

In November, 2006, the American people demanded a New Direction: to make America safer, to help restore the American dream, and to restore accountability and fiscal responsibility to the people's government.

The 110th Congress brought new faces, new energy and a steadfast commitment to a New Direction. In January, the first woman Speaker of the House in American history gaveled open the Congress in honor of all of America's children. Passage of the Six for '06 agenda, within the first 100 hours with broad bipartisan support, signaled change and a new focus on American priorities.

Today, under Democratic leadership, the Congress remains focused on a New Direction that makes American families and children, and our future generations, our highest priority. To date, the 110th Congress has passed a total of 117 key measures - with nearly 70 percent passing with the significant support of both Democrats and Republicans. The President has signed a number of major measures – including the College Cost Reduction and Access Act, the 9/11 Commission's Recommendations, critical Innovation Agenda legislation, unprecedented Lobby and Ethics Reform to change the way business is done in Washington, and the first Minimum

Wage Increase in a decade.

And, we are restoring fiscal discipline to our federal government for the first time in six years by returning to the pay-as-you-go budget discipline that produced historic budget surpluses during the Clinton Administration, but was abandoned under the last six years. Under our newly instituted fiscal policies, any new federal spending must be paid for. As simple as this might sound in principle, it represents a stark contrast to the borrow-and-spend practices that were in place under the Bush Administration and previous Congressional majorities and that ran up record deficits and exploded the national debt.

While we have had a very productive first year in the majority, on many issues, the President has been a stubborn opponent of progress for the American people. He has vetoed five key measures so far this year and is threatening to veto 42 more House-passed measures. In a number of cases, the President is threatening to veto measures that have significant public support, such as life-saving stem cell research, middle-class tax relief, and health care for 10 million poor uninsured children.

No where has the President's obstructionism been more apparent and damaging than in his stubborn adherence to a failing policy in Iraq. The message after last year's election was loud and clear - after nearly five years of war, the American people know the cost has been too high: to life and limb, to our reputation in the world, to our military readiness, and to

American taxpayers.

They know that this war has not made the American people safer, our military stronger, or the region more stable, and that we must responsibly redeploy our troops so we can refocus on the real war on terrorism and rebuild our military readiness.

Toward that end, this New Direction Congress has changed the debate, making the Bush Administration more accountable for the execution of the war, and the Iraqi government more responsible for its own future. We have instituted vigorous oversight, uncovering

tens of billions of dollars in waste, fraud, and abuse in spending in Iraq by companies like Blackwater and Halliburton. And we have passed a series of measures to initiate the responsible redeployment of our troops and enhance national security and military readiness – measures that unfortunately were rejected by the President and his allies in Congress who helped to sustain his vetoes.

Despite the political obstructionism by the President and his loyal partisans in Congress, the New Direction Congress remains committed to fighting for the issues important to all Americans, from changing direction in Iraq and refocusing our fight against terrorists, to addressing

pocketbook issues here at home, to ensuring that the nation we leave for our children is greater than the one we inherited.

On this, the first anniversary of the election of the New Direction Congress, with significant progress to show, we continue our work to lead the nation in a New Direction and towards a greater America.