the faraway land of Iraq, having lost more than 3,300, through death, of our finest, 27,000 wounded, a third of them missing limbs, 2,000 double amputees, brain injuries as we have never seen before, and paralysis. We have lived up to our end of the bargain.

At a time when the health care needs of thousands of our soldiers and veterans are being ignored, Democrats have added—with the help of two courageous Republicans, who I am confident will vote with us on this matter—we have added \$2.5 billion to ensure all of our troops receive the quality care they have earned—our troops—veterans. These funds will improve the unconscionable conditions at Walter Reed and other medical facilities around the country and greatly en-

hance the care provided to those who suffer from brain trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder.

Every Thursday, Senator ENSIGN and I, when we are in session, in the Johnson Room, have a "Welcome to Washington" for Nevadans. The Baileys were here today. They had a 27-year-old son who went to Iraq and came home with severe emotional problems. He was fine before he went. He went to a VA facility in Southern California, hundreds of miles away from his parents, where he was not taken care of. He died of a drug overdose. Not illegal drugs but drugs they gave him. What we have put in this bill to help veterans, those people returning from Iraq who have been injured, is important. It is in this bill and it should stay here.

At a time when our citizen soldiers have been pushed to their limit, and most Guard and Reserve units lack the equipment they need to conduct their mission, our bill would provide an additional \$1 billion for the supplies and equipment they need. Despite the fact a majority of the American people disapprove of this administration's Iraq policy, this bill clearly takes care of the men and women who are serving us courageously in Iraq, as clearly as anyone who opposes this legislation would set back or hurt badly our efforts to support our fighting forces.

We provide for our troops, we do that, but we also believe we have an obligation to address emergencies facing Americans here at home. That is what emergency supplemental bills were at one time—emergencies that developed during the year.

President Bush has made numerous trips to the gulf region to take a look at the devastation created by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, which devastated that region of the country, but he hasn't done anything about it, to speak of. We believe we have a responsibility to help the victims of this historic tragedy. We agree with the sentiment of the people of this country, who are determined to help their fellow citizens, and that is what this bill does. We provide \$7 billion for the victims of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, whose help is long overdue.

Thousands of family farmers and ranchers from virtually every State in this country are suffering the effects of extreme drought or damaging weather conditions. These are emergencies. We rely upon these American farmers and ranchers for the Nation's food supply, and we believe we have an obligation to help them when disaster strikes. That is why we provide \$3.5 billion to help address some of the losses suffered by farmers and ranchers caused by drought, flood, fire, hurricanes, and pestilence.

More than 5 years after the terrible terrorist attacks of 9/11, we know gaps remain in this Nation's homeland security efforts. This is an emergency. We have tried here on the Senate floor to offer amendments to cover this. We have been defeated on a straight party-

line basis. This bill has that relief. That is why we provide \$2 billion for port security, mass transit security, airport security, and other initiatives to address the shortcomings identified by the bipartisan 9/11 Commission, whose recommendations came down almost 3 years ago.

Tens of thousands of children across this country will lose their health care in the next several months if we don't do something in this conference report. This, too, is an emergency. That is why we provide \$650 million to keep the State Children's Health Insurance Program running. This is health care for kids.

All of these nonmilitary investments are crucial priorities, but fully funding our troops and changing the course of the war in Iraq is this bill's primary goal. No one wants this Nation to succeed in the Middle East more than I do. But I know that after more than 4 years of mismanagement and incompetence of the war in Iraq by this administration, there is no magic formula or silver bullet that will lead us to the victory we all desire. Yet I also believe there is a way forward that gives us our best chance to end the war responsibly while protecting our strategic interests, strengthening our security, and better positioning us to provide the long-term assistance Iraq will need for years to come. This way forward is consistent with what our military leaders are telling us, including General Petraeus, who repeated again yesterday, publicly—not privately but publicly—that this war cannot be won militarily. That is what General Petraeus says.

I want to talk about what is in this bill as relates to Iraq.

First, we transition the U.S. mission from policing a civil war to training and equipping Iraqi security forces, protecting U.S. forces and conducting targeted counterterrorism operations.

Second, we begin the phased redeployment of our troops no later than October 1, 2007, with the goal of removing all combat forces by April 1, 2008, except for those carrying out the limited missions I have mentioned.

Third, we impose tangible, measurable, and achievable benchmarks on the Iraqi Government so they will be held accountable for making progress in security, political reconciliation, and improving the lives of ordinary Iraqis, who have suffered so very much.

Fourth, we launch the kind of diplomatic, economic, and political offensive the President's strategy lacks, starting with a regional conference working toward a long-term framework for stability in the region, as recommended by the Iraq Study Group, with Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Egypt, Syria, and, yes, Iran must be involved.

Fifth, and finally, we build up our overburdened military to ensure that only battle-ready troops are sent into battle, and giving them the manpower and support they need to face the daunting challenges that lie ahead. My

friend Congressman MURTHA, whom I had the good fortune to serve with when I was in the House of Representatives, pointed out clearly in the debate on the House floor last night that we are currently paying 126,000 individuals, independent contractors, to supplement the work of our soldiers. These contractors are not held to the same standards or accountability of our troops, yet often earn tens of thousands of dollars more. This is unacceptable. Do the American taxpayers know this, that 126,000 people are being paid over there for various things? Doing what? Why? This is costing billions, and for what? And why? This supplemental funding bill was forged by listening to Members of Congress from both parties, to military experts, and, most importantly, to the American people. I have had a number of people from the other side who have come to me and said, we know you are doing the right thing but we can't help you now. There are two people on the other side, however, who are coming and saying they are going to vote on this matter. I don't know what I can say, other than to say it is for the American people, and they have a lot of courage.

This compromise was forged through thoughtful negotiation. It was forged with the firm resolve that we must do what is right for our troops, our Nation's security, and Iraq's future. Once we pass this bill, we will send it to the President's desk. We know he has threatened to veto this legislation. But in the same spirit of compromise and bipartisanship with which this bill was written, we hope the President will reconsider his stubbornness and his refusal to listen to the American people. This is a good conference report. It provides for the safety of our troops, it helps Americans recover from emergencies that have plagued us here at home, and it sets us on a new course, away from a civil war with no end in sight, and toward a responsible, phased redeployment, and it holds the Iraqis accountable. This is a responsible plan for redeployment, not a precipitous withdrawal.

Our troops in harm's way will always have the resources to do the mission their leaders ask of them. It directs our attention to eliminating al-Qaida, addresses refugee and humanitarian crises, and launches the diplomatic and political surges necessary to prevent regional instability. It also allows us to provide the longer term investments and the political solutions needed in Iraq. It prevents the jihadists from being able to claim victory over America, and it begins to restore America's prestige, power, and influence in the region and throughout the world.

Some will say there is no alternative to the President's course. They say the only course is to stay the course or fail; that there is no plan B. But our President is wrong. I say that with all due respect. The choice is in our hands. Today, we have the chance to support our troops, represent the will of the

American people, and lead America to a path of responsibility. If the President refuses to change direction, America risks being bogged down in Iraq for years, not months.

This President, who took us to war under false pretenses, now needs the courage to admit his policies have failed and work with us to bring the war to a responsible end. This conference report gives him that path forward, and I hope he follows it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time has expired.

The question is on agreeing to the conference report.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHN-SON) is necessarily absent.

Mr. LOTT. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM) and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. MCCASKILL). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 51, nays 46, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 147 Leg.]

YEAS—51

Akaka	Feingold	Murray
Baucus	Feinstein	Nelson (FL)
Bayh	Hagel	Nelson (NE)
Biden	Harkin	Obama
Bingaman	Inouye	Pryor
Boxer	Kennedy	Reed
Brown	Kerry	Reid
Byrd	Klobuchar	Rockefeller
Cantwell	Kohl	Salazar
Cardin	Landrieu	Sanders
Carper	Lautenberg	Schumer
Casey	Leahy	Smith
Clinton	Levin	Stabenow
Conrad	Lincoln	Tester
Dodd	McCaskill	Webb
Dorgan	Menendez	Whitehouse
Durbin	Mikulski	Wyden

NAYS—46

Alexander	DeMint	McConnell
Allard	Dole	Murkowski
Bennett	Domenici	Roberts
Bond	Ensign	Sessions
Brownback	Enzi	Shelby
Bunning	Grassley	Snowe
Burr	Gregg	Specter
Chambliss	Hatch	Stevens
Coburn	Hutchison	Sununu
Cochran	Inhofe	Thomas
Coleman	Isakson	Thune
Collins	Kyl	Vitter
Corker	Lieberman	Voinovich
Cornyn	Lott	Warner
Craig	Lugar	
Crapo	Martinez	

NOT VOTING—3

Graham	Johnson	McCain
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The conference report was agreed to.

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. DURBIN. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Madam President, for Members of the Senate, as we have announced, there will be no more rollcall votes this week.

We hope that we can move, on Monday, without any problems, to the FDA reauthorization. This is an extremely important piece of legislation which Senator KENNEDY and Senator ENZI have worked on for months. Now, we hope we can move to that. We know people want to offer amendments. Certainly, that will be part of what we are doing here because the bill is imperfect. But it is a bill on which we must move forward. With all of the food safety and health safety issues that have come up during the past several years, we must do this. So we are going to move to that bill on Monday. That will be the next order of business for the Senate.

Mrs. CLINTON. Madam President, with this vote, Congress has provided funding for our troops while also putting forward sensible provisions to begin the withdrawal of troops from Iraq. I call upon the President to work with Congress in order to ensure the troops receive these funds and that we change course in Iraq.

I am also pleased to announce with Senator SCHUMER that after a long struggle, and thanks to the leadership of Senator BYRD and Senator HARKIN, we have secured \$50 million for the monitoring, diagnosis, and treatment for the thousands of men and women whose health has been terribly affected by the dust, debris, and poisons that filled the air after the attacks of 9/11.

I am grateful for the support of Senator BYRD, Senator HARKIN and Senator SPECTER who have been steadfast in recognizing our duty to help those who helped New York in our hour of need—and help everyone whose health and lives have been affected by 9/11.

This is a great victory for the victims and heroes, for New York, and for our values which were targeted on 9/11.

The Centers of Excellence providing care through the Mt. Sinai consortium and the Fire Department of New York with Federal funds are doing heroic work—but more and more people are walking through the doors because of respiratory problems and other debilitating conditions. These treatment centers—centers that provide essential care to those who responded in our time of need—are on the brink of running out of Federal resources in the fall. Thanks to the funding in this bill, we will be able to send a lifeline of funding before these treatment centers fall over the financial cliff.

Based upon the estimates of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, it would take nearly \$283 million to treat to 34,000 first responders and workers for just one year. And that number doesn't take into account the treatment needs of forgotten populations, such as residents, office workers, students, and others who were also exposed to these toxic substances.

The funding contained in this legislation is a great step forward and will serve as a bridge fund until we are able to come up with a long term solution. This \$50 million will be used to help provide both inpatient and outpatient treatment services for responders and workers affected by debilitating respiratory and mental health problems.

These are more than names on a list or lines in a budget. These are lives that have been turned upside down, often silently, often without public notice.

When the towers collapsed, thousands of tons of coarse and fine particulate matter were released into the air, and inhaled into the lungs of hundreds of thousands of individuals—substances that included cement dust, glass fibers, asbestos, lead, hydrochloric acid, and other toxic pollutants. The combustion of jet fuel after the attacks created a dense plume of black smoke, filled with other toxic substances like benzene and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons. Fires at Ground Zero continued to burn underground for several months after the attacks.

Of course, none of our incredibly brave firefighters, police officers, emergency responders, workers, volunteers and others stopped to think about the health implications of what they were walking into—they risked their lives to help save others.

The day after 9/11, I visited Ground Zero; it was evident that the air was not fit to breathe and these conditions continued for months afterwards.

Over the next 9 months, it is estimated that hundreds of thousands of individuals were exposed to the dust and debris not only at Ground Zero, but also a site at Fresh Kills, the landfill in Staten Island, where workers sifted through the debris in an attempt to recover evidence from the attacks.

People began coming down with what we would later call World Trade Center cough. We heard reports of previously healthy detectives who could bench press 250 pounds unable to lift a child. Firefighters who could run miles no longer able to climb stairs. Construction workers in perfect physical shape before the attacks with incredible difficulty breathing after the attacks. Increased risk of cancer. Newly developed asthma, bronchitis, persistent sinusitis, laryngitis, or other respiratory problems. For these individuals, their illnesses are a constant reminder of that terrible day.

On March 21, the HELP Committee held a hearing—which I led along side Chairman KENNEDY—on the long term impacts of 9/11.

What we heard that day was nothing short of devastating and all of us in the room during the hearing came away with a new sense of urgency in making sure that the workers, residents, students, volunteers and others who are experiencing adverse health effects due to exposure of 9/11 toxins get the care they desperately need.

Of particular concern: many of those who are ill are falling through the

cracks of traditional health coverage. According to testimony presented at this hearing, more than 40 percent of the responders enrolled in the Mt. Sinai treatment program are uninsured, and an additional 23 percent are underinsured. New York City reports that approximately 60 percent of those enrolled at Bellevue Hospital's treatment program are also uninsured.

Today, Congress has sent a powerful message to the police officers, firefighters, first responders, workers, and volunteers of 9/11: You are not forgotten. We will respond to an attack on our values and way of life by honoring our values and helping the victims.

But we must go further.

We need a longer-term Federal solution to provide monitoring, diagnosis, and treatment. The city and local organizations have done a tremendous service, but this was as an attack on our whole Nation and our whole Nation should support the efforts taking place in New York. These funds will only support the work for the short term. And a third treatment center at Bellevue Hospital—the only center that evaluates and treats many of the forgotten victims: residents, office workers, students, and others—has not received any Federal help at all.

I have introduced the 9/11 Heroes Health Improvement Act to provide \$1.9 billion in grants for ongoing medical and mental health treatment and monitoring, and I will continue to work with my colleagues on the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee to ensure that we have a long-term solution for 9/11 affected individuals.

We should always keep in our hearts the people who deserve our help.

Retired New York Police Detective Michael Valentin is one of those who is living with the health effects of 9/11. He rushed to Ground Zero from his home on Long Island on 9/11 and for the first few days searched for remains in the area, later working on the pile and providing perimeter security.

Before 9/11, he was running miles a day and going to college at night to become a supervisor.

Since 9/11, he has experienced respiratory problems and breathing difficulties, asthma attacks, operations to treat tumors he has developed, and other conditions. He could no longer find the strength to attend college at night or run enough to pass even the police department's physical test. He retired officially on January 31 of this year.

Detective Valentin wanted to attend the hearing in Washington. He wanted to speak out and be heard because too many of the victims and heroes feel forgotten and left behind. Unfortunately, Detective Valentin was too sick to make the trip, and he is not alone.

The tragedy of 9/11 is not over. The loss of life, the pain, and the suffering are not over. The tragic legacy continues for the families who lost loved ones and for residents, workers, volunteers, first responders and others who

have faced hardship and health consequences in the aftermath of the attacks.

Today, we have achieved a great victory—but it must only be a first step to make sure those that gave so much on that terrible day are not forgotten and receive the help they deserve.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California is recognized.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each, and that the following Senators be recognized in the following order: Senator SHELBY, 3 minutes; Senators FEINSTEIN and FEINGOLD, 10 minutes total; Senator BUNNING, 15 minutes; and Senator SCHUMER, 15 minutes.

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

The Senator from Washington is recognized.

THANKING STAFF

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, before the Senator proceeds, I wish to take a minute and thank all of our staffs who worked tremendously hard to get this bill to the floor, the staff on the Appropriations Committee, Senator BYRD's personal staff—many Members worked very hard, along with their staff members but particularly those people who sit in the back row back there and are not recognized who stay up very late to get this to all of us. To all of our floor staff, I say thank you for your tremendous work in getting us to this point.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama is recognized.

SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. SHELBY. Madam President, in passing this emergency supplemental appropriations bill this afternoon, the Democratic-controlled Senate has sent a message—one that the war is lost, that we have given up, and that we have no hope of victory.

Today, we have also put an arbitrary deadline on our military. I believe it is unequivocally wrong to do this, the wrong message at exactly the wrong time. I believe we must give our troops the opportunity to win. We cannot tie the hands of our commanders on the ground. We cannot have 535 generals micromanaging the war from the Halls of Congress.

This war is a test of wills. Our defeatist message states that today our will has been broken. This is not the message we want our enemy to hear. Our actions in the Senate have consequences. I believe we have just sent a message—the wrong message—that our efforts were not enough. We have sent

a message that the enemy has won. I believe we have sent a message of surrender, a message of submission, a message of failure. And this message was not just sent to those fighting against us in Iraq, it reverberates around the globe. Today, I believe the Senate has illustrated raw partisan politics at its worst.

I believe the American people deserve better. Our troops deserve better. Our Armed Forces need the support of the people—us—who sent them into a war zone, not partisan politics. They need the time to succeed, not a timetable for retreat.

George Orwell once said: The quickest way to end a war is to lose it. Yes, the quickest way to end the war is to lose it. With today's vote, we are well on our way. Yet fortunately, for our troops, the President will veto this bill, and Congress will have enough votes to sustain it.

In the coming weeks, when Congress crafts a new supplemental appropriations bill, I believe we must not use the same narrow-minded approach. We must not send another message of defeat, of surrender.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California is recognized.

CAMPAIGN DISCLOSURE PARITY ACT

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Madam President, on April 17, just over a week ago, I rose, along with the Senator from Wisconsin, Senator FEINGOLD, to ask unanimous consent that the Senate take up and adopt S. 223, which was reported unanimously by the Rules Committee on March 28. Senator ALEXANDER objected on behalf of a Republican Senator. As a result, the bill remains in limbo. To this date, that Republican Senator has declined to come forward to say why the bill should not become law.

This is such a simple, direct bill with respect to transparency. It is an idea whose time has long come. It is very hard for us to understand who could oppose this good government bill and what their reason for opposing it could be.

After last week's roadblock halted passage, the minority leader's spokesman told the Washington Post:

Senators are now reviewing the bill in anticipation of legislative action.

We would hope that review is complete. We could now get down to business and today, by unanimous consent, just as we did in the Rules Committee, pass this bill, send it to the House, and have it become law. At our hearing on March 14 and our markup on March 28, it was clear there was no public opposition whatsoever to this bill. It is really time for the Senate to act.

The bill is titled the "Senate Campaign Disclosure Parity Act." It is sponsored by Senators FEINGOLD and COCHRAN and 33 additional Senators. It would simply require that the Senate

campaign finance reports be filed electronically rather than in paper format, just as everyone else is doing now.

Currently, House candidates, Presidential candidates, political action committees, and party committees are all required to file electronically. And they do. But Senators, Senate candidates, authorized campaign committees, and the Democratic and Republican senatorial campaign committees are exempt. As a result, we have a cumbersome system in which paper copies of disclosure reports are filed with the Senate Office of Public Records, which scans them to make an electronic copy and sends the copy to the FEC on a dedicated communications line. The FEC then prints the report and sends it to the vendor in Fredericksburg, VA, where the information is keyed in by hand and then transferred back to the FEC database at a cost of approximately \$250,000 to the taxpayers. This is \$250,000 which is needlessly spent to continue an archaic system. It is long past time to bring the Senate into the modern era.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to let this bill go today.

I yield the floor to the author of the bill, the distinguished Senator from Wisconsin.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin is recognized.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Madam President, I certainly thank the Senator from California, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, once again for being so committed to getting this bill passed. It has been, as she said, over a week since we came to the floor to try to get the Senate to pass the Senate Campaign Parity Act.

Last Tuesday, the senior Senator from Tennessee objected "on behalf of a Republican Senator." Now we have waited to hear from that Senator, whoever he or she is, about his or her concerns about the bill. So far, not a word. It would not take very long to review this bill. It is very simple.

In fact, it seems as if the source of the objection is hoping never to be identified because a citizen effort to find out who the objector is, supported by a number of blogs from both the right and the left, has so far come up empty.

There has been a lot of discussion in the press and the blogs about whether the objection we heard last week constitutes one of those so-called secret holds, which have rightly come under attack in recent years. Well, someone anonymously blocked the bill from being passed last Tuesday, that person has made no effort to resolve his or her concerns with us, and the Republican leadership will not tell us who that person is. Now, that is a "secret hold," in my book. It is time for some sunshine here. If someone has a problem with this bill, he or she should step forward and discuss it with us. I am hopeful that after a week to take a look at the bill, the objector will have realized how completely noncontroversial it is and will let it go through this week.