ironic that the Vice President made these remarks at an event sponsored by a group called the Frontiers of Freedom. Asking hard questions and demanding answers from your government is one of the very foundations of freedom, but DICK CHENEY seems to consider it borderline treason.

Well, shame on him and shame on him for implying that criticism of this war amounts to criticism of the brave men and women in uniform who are on the front lines. The fact is there was exaggeration, manipulation, and down right deception in the run-up to the war. There is report after report of the Bush administration ignoring or downplaying serious misgivings in the intelligence community about the weapons of mass destruction case.

It has been well confirmed that the Vice President himself visited CIA headquarters to lean on analysts and to make sure that they were reaching ''right'' conclusions.

Then there are the Downing Street memos, which claim the intelligence was being fixed around the policy. The Vice President claims that it is a few opportunists who are raising questions about trumped-up intelligence.

Well, guess what, Mr. Vice President, for more than half of the American people, there is a belief that the administration deliberately misled us into war. As the New Republic points out, that is not a few opportunists, more like a few million American citizens. Actually, more than 150 million who do not believe the President and his team told the truth.

What you are seeing is a desperate White House losing its ability to shape public opinion and consequently twisting the truth beyond recognition. This push-back is a clear sign that the wheels are coming off. By roughly a 2 to 1 margin, Americans have lost confidence in the Bush Iraq policy. A majority thinks we need to reduce our troop levels. Before Thanksgiving, 79 Senators voted for an amendment that indicates an interest in moving forward towards full Iraqi sovereignty in the year 2006, and demands more accountability from the administration on the conduct of the war.

And recently, my good friend and esteemed colleague from Pennsylvania, Mr. JACK MURTHA, a Marine Corps veteran with strong defense credentials, came out for bringing our troops out of Iraq.

□ 1815

But instead of engaging in an honest dialogue with him, the first reaction from the other side of the aisle was to resort to fearmongering and character assassination. Representative MURTHA was subjected to the most vile and devious accusations. He was compared to a prominent al Qaeda terrorist. He was said to be emboldening our enemies. It was implied that he was a coward. And then the majority resorted to a gimmick, a cheap stunt distorting Mr. MURTHA's words in an attempt to gain political advantage. I wish that those on the other side of the aisle were half as honorable as they are clever. The American people deserve better. Our troops deserve better than this. They deserve a thorough, substantive, honest debate on the war, not a bill that could not be amended, not a bill brought to the House floor for no other reason than partisan gamesmanship.

Mr. Speaker, a group of Democrats has written a discharge petition to bring the Iraq debate to the House floor, to bring it through legislation around a piece of legislation called Homeward Bound, H.J. Res. 55, to bring it to the House floor so that we can have the debate we need. This discharge petition will allow 17 hours of debate on the Nation's Iraq policy. And unlike the sham bill presented by the majority in response to Representative MURTHA's call to the end of war, it would be brought up under an open rule, a rule that allows amendments to be introduced. I urge my colleagues to sign the discharge petition, allow for a real debate.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, December 7, 2005.

The Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
The Speaker, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: I have the honor to transmit herewith a facsimile copy of a letter received from Ms. Caren Daniels-Meade, Chief, Elections Division, State of California, indicating that, according to the unofficial returns of the Special Election held December 6, 2005, the Honorable John Campbell was elected Representative in Congress for the Forty-eighth Congressional District, State of California.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

KAREN L. HASS,
Clerk.

BRUCE MCPHERSON, SECRETARY OF STATE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA,
Sacramento, CA, December 6, 2005.

The Hon. KAREN L. HAAS,
Clerk, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MS. HAAS: This is to advise you that the unofficial results of the Special Election held on Tuesday, December 6, 2005, for Representative in Congress from the Forty-eighth Congressional District of California, show that John Campbell received 41,450 or 44.7percent of the total number of votes cast for that office.

It would appear from these unofficial results that John Campbell was clearly elected as Representative in Congress from the Forty-eighth Congressional District of California.

To the best of our knowledge and belief at this time, there is no contest to this election.

As soon as the official results are certified to this office representing votes cast in all 268 precincts established for this election, an official Certificate of Election will be prepared for transmittal as required by law.

Sincerely,

CAREN DANIELS-MEADE,
Chief, Elections Division.

SWEARING IN OF THE HONORABLE JOHN CAMPBELL, OF CALIFORNIA, AS A MEMBER OF THE HOUSE

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the gentleman from California, Mr. JOHN CAMPBELL, be permitted to take the oath of office today. His certificate of election has not arrived, but there is no contest, and no question has been raised with regard to his election.

The SPEAKER. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER. Will the Representative-elect please take the well.

Mr. CAMPBELL of California appeared at the bar of the House and took the oath of office, as follows:

Do you solemnly swear that you will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that you will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that you take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that you will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which you are about to enter. So help you God.

The SPEAKER. Congratulations, you are now a Member of the 109th Congress.

WELCOMING THE HONORABLE JOHN CAMPBELL TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, when our former colleague, Mr. Cox, was nominated by the President to become the chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission, it obviously created an opening in one of the most beautiful congressional districts in the entire country in Southern California; and we are very pleased that our new colleague who has just been sworn in, JOHN CAMPBELL, was elected.

JOHN CAMPBELL has an extraordinary history in California. As I look around the Chamber, Mr. Speaker, at our colleagues, very few of them actually have roots in California. The fact of the matter is JOHN CAMPBELL has roots that extend deeper than, frankly, anyone that I know. Our State is a little more than 150 years old; and yet in 1860, the year that Abraham Lincoln was elected President of the United States, JOHN CAMPBELL's great grandfather was elected to the California State legislature. So 145 years later, we have JOHN CAMPBELL now coming to serve in the United States House of Representatives, to me the greatest deliberative body known to man.