

Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that neither the administration nor the Republican leadership in Congress is willing to face the facts. The reckless rush to war in Iraq without being prepared to win the peace has put our troops seriously at risk. We have a situation that continues to deteriorate on the ground in Iraq. We are forcing young men and women to stay in the military and are exerting inordinate pressure to extend their enlistments. Finally, we are reducing the qualifications of new recruits into the military. This is all a desperate attempt to maintain our inadequate troop strength levels.

Rather than acknowledge the problems and deal with responsible proposals that have been offered by a number of our colleagues, the Republican leadership has instead advanced to the floor legislation to reinstate the draft which they do not even support.

It is time to stop playing games with the welfare of the young men and women that are serving us in Iraq and around the world. They deserve better. They deserve proper equipment and an increase in our overall troop level. They need leadership in the White House and in Congress to help stabilize and reverse the perilous situation into which they have been thrust, against the best advice of uniformed leadership.

I urge my colleagues to reject this legislation and to provide a responsible alternative to increasing the troop level and increasing the range and nature of support from other countries. Sadly, it appears that this White House, the current Secretary of Defense and the Republican leadership in Congress are not equal to the task at hand. Hopefully, after November we will be given a new opportunity to address these critical issues.