A PLEDGE *to* AMERICA

a new governing agenda built on

THE PRIORITIES OF OUR NATION,
THE PRINCIPLES WE STAND FOR
&
AMERICA'S FOUNDING VALUES

JULY
IV

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A PLEDGE *TO* AMERICA

America is more than a country.

America is an idea – an idea that free people can govern themselves, that government's powers are derived from the consent of the governed, that each of us is endowed by their Creator with the unalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. America is the belief that any man or woman can – given economic, political, and religious liberty – advance themselves, their families, and the common good.

America is an inspiration to those who yearn to be free and have the ability and the dignity to determine their own destiny.

Whenever the agenda of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to institute a new governing agenda and set a different course.

These first principles were proclaimed in the Declaration of Independence, enshrined in the Constitution, and have endured through hard sacrifice and commitment by generations of Americans.

In a self-governing society, the only bulwark against the power of the state is the consent of the governed, and regarding the policies of the current government, the governed do not consent.

An unchecked executive, a compliant legislature, and an overreaching judiciary have combined to thwart the will of the people and overturn their votes and their values, striking down long-standing laws and institutions and scorning the deepest beliefs of the American people.

An arrogant and out-of-touch government of self-appointed elites makes decisions, issues mandates, and enacts laws without accepting or requesting the input of the many.

Rising joblessness, crushing debt, and a polarizing political environment are fraying the bonds among our people and blurring our sense of national purpose.

Like free peoples of the past, our citizens refuse to accommodate a government that believes it can replace the will of the people with its own. The American people are speaking out, demanding that we realign our country's compass with its founding principles and apply those principles to solve our common problems for the common good.

The need for urgent action to repair our economy and reclaim our government for the people cannot be overstated.

With this document, we pledge to dedicate ourselves to the task of reconnecting our highest aspirations to the permanent truths of our founding by keeping faith with the values our nation was founded on, the principles we stand for, and the priorities of our people. This is our Pledge to America.

We pledge to honor the Constitution as constructed by its framers and honor the original intent of those precepts that have been consistently ignored – particularly the Tenth Amendment, which grants that all powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the states respectively, or to the people.

We pledge to advance policies that promote greater liberty, wider opportunity, a robust defense, and national economic prosperity.

We pledge to honor families, traditional marriage, life, and the private and faith-based organizations that form the core of our American values.

We pledge to make government more transparent in its actions, careful in its stewardship, and honest in its dealings.

We pledge to uphold the purpose and promise of a better America, knowing that to whom much is given, much is expected and that the blessings of our liberty buoy the hopes of mankind.

We make this pledge bearing true faith and allegiance to the people we represent, and we invite fellow citizens and patriots to join us in forming a new governing agenda for America.

Foreword

Americans need no reminder that the challenges we face are enormous. Our economy has declined and our debt has mushroomed with the loss of millions of jobs. The social fabric that binds us as citizens, families and communities is unraveling. Voices in and out of government whisper that our standing as the world's leader of democracy and economic growth is ending.

The American people do not accept these counsels of timidity, failure, and despair. In town halls and on public squares, in every corner of this country, people have gathered and spoken out – in small groups and larger crowds, through phone calls and in letters, through websites and new technologies.

Though these petitions come from different walks, their message is uniform: *Washington has not been listening.*

Politicians in Washington have imposed an agenda that doesn't reflect the priorities of the people. What's worse, the most important decisions are made behind closed doors, where a flurry of backroom deals has supplanted the will of the people.

It's time to do away with the old politics: that much is clear. It's not enough, however, to swap out one set of leaders for another. Structure dictates behavior, so we have drafted this blueprint on a process of listening to the American people and fielding their concerns and ideas for turning things around.

- Our plan offers a clear and clearly different approach, one in which the people have the most say and the best ideas trump the most entrenched interests.

- Our plan stands on the principles of smaller, more accountable government; economic freedom; lower taxes; fiscal responsibility; protecting life, American values, and the Constitution; and providing for a robust national defense.

- Our plan puts forth a new governing agenda that reflects the priorities of the American people – priorities that have been ignored, even mocked by the powers-that-be in Washington – and can be implemented today.

- These are focused concrete examples of the policies through which we will promote greater liberty, wider opportunity, and national economic recovery - and they can be implemented today.

A plan to create jobs, end economic uncertainty, and make America more competitive must be the first and most urgent domestic priority of our government. So first, we offer a plan to get people working again. We will end the attack on free enterprise by repealing job-killing policies and taking steps to assure current businesses and future entrepreneurs that the government will not stifle their ability to compete in the global marketplace.

By permanently stopping job-killing tax hikes, families will be able to keep more of

their hard-earned money and small businesses will have the stability they need to invest in our economy and help grow our workforce. We will further encourage small businesses to create jobs by allowing them to take a tax deduction equal to 20 percent of their income.

We will rein in the red tape factory in Washington, DC by requiring congressional approval of any new federal regulation that may add to our deficit and make it harder to create jobs. In addition, we will repeal the costly small business mandates contained in the new health care law.

If we've learned anything over the last two years, it's that we cannot spend our way to prosperity. We offer ***a plan to stop out-of-control spending and reduce the size of government***.

With common-sense exceptions for seniors, veterans, and our troops, we will roll back government spending to pre-stimulus, pre-bailout levels, saving us at least $100 billion in the first year alone and putting us on a path to balance the budget and pay down the debt. We will also establish strict budget caps to limit federal spending from this point forward.

We will launch a sustained effort to stem the relentless growth in government that has occurred over the past decade. By cutting Congress' budget, imposing a net hiring freeze on non-security federal employees, and reviewing every current government program to eliminate wasteful and duplicative programs, we can curb Washington's irresponsible spending habits and reduce the size of government, while still fulfilling our necessary obligations.

We will also prevent Washington from forcing responsible taxpayers to subsidize irresponsible behavior by ending bailouts permanently, canceling the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP), and reforming Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac.

Instead of pushing off our long-term fiscal challenges, we will reform the budget process to ensure that Congress begins making the decisions that are necessary to protect our entitlement programs for today's seniors and future generations.

Of course, Americans remember that President Obama argued his government takeover of health care was the single most important thing we could do to address our growing debt crisis. This notion has since been thoroughly discredited: we now know the new health care law will mean more financial pain for seniors, families, and the federal government. We offer ***a plan to repeal and replace the government takeover of health care*** with common sense solutions focused on lowering costs and protecting American jobs. We will enact real medical liability reform; allow Americans to purchase health coverage across state lines; empower small businesses with greater purchasing power; and create new incentives to save for future health needs. We will protect the doctor-patient relationship, and ensure that those with pre-existing conditions gain access to the coverage they need. We will permanently end taxpayer funding of abortion and codify the Hyde Amendment.

We recognize that these solutions are ambitious, and that we are proposing them at a time of intense public distrust in politicians and the political system. That's why we are offering ***a plan to reform Congress and restore trust*** so that we can put power back where it belongs: in the hands of the people. We will govern differently than past Congresses of both parties. We will require that every bill contain a citation of Constitutional authority. We will give all Representatives and citizens at least three days to read the bill before a vote. We will make sure that the floor schedule and operations reflect the priority of revitalizing the economy, and ensure there is an open process that makes it easier – not harder – to eliminate unnecessary spending on any legislation that spends the people's money.

Above all else, the primary obligation of the federal government remains providing for the common defense against all threats foreign and domestic. We offer ***a plan to keep our nation secure at home and abroad*** that will provide the resources, authority, and support our deployed military requires, fully fund missile defense, and enforce sanctions against Iran. We will keep terrorist combatants in Guantanamo Bay not in our local jails and courtrooms. Our borders are a vital part of our security, so we will act decisively to ensure that the federal government fulfills its constitutional duty to protect our citizens and our Nation, working closely with our state and local governments.

Public Debt:
Nearly Half Owned by Foreign Entities

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A PLAN *to* *Create Jobs*

End Economic Uncertainty and Make America More Competitive

Joblessness is the single most important challenge facing America today. Jobs are the lifeblood of our economy, and for our workforce, there is no substitute for the pride and dignity that comes with an honest day's work and a steady paycheck.

Washington's heavy-handed approach is not working. Private sector unemployment remains at or near 10 percent, jobless claims continue to soar, and the only parts of the economy expanding are government and our national debt. It is time to end this liberal Keynesian experiment and stop the attacks on our employers that prevent them from investing in our economy. We need private sector jobs, not more government.

We have a plan that will help create jobs, end economic uncertainty, and make America more competitive.

"Top-down one-size-fits-all decision making should not replace the personal choices of free people in a free market, nor undermine the proper role of state and local governments in our system of federalism." – Gov. Bob McDonnell (VA)

What We're Up Against

The trillion-dollar "stimulus" spending bill has made "where are the jobs?" a national rallying cry after failing to live up to the specific promises made by its architects. Instead of remaining below eight percent, unemployment has been above nine percent for 16 consecutive months. This is a far cry from the recovery the American people were promised.

Undeterred by dismal results, Washington Democrats continue to double-down on their job-killing policies. President Obama is proposing spending billions more on government "stimulus" projects. He also wants to raise taxes on roughly half of small business income in America. Raising taxes on anyone in a struggling economy – especially family-owned businesses – is precisely the wrong thing to do. Economists agree, as do the American people.

"An economy constrained by high tax rates will never produce enough revenue to balance the budget, just as it will never create enough jobs." – President John F. Kennedy

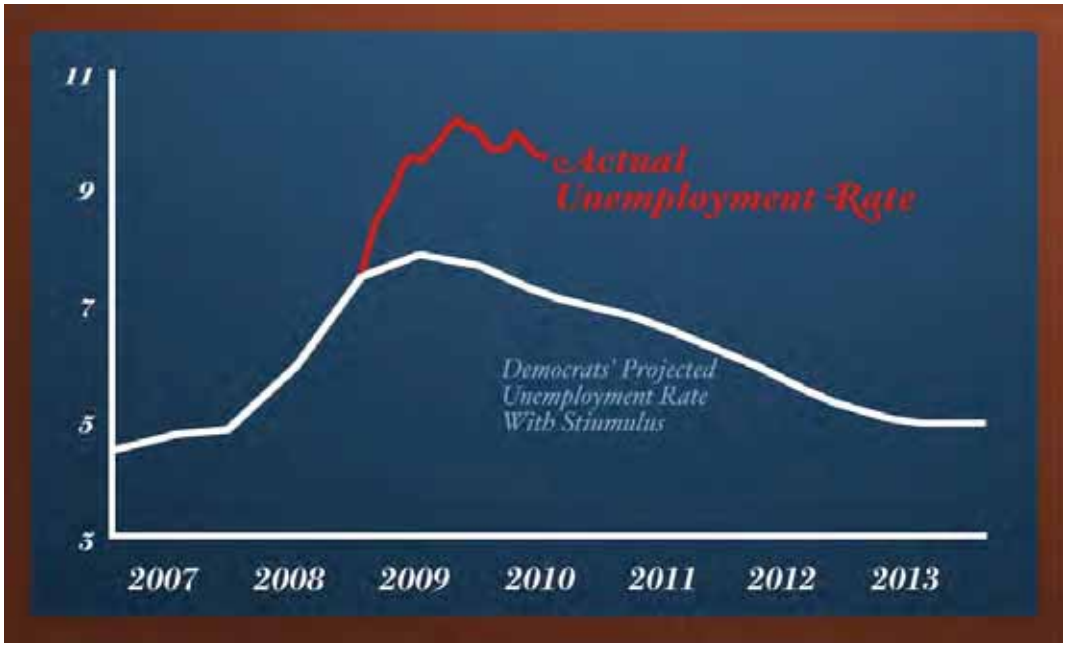
In addition to punishing businesses, these looming tax hikes will hurt every family in America. During the 1990s, a Republican Congress enacted pro-family policies such as marriage penalty relief and the child tax credit. Unless action is taken, a $3.8 trillion tax hike will go into effect on January 1, 2011 that will unravel these policies. A family of four with a household income of $50,000 a year will have to pay $2,900 more in taxes in 2011, according to a new analysis by Deloitte Tax LLP, a tax consulting firm. The same family making $100,000 a year will see its taxes rise by $4,500. In addition, the marriage penalty will return, the child tax credit will be cut in half, and the Alternative Minimum Tax will ensnare more than 25 million taxpayers.

Washington-focused economic policies have failed to put people back to work and have pushed our nation to the brink of a fiscal crisis. The American people know that to boost the economy, spending must be slashed, tax increases must be prevented, and small businesses must have certainty that the rules won't change every few months so they can get back on their feet. The constant threat of new taxes and new regulations prevents investors and entrepreneurs from putting capital at risk. These private sector employers must be given the certainty that if they take a risk to expand their company or hire a new employee, Washington won't yank the rug from under their feet.

Permanent bailouts, government takeovers, threats of tax increases and "stimulus" spending sprees have combined to create uncertainty for private investment in our economy and keep employers on the sidelines. The longer our government refuses to wake up and abandon its job-killing agenda, the longer it will take to turn things around and get people working again.

WHERE ARE THE JOBS?

Since the trillion-dollar 'stimulus' was signed into law in February 2009, the unemployment rate has climbed and is stuck near 10 percent. Despite the 'stimulus' and Democrats' promises the unemployment rate would remain below eight percent, the unemployment rate climbed from 7.7 percent in January 2009 to 9.5 percent in August 2010.



Source: January 2009 Romer/Bernstein Report and U.S. Department of Labor data.

Our Plan to End the Uncertainty and Create Incentives for Job Growth

If we've learned anything during the recession, it's that we cannot tax and spend our way to prosperity. The best way to get people working again is to rein in the growth of government and end the uncertainty facing small businesses. By addressing both issues, our plan revives free enterprise and moves America away from a debt-driven economy.

Permanently Stop All Job-Killing Tax Hikes

We will help the economy by permanently stopping all tax increases, currently scheduled to take effect January 1, 2011. That means protecting middle-class families, seniors worried about their retirement, and the entrepreneurs and family-owned small businesses on which we depend to create jobs in America.

Give Small Businesses a Tax Deduction

We will allow small business owners to take a tax deduction equal to 20 percent of their business income. This will provide entrepreneurs with a much-needed infusion of capital for investment and new hiring.

Rein in the Red Tape Factory in Washington, DC

Excessive federal regulation is a de facto tax on employers and consumers that stifles job creation, hampers innovation and postpones investment in the economy. When the game is always changing, small businesses cannot properly plan for the future. To provide stability, we will require congressional approval of any new federal regulation that has an annual cost to our economy of $100 million or more. This is the threshold at which the government deems a regulation "economically significant." If a regulation is so "significant" and costly that it may harm job creation, Congress should vote on it first.

Repeal Job-Killing Small Business Mandates

One of the most controversial mandates of the Democrats' government takeover of health care requires small businesses to report to the Internal Revenue Service any purchases that run more than $600. This 1099 reporting mandate is so overbearing that the IRS ombudsman has determined that the agency is ill-equipped to handle all the resulting paperwork. We will repeal this job-killing small business mandate.

a plan to

Stop OUT OF CONTROL SPENDING *and* *Reduce* THE SIZE OF GOVERNMENT

Washington's out-of-control spending spree needs no introduction. Our debt is now on track to exceed the size of our economy in the next two years. The lack of a credible plan to pay this debt back causes anxiety among consumers and uncertainty for investors and employers.

It isn't just that we need to stop spending so much – we need to stop spending so irrationally. The spending process in Washington is designed to make it easy to increase spending and raise taxes and difficult to cut spending and lower taxes. The deck is stacked against limited government and fiscal responsibility. This must stop.

We have a plan to impose fiscal discipline and cut government down to size.

What We're Up Against

Instead of putting the brakes on Washington's spending habits as they promised, President Obama and Democratic Leaders have stepped on the accelerator and demonstrated unparalleled recklessness with taxpayer dollars.

Over the past three years, non-security discretionary spending (the spending that is approved each year by Congress outside of the Department of Defense, Department of Homeland Security, and Department of Veterans Affairs) has increased a staggering 88 percent. As a result, we now borrow 41 cents of every dollar we spend, much of it from foreign countries, including China, and leave the bill to our kids and grandkids.

Within three years, our government will spend more than $1 billion a day just to pay the interest on our debt. That money won't build roads, fight terrorism, secure our border, or support Medicare for seniors. It is simply the cost of Congress' failure to control spending.

> **"Government's view of the economy could be summed up in a few short phrases: if it moves, tax it. If it keeps moving, regulate it. And if it stops moving, subsidize it."**
> - President Ronald Reagan

Economists have warned that all this borrowing runs the risk of causing a damaging spike in interest rates, which would cripple job creation. If our economy remains debt-driven, it will not be in a position to support a lasting economic recovery.

Unfortunately, Washington Democrats refuse to listen to the American people and eliminate, restrain, or even budget for their out-of-control spending spree. Indeed, Democrats simply walked away from writing next year's budget altogether – a first in the modern era. Without a budget, Washington will try to get away with continuing to spend at current "stimulus" levels. We cannot allow that to happen.

Our Plan to Put Government on a Path to a Balanced Budget and Pay Down the Debt

We will have a responsible, fact-based conversation with the American people about the scale of the fiscal challenges we face, and the urgent action that is required to deal with them. We will curb Washington's spending habits and promote job creation, bring down the deficit, and build long-term fiscal stability.

Act Immediately to Reduce Spending

There is no reason to wait to reduce wasteful and unnecessary spending. Congress should move immediately to cancel unspent "stimulus" funds, and block any attempts to extend the timeline for spending "stimulus" funds. Throwing more money at a stimulus plan that is not working only wastes taxpayer money and puts us further in debt.

Cut Government Spending to Pre-Stimulus, Pre-Bailout Levels

With common-sense exceptions for seniors, veterans, and our troops, we will roll back government spending to pre-stimulus, pre-bailout levels, saving us at least $100 billion in the first year alone and putting us on a path to begin paying down the debt, balancing the budget, and ending the spending spree in Washington that threatens our children's future.

Establish a Hard Cap on New Discretionary Spending

We must put common-sense limits on the growth of government and stop the endless increases. Only in Washington is there an expectation that whatever your budget was last year, it will be more this year and even more the next. We will set strict budget caps to limit federal spending on an annual basis. Budget caps were used in the 1990s, when a Republican Congress was able to bring the budget into balance and eventual surplus. By cutting discretionary spending from current levels and imposing a hard cap on future growth, we will save taxpayers hundreds of billions of dollars.

Cut Congress' Budget

This year, Congress increased its own budget by 5.8 percent at a time when families and small businesses across the country are cutting back. We will make Congress do more with less by significantly reducing its budget.

Hold Weekly Votes on Spending Cuts

Earlier this year, House Republicans launched the YouCut initiative to combat the permissive culture of runaway spending in Congress. Over the course of nine weeks, YouCut produced proposals to save taxpayers more than $120 billion. We will continue to hold weekly votes on spending cuts.

End TARP Once And For All

Americans are rightly outraged at the bailouts of businesses and entities that force responsible taxpayers to subsidize irresponsible behavior. We will cancel the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP), a move that would save taxpayers tens of billions of dollars.

End Government Control of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac

Since taking over Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, the mortgage companies that triggered the financial meltdown by giving too many high risk loans to people who couldn't afford them, taxpayers were billed more than $145 billion to save the two companies. We will reform Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac by ending their government takeover, shrinking their portfolios, and establishing minimum capital standards. This will save taxpayers as much as $30 billion.

Impose a Net Federal Hiring Freeze of Non-Security Employees

Small businesses and entrepreneurs are the engine of our economy and should not be crowded out by unchecked government growth. We will impose a net hiring freeze on non-security federal employees and ensure that the public sector no longer grows at the expense of the private sector.

Root Out Government Waste and Sunset Outdated & Duplicative Programs

Once created, federal programs almost never go away, even if the problem they were created to address is no longer relevant. More than 20 states have addressed this problem by requiring that programs end – or "sunset" – by a date certain. We will adopt this requirement at the federal level to force Congress to determine if a program is worthy of continued taxpayer support.

Reform the Budget Process to Focus on Long-Term Challenges

We will make the decisions that are necessary to protect our entitlement programs for today's seniors and future generations. That means requiring a full accounting of Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid, setting benchmarks for these programs and reviewing them regularly, and preventing the expansion of unfunded liabilities.

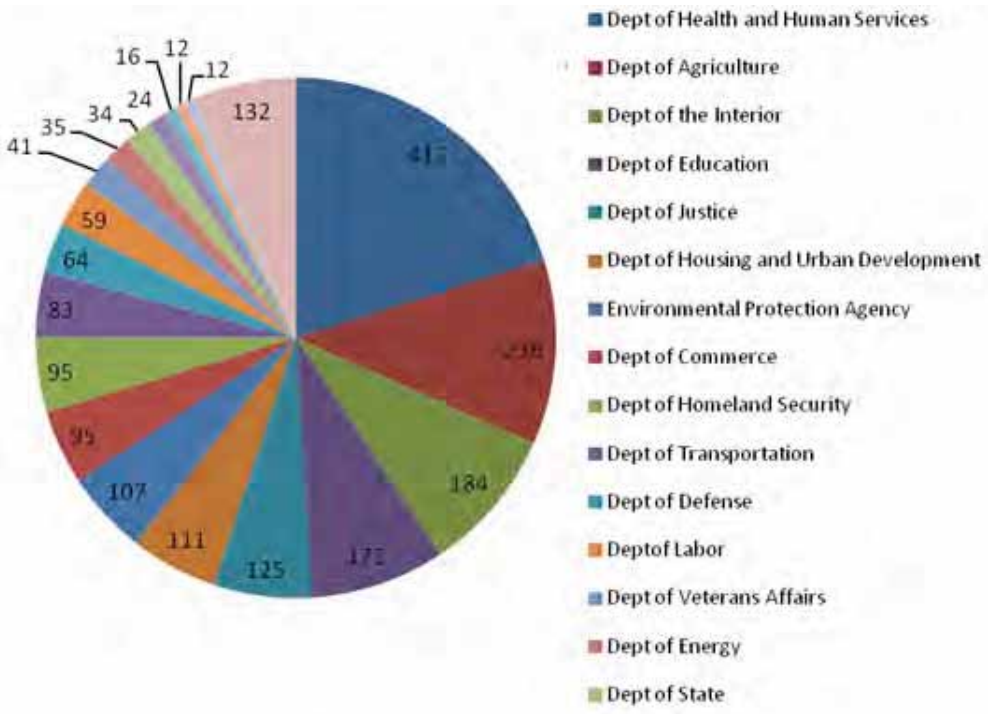
Did You Know...

Today, Washington spends **$7 million every minute of every hour of every day**. That is twice as much as was spent per minute in 1980.

Our cumulative national debt now exceeds $13,000,000,000,000 which is **more than $42,000 for every man, woman, and child in America**. Under the most recent budget projections, it will continue to grow, doubling by 2020.

There is literally no aspect of our economy or our society that the federal government doesn't tax, regulate or subsidize, and often it does all three at the same time. The most recent edition of the Catalogue of Federal Domestic Assistance listed **2,050 different assistance programs** available to states, local governments, for-profit and non-profit organizations, groups, and individuals. Taxpayers are literally funding programs from cradle to grave

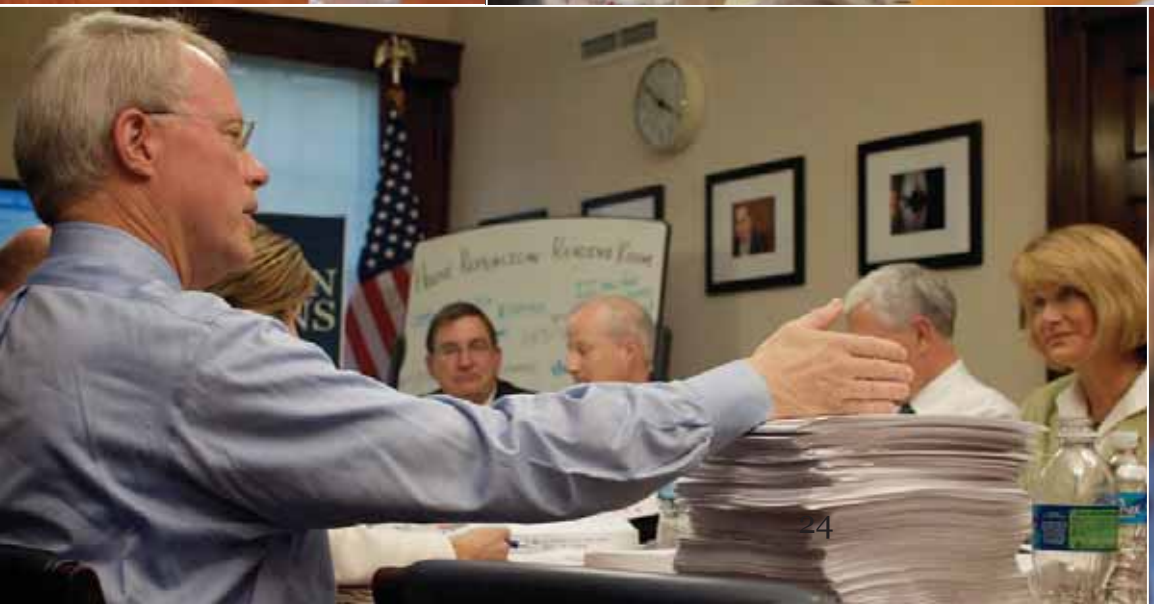
FEDERAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS



Federal spending consumes nearly one-quarter of our entire economy and is crowding out the private economy. Indeed, today more Americans work for one level of government or another than work in all the goods-producing industries, such as manufacturing, combined. According to the Obama Administration's most recent budget forecast, government spending as a percentage of the economy will be, on average, several percentage points higher over the next ten years than it was during either the Clinton or Bush presidencies.

America
SPEAKING OUT
AmericaSpeakingOut.com
IRS
Secretary

Bleu



A PLAN TO

Repeal AND Replace

THE GOVERNMENT TAKEOVER OF HEALTH CARE

The American people wanted one thing out of health care reform: lower costs, which President Obama and Democrats in Washington promised, but did not deliver. Instead of expanding the size and scope of government with more debt, higher taxes, and burdensome mandates, Americans are calling for reforms that lower costs for families and small businesses, increase access to affordable, high-quality care and strengthen the doctor-patient relationship. We have a plan to do just that.

What We're Up Against

The core promises Washington Democrats made to force the health care law through Congress have already been broken:

Jobs.

Employers large and small coast-to-coast have announced that they are considering laying off employees or dropping their health care coverage in response to the new law, despite President Obama's boast that it is also a jobs plan.

Costs.

Both the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO) and the chief actuary at the Obama Administration's Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) have confirmed that the new law fails to lower health care costs as promised.

Deficits and Debt.

The Obama Administration's Social Security and Medicare Trustees' report confirms that the new law does little to address the nation's growing fiscal crisis despite President Obama's pledge that passing his plan constituted the "most important thing we can do" for the nation's financial future.

Taxes.

The new health care law includes at least a dozen violations of President Obama's pledge not to raise taxes on middle-class families. The Obama administration has conceded that the 'individual mandate' at the heart of the new law is indeed a tax, a notion the president "absolutely" rejected last fall.

Seniors.

The chief actuary at the Obama Administration's Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services has confirmed that the new law's massive Medicare cuts will fall squarely on the backs of seniors, millions of whom will be forced off their current Medicare coverage.

If You Like It…You Can't Keep It.

The Obama Administration has been forced to acknowledge that the new law will force some 87 million Americans to drop their current coverage despite President Obama's promise that Americans would be able to keep the coverage that they have.

Abortion.

Americans are overwhelmingly opposed to using tax dollars to pay for abortion, and the executive order issued by President Obama in conjunction with congressional passage of the health care law is inadequate to ensure taxpayer funds are not used in this manner.

Instead of bringing the full weight of the government to bear in enforcing this job-killing health care law, Washington Democrats should listen to the American people and stand down.

Our Plan to Repeal the Job Killing Health Care Law and Put in Place Real Reform

Repeal the Costly Health Care Takeover of 2010

Because the new health care law kills jobs, raises taxes, and increases the cost of health care, we will immediately take action to repeal this law.

Enact Medical Liability Reform

Skyrocketing medical liability insurance rates have distorted the practice of medicine, routinely forcing doctors to order costly and often unnecessary tests to protect themselves from lawsuits, often referred to as "defensive medicine." We will enact common-sense medical liability reforms to lower costs, rein in junk lawsuits and curb defensive medicine.

Purchase Health Insurance across State Lines

Americans residing in a state with expensive health insurance plans are locked into those plans and do not currently have an opportunity to choose a lower cost option that best meets their needs. We will allow individuals to buy health care coverage outside of the state in which they live.

Expand Health Savings Accounts

Health Savings Accounts (HSAs) are popular savings accounts that provide cost-effective health insurance to those who might otherwise go uninsured. We will improve HSAs by making it easier for patients with high-deductible health plans to use them to obtain access to quality care. We will repeal the new health care law, which prevents the use of these savings accounts to purchase over-the-counter medicine.

Strengthen the Doctor-Patient Relationship

We will repeal President Obama's government takeover of health care and replace it with common-sense reforms focused on strengthening the doctor-patient relationship.

Ensure Access for Patients with Pre-Existing Conditions

Health care should be accessible for all, regardless of pre-existing conditions or past illnesses. We will expand state high-risk pools, reinsurance programs and reduce the cost of coverage. We will make it illegal for an insurance company to deny coverage to someone with prior coverage on the basis of a pre-existing condition, eliminate annual and lifetime spending caps, and prevent insurers from dropping your coverage just because you get sick. We will incentivize states to develop innovative programs that lower premiums and reduce the number of uninsured Americans.

Permanently Prohibit Taxpayer Funding of Abortion

We will establish a government-wide prohibition on taxpayer funding of abortion and subsidies for insurance coverage that includes abortion. This prohibition would go further and enact into law what is known as the Hyde Amendment as well as ban other instances of federal subsidies for abortion services. We will also enact into law conscience protections for health care providers, including doctors, nurses, and hospitals.

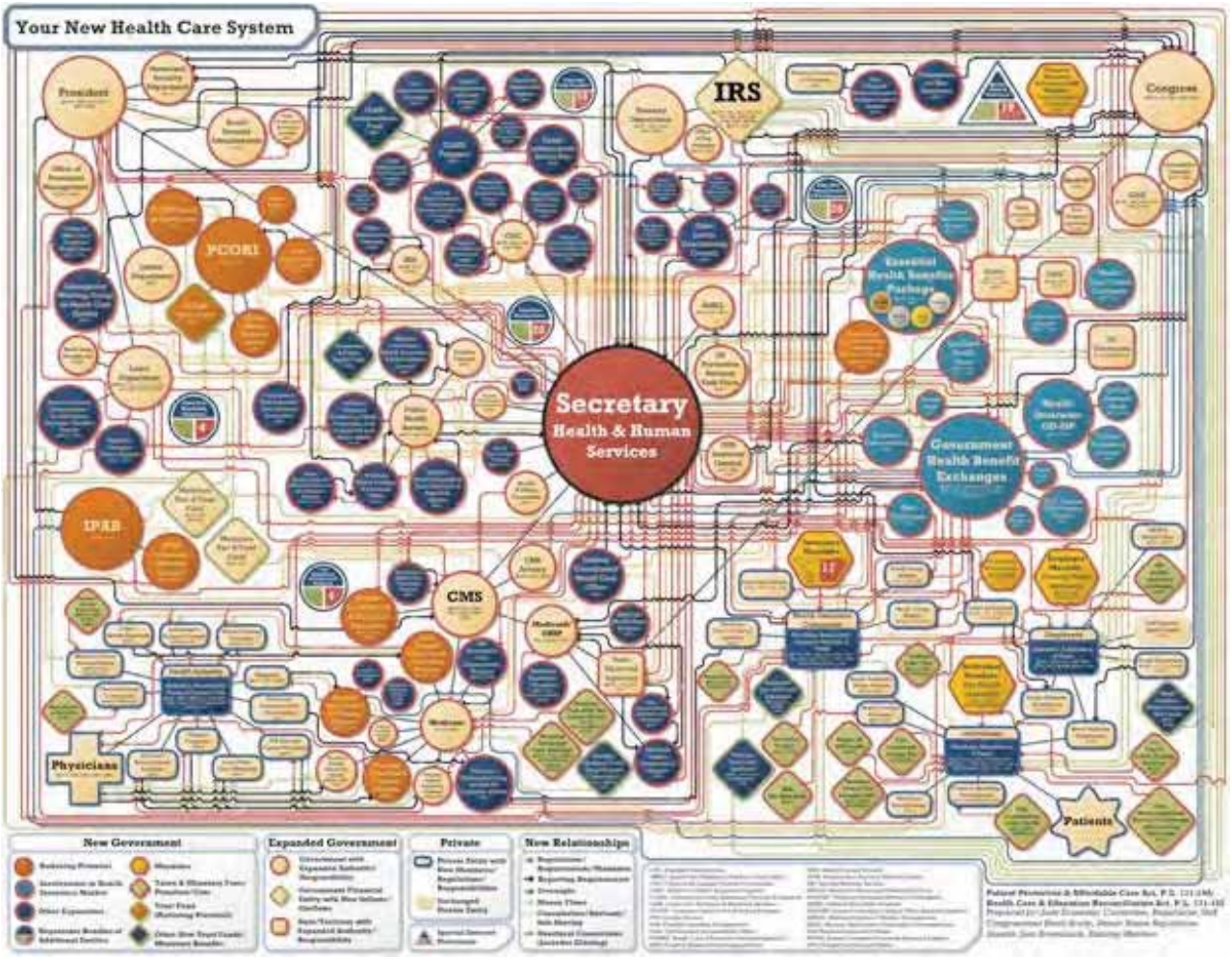
Did You Know...

Through July 31, 2010, **3,833 pages of federal regulations** have been issued regarding the new law.

Roughly **16,500 IRS auditors**, agents, and other employees may be needed to collect the hundreds of billions of dollars in new taxes levied on the American people by the new health care law.

The new health care law includes **$569.2 billion in tax increases** – including taxes that will directly increase the cost of health care goods and services – and **$528.5 billion in Medicare cuts**, which will be used to create new programs not related to seniors.

A MAZE OF BUREAUCRACIES



The new health care law provides for the creation of more than 160 boards, bureaus, and commissions. Republicans on the Joint Economic Committee have released a chart detailing this maze of bureaucracies.

A Plan to
REFORM CONGRESS AND RESTORE TRUST

Americans have lost trust with their government, which has too often ignored the will of the people in favor of party loyalty and a desire to pass partisan bills at any cost. Backroom deals, phantom amendments, and bills that go unread before being forced through Congress have become business as usual. Never before has the need for a new approach to governing been more apparent than under Speaker Nancy Pelosi and her leadership. Americans are demanding change in the way Congress works, and we are fighting to bring much-needed sunlight to the process and give the American people a greater voice in their Congress.

We now propose changing the way Congress works once and for all, so that the will of the people can be heard and the best ideas can trump the most vested interests.

What We're Up Against

The House of Representatives continues to move further away from its roots as a deliberative body, toward a centralized power structure where the majority does whatever it needs to win at all costs. Over the course of her tenure, Speaker Pelosi has consolidated authority, abusing the letter and spirit of the House rules to get the outcome desired, while ignoring the voices of the American people, the minority and even dissenters within her own party. Democratic Leaders continue moving in the wrong direction by limiting openness and debate, and using various backhanded tactics to ignore the will of the people:

Despite having the largest Democratic majority since 1993, the current Congress marked the first time in the history that ***not a single spending bill was considered under an "open" amendment process.***

During final consideration of President Obama's government takeover of health care, Speaker Pelosi and Rules Committee Chairwoman Louise Slaughter publicly discussed a plan to allow the House to pass the bill without a vote by the House. Referred to as the "Slaughter Solution," House Democrats eventually abandoned the scheme under the weight of a sustained public outcry.

When the House was poised to consider legislation to impose a "cap-and-trade" national energy tax, a 300-page "manager's amendment" rewriting key provisions of the bill without a separate vote was dropped in the laps of lawmakers at 3:00 am. The House began debate on the bill just a few hours later.

For the first time in modern history, the House failed to pass or even debate a budget, allowing spending to continue to grow at a breathtaking rate without any blueprint for making fiscal decisions.

It's no wonder that a national survey released earlier this year showed that just two in 10 Americans believe our government operates with the consent of the governed. We cannot continue to operate like this.

Our Plan to Restore Trust

The top-down way of governing is outdated and just plain backwards. We will launch a prolonged campaign to transfer power back to the people and ensure they have a say in what goes on in the Congress. This year House Republicans launched a first-of-its-kind web platform called "America Speaking Out" to engage directly with the American people and allow them to establish a dialogue with their members of Congress. We will continue this groundbreaking transformative effort to give people a voice in real time with their government. We recognize that if we are truly committed to addressing the American people's highest priorities, the House of Representatives must operate differently – differently from the way the Democrats do now, and differently from the way Republicans did in the past. Change begins at home.

Read the Bill

We will ensure that bills are debated and discussed in the public square by publishing the text online for at least three days before coming up for a vote in the House of Representatives. No more hiding legislative language from the minority party, opponents, and the public. Legislation should be understood by all interested parties before it is voted on.

Adhere To the Constitution

For too long, Congress has ignored the proper limits imposed by the Constitution on the federal government. Further, it has too often drafted unclear and muddled laws, leaving to an unelected judiciary the power to interpret what the law means and by what authority the law stands. This lack of respect for the clear Constitutional limits and authorities has allowed Congress to create ineffective and costly programs that add to the massive deficit year after year. We will require each bill moving through Congress to include a clause citing the specific constitutional authority upon which the bill is justified.

Make It Easier to Cut Spending

By forbidding amendments on spending bills, Democrats have denied lawmakers the opportunity to tighten Washington's belt and slash wasteful and duplicative programs. Structure dictates behavior, so we will let any lawmaker — Democrat or Republican — offer amendments to reduce spending.

Advance Legislative Issues One at a Time

We will end the practice of packaging unpopular bills with "must-pass" legislation to circumvent the will of the American people. Instead, we will advance major legislation one issue at a time.

Did You Know...

The number of House legislative days devoted to action on noncontroversial and often insignificant "suspension" bills is up significantly in this Congress by comparison with the past several Congresses, wasting time and taxpayer resources. Of the bills considered under the suspension procedure – requiring 2/3 vote for passage – so far during this Congress, **more than half** were bills naming federal buildings, recognizing individuals or groups (like sports teams) for achievements, or supporting the designation of particular days, months, or weeks.

This year, for the first time in the modern era, the House did not pass a budget, and of the twelve regular spending bills, only two have passed.

House Democrats have relied heavily on what are known as "martial law" procedures during the current Congress, particularly provisions that allow them to bring any bill to the floor with little or no notice and deny Republican members of Congress or even factions of their own party their right to debate and offer amendments or substitutes for consideration or vote.

A PLAN

To keep our nation SECURE AT HOME AND ABROAD

We are a nation at war. We must confront the worldwide threat of terrorism and to deal with the world as it is, not as we wish it to be. We will do all that is needed to protect our homeland, support our troops and the veterans who have so honorably served us, and ensure our government has a coherent strategy to confront and defeat the terrorist threat. And we will never apologize for advancing the cause of freedom and democracy around the world, nor will we abandon our historic role in lifting up those who struggle to receive the blessings of liberty.

Over the last year, we have seen clear and immediate evidence that terrorists continue to plot devastating attacks against our homeland, including a plot to bomb the New York City subway system, and continuing with the attacks at Fort Hood, Times Square, and on board Northwest Flight 253. Each of these attacks represented new strands of terrorism, new signs of an enemy ready and willing to adapt.

"History does not long entrust the care of freedom to the weak or the timid."
– President Dwight D. Eisenhower

We have a plan to keep our nation secure at home and abroad and hold the current government accountable for fulfilling its responsibility to provide for a robust defense.

Our Plan for National and Border Security

Providing for the common defense is a not just a priority or political imperative – it is a Constitutional duty. National security is more than just war fighting: it is protecting our citizens, bringing certainty to an uncertain world, supporting those who volunteer in the service of their country and defend our way of life, using every tool to protect Americans from threats at our borders.

Pass Clean Troop Funding Bills

When asked to provide our troops with the resources they need, we will do so without delay. That means no more troop funding bills held up by unrelated policy changes, or extraneous domestic spending and pork-barrel projects.

Keep Terrorists Out of America

We will prevent the government from importing terrorists onto American soil. We will hold President Obama and his administration responsible for any Guantanamo Bay detainees they release who return to fight against our troops or who have become involved in any terrorist plots or activities.

Demand an Overarching Detention Policy

Foreign terrorists do not have the same rights as American citizens, nor do they have more rights than U.S. military personnel. We will work to ensure foreign terrorists, such as the 9/11 conspirators, are tried in military, not civilian, court. We will oppose all efforts to force our military, intelligence, and law enforcement

personnel operating overseas to extend "Miranda Rights" to foreign terrorists.

Fully Fund Missile Defense

There is real concern that while the threat from Iranian intercontinental ballistic missiles could materialize as early as 2015, the government's missile defense policy is not projected to cover the U.S. homeland until 2020. We will work to ensure critical funding is restored to protect the U.S. homeland and our allies from missile threats from rogue states such as Iran and North Korea.

Require Tough Enforcement of Sanctions against Iran

The Iranian regime is a state-sponsor of terrorism, has actively worked to harm our deployed troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, and violates the rights and will of its own people. It has declared its determination to acquire a nuclear capability, which threatens its neighbors and the security of the United States. We will work to ensure the government aggressively and effectively implements the sanctions with the tools Congress has provided.

Establish Operational Control of the Border

We must take action to secure our borders, and that action starts with enforcing our laws. We will ensure that the Border Patrol has the tools and authorities to establish operational control at the border and prohibit the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture from interfering with Border Patrol enforcement activities on federal lands.

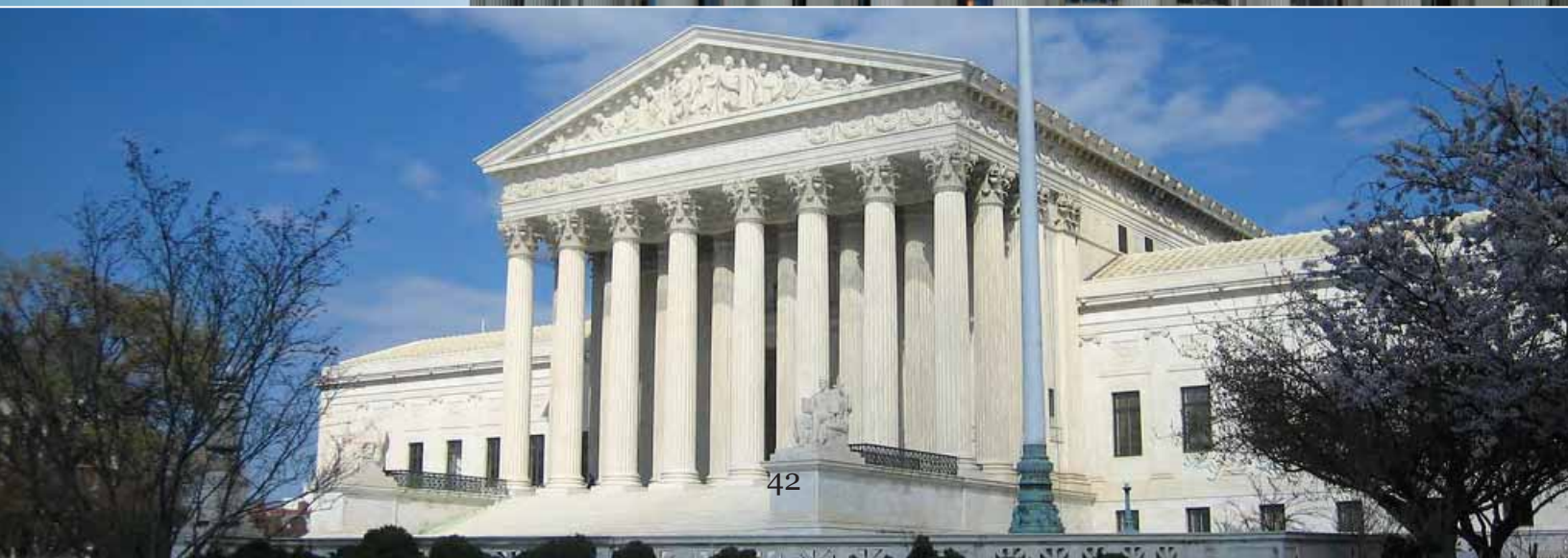
Work with State and Local Officials to Enforce Our Immigration Laws

The problem of illegal immigration and Mexican drug cartels engaged in an increasingly violent conflict means we need all hands on deck to address this challenge. We will reaffirm the authority of state and local law enforcement to assist in the enforcement of all federal immigration laws.

Strengthen Visa Security

To stop terrorists like Omar Farouk Abdulmutallab, the Christmas Day bomber, we will require the Department of Homeland Security to review all visa applications at high-risk consular posts and prevent aliens from attempting to avoid deportation after having their visas revoked.

Checks and Balances



Our founders built a system of checks and balances to slow the growth of government and prevent the tyranny of the majority. The ultimate power in this system of government is held by the people, who were given the tools by our Founders to hold those they elect as their representatives accountable for their actions. Government exists to be the servant of the people, not their master.

Unfortunately, the metrics used to hold Congress accountable are often flawed. Rather than using the scale of how well elected representatives represent the views of the people, the scale is often currently measured in bills passed, dollars spent, and programs created. This must change.

"But the whole history of America is quite different from Europe. People went there to get away from the intolerance and constraints of life in Europe. They sought liberty and opportunity; and their strong sense of purpose has over two centuries, helped create a new unity and pride in being American." – Lady Margaret Thatcher

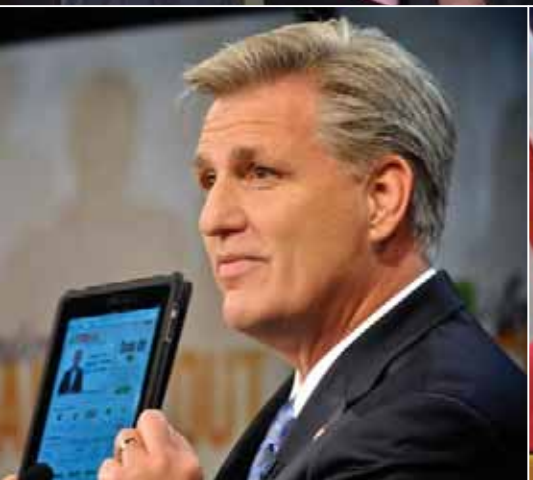
Every American must ask: what has Congress done to ensure opportunity and to safeguard my liberty and the freedoms guaranteed to me in the Constitution? We stand ready to be judged by that standard.

We will stand committed to our principles and fight to renew the drive for a smaller, less costly, and more accountable government. We will promote and advance solutions that get people working again, stop out-of-control spending, repeal and replace the government takeover of health care, make Congress more open and transparent, and keep our nation secure at home and abroad.

At the same time, we will serve as a check and a balance against any schemes that are inconsistent with the priorities and rights of the American people:

- We will fight to ensure transparency and accountability in Congress and throughout government.
- We will continue to fight the growth of government and oppose new stimulus spending that only puts our nation further in debt.
- We will fight efforts to fund the costly new health care law.
- We will fight to increase access to domestic energy sources and oppose attempts to impose a national "cap and trade" energy tax.
- We will fight for the rights of workers and oppose "card check" schemes that put Washington union bosses before individuals' right to a secret ballot.
- We will fight efforts to use a national crisis for political gain.

IDEAS
America
SPEAKING OUT
AmericaSpeakingOut.com



Speak Out

Built through a process of listening to the people, this is our Pledge to America.
To begin the process of implementing a new governing agenda that honors our Constitution and reflects the will of the people, we call on the leadership of the 111th Congress to bring these reforms and policies to an immediate vote, and ask all citizens of our Nation – men and women of good will and good heart – who share in our beliefs, to join with us and speak out.

Republicans in Congress

pledge.GOP.*gov*