



## **AN ACTION PLAN FOR HOUSE REPUBLICANS: BOLD, SIMPLE, AND DIFFERENT THAN THE DEMOCRATS**

**May 20, 2008**

Americans are angry. They are mad each time they fill their gas tanks. They get madder when they visit a doctor and can't afford to pay the bill. They get angrier on pay-day when they see more taken out of their paycheck to fund a federal government that is entirely dysfunctional. And their anger boils over as they watch politicians in Washington point fingers at each other, launch politically motivated investigations, waste money on wasteful pork barrel spending, and reward special interests over the national interest—while consistently failing to provide solutions to the real problems that they face each day.

Over a decade ago, the American people empowered Republicans because of a shared commitment to reform government, to provide real solutions to their problems, to balance federal budgets, and to promote individual freedom and American values. Republicans, after many successes, drifted off course and as a result their actions abandoned the American people. The Bridge to Nowhere has led us here.

The time has come to be bold. The time has come to move beyond empty political rhetoric and to revitalize our contract with the American people. We will provide hardworking Americans with innovative solutions to the problems that they face everyday.

### **I. FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY**

The budget—the blueprint for Washington's dysfunction—has grown out of control. Your government now spends over \$24,000 per household, up over \$7,000 in the last five years alone. This represents its largest expansion in 50 years. You would think for over \$24,000 per family, we would get more than a bridge in Alaska and a Hippie Museum in Woodstock, wouldn't you?

The record government expansion is coupled with the unsustainable growth of Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security. According to recent analyses, the next generation will face a choice between two evils—a crushing tax burden that is double what we pay today, or a federal government that consists entirely of Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security. The time has come for each member of Congress to show political courage. The hard-working Americans that pay its bills deserve no less.

- **THE END OF PORK-BARREL SPENDING**

House Republicans are committed to ending pork-barrel spending. We will not wait on the Democrat Majority to end Bridges to Nowhere and Monuments to Me—we declare an immediate earmark moratorium and pledge to reform the system. We also pledge to uphold any future veto of a spending bill that is pork laden and does not lead to a balanced budget.

Too often middle-class Americans watch Washington place special interests over the national interest and promote secrecy over transparency. We are the party of reform, we understand that Washington is dysfunctional, and we will not sit idly by as Democrats continue to defend the status quo. Too often, hard working Americans see campaign donations going in one end of Capitol Hill and special interest earmarks coming out of the other. Too often, they have seen Washington taking more out of their hard earned paycheck so some Congressman can keep his. It has to stop, and we will be the ones to stop it.

- **LIMITING WASHINGTON TAXES AND SPENDING TO WHAT MIDDLE CLASS AMERICANS CAN AFFORD**

House Republicans are committed to eliminating the Alternative Minimum Tax and preventing the scheduled tax increases in 2010 from taking more from the paychecks of hard-working, middle class families. We are also committed to amending the U.S. Constitution to limit the growth of federal spending to a level at which middle class Americans can afford. At present, the projected growth of federal spending is unsustainable and threatens the standard of living for the next generation of American families. The spending limit amendment would prohibit federal spending from growing faster than the economy (nominal GDP).

- **A FAIR, SIMPLE TAX CODE THAT AMERICANS CAN UNDERSTAND AND HAVE A RIGHT TO EXPECT**

House Republicans are committed to ending a tax code that is too long, too complex and too unfair. Specifically, our legislation would provide comprehensive, individual income tax reform by providing individuals an alternative, two-tier flat tax system that can be filed on one page. Taxpayers can choose the new, simplified system or stay with the current tax code—whichever option best suits them. The tax code today has gotten worse and remains a nightmare for middle class Americans. We must address the tax issue *not* as Republicans or Democrats, but as Americans. We are an overtaxed nation and hard-working Americans deserve a break. They should have a tax code that is fair, simple and consistent.

## **II. ENERGY SECURITY**

There is something very wrong when the greatest country on earth is unable to provide its people with American energy. Middle class American families are getting hammered at the pump by record gasoline prices. These families, on average, will pay nearly \$1,500 more this year for gasoline than last year. Why? For too long, America's energy policy has failed to consider the basic economic principles of supply and demand. Washington continues to make the problem worse. The time has come for a comprehensive, long term vision to make energy more available by becoming more efficient.

- **INCREASED EXPLORATION IN ALASKA AND THE OUTERCONTINENTAL SHELF**

House Republicans are committed to increasing American energy supplies to lower prices and reduce dependence on Middle Eastern Oil by incentivizing conservation and allowing energy exploration in Alaska and the Outer Continental Shelf, as well as the development of cleaner coal technologies and alternative fuels.

In light of rising worldwide crude oil prices, the resulting spike in gas prices at home, and our continued reliance on energy supplies from unfriendly or unstable regions of the world, House Republicans will promote a 21<sup>st</sup> century energy policy designed to make American energy more available, less expensive, and thus more affordable for middle class Americans. These commitments free up an enormous amount of American energy and measurably decrease our need to import energy resources from countries like Venezuela, Nigeria, and Saudi Arabia.

House Republicans understand that American energy companies exist to produce energy. Attacking, suing, and investigating the businesses that provide energy will not the way to reduce gas prices, eliminate shortages, and end America's dependence on Middle Eastern Oil. Washington needs to stop wasting its time regulating, litigating, and taxing, and needs to focus on providing common-sense ideas to increase American supply. We need more American refineries, we need more American exploration, and we need more American energy sources. Period.

## **III. NATIONAL SECURITY**

The number one responsibility of the federal government is to protect Americans from all threats—foreign and domestic, and House Republicans are committed to preventing another 9/11 from occurring on American soil.

- **A LEGAL FRAMEWORK THAT ALLOWS AMERICA TO PREVENT TERRORIST ATTACKS**

House Republicans are committed to preventing terrorists from attacking America. House Republicans will empower our intelligence agencies to intercept terrorist communications with sources outside of the United States without the lengthy process of getting a warrant that could jeopardize the ability to thwart an attack.

#### **IV. AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE**

The health care system in America creates a headache for too many hard-working Americans. That is a problem. Our health care challenges originate with a lack of free-market principles applied to the system itself, and the stress that misguided Washington policies has placed upon it. In fact, our health care system today barely resembles a patient centered system. This is reinforced by the fact that the federal government remains the largest purchaser of health care in the country. Americans do not want a health care system brought to them by a government exemplified by the compassion of the IRS, the efficiency of the Postal Service, and the competency of FEMA. The answer lies in providing solutions to the problems that government has already created within the health care system.

- **A FAMILY-FOCUSED, PATIENT-CENTERED HEALTH CARE SYSTEM**

House Republicans are committed to a family-focused, patient-centered health care system. By focusing on the patient, we can fix our broken health care system, by 1) providing a refundable health care tax credit to every American to purchase affordable health care coverage, and 2) broadening the array of choices for health insurance plans, by allowing individuals to purchase plans available in other states. These measures will allow Americans who like their current health plan to keep it, while encouraging all individuals to own and control a personal and portable health insurance policy. Hard-working Americans deserve peace of mind that their health care choices will be between them and their doctor—not Washington bureaucracy.

#### **V. FAMILY FOCUSED ASSISTANCE TO THE POOR FOR THE 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY**

The “can-do” spirit and the family unit are two inherently American ideals. Though over 50 percent of food stamp aid is currently received by families with children, only 15 percent of those funds go to married couples with children. The food stamp program, as it exists today, is a 20<sup>th</sup> century program designed to address 20<sup>th</sup> century problems. It is a relic that represents the misguided, antiquated means to combat poverty that not only fails to adequately address impoverished children, but actually harms them.

We must renew our commitment to fighting poverty by reinventing the Food Stamp program to address the problems of 21<sup>st</sup> Century America.

- House Republicans are committed to ensuring that many of the current welfare work requirements are extended to other programs—namely food stamps and housing—so that those who are not old, young, or disabled are on the road to self sufficiency. This common-sense reform targets the root of the problem by ensuring a more stable environment for low-income children by providing incentives for their parents to marry and raise them in two-parent homes. House Republicans are committed to ensuring that low income-children are afforded the same access to the American dream and opportunity to climb up the economic ladder as all children.

## **VI. INCREASING PARENTAL RIGHTS: A MORAL APPROACH FOR FAMILIES TO PROTECT & EDUCATE THEIR CHILDREN**

Parenting in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is a difficult responsibility that is made even more difficult by government intrusion in decisions that should be made within the family. Republicans understand that parents know best how to protect and educate their children and understand that their rights must be protected from encroachment by outsiders.

- House Republicans are committed to supporting parental rights, by (1) ensuring that a child cannot be transported across a state border for an abortion in order to circumvent state parental notification requirements, and (2) empowering parents to maintain control over their family's personal education decisions.