

OCTOBER 2008

# A NEW DIRECTION FOR AMERICA

America faces daunting challenges—and clear choices. The worst financial crisis since the Great Depression imperils our nation's vitality and the economic security of every American. America's brave men and women are still fighting a costly war in Iraq while focus needs to be intensified on Afghanistan and terrorism around the globe. The call for change could not be more clear.

The 110th Congress has begun to move America in a New Direction. Toward energy independence and clean, renewable energy and an energy efficient future. To an America more competitive in a global economy, creating high tech and green jobs here at home. Putting our troops and veterans first. Working to make college, energy, health care, and home ownership more affordable for every American. Beginning to change the way we do business in Washington and restore fiscal responsibility and accountability to government.

The New Direction Congress has enacted into law key legislation to rebuild our economy, strengthen our national security, care for America's children and families, protect our planet, and restore accountability—with significant bipartisan support more than 70 percent of the time. More progress was prevented by the failed ideology and the continued obstruction of the Bush Administration and his allies in Congress. A New Direction for America is still needed.

## ECONOMIC RECOVERY

- ★ Economic Rescue Plan with key taxpayer and homeowner protections **ON WAY TO PRESIDENT'S DESK**
- ★ Recovery Rebates to jump-start economy, help Americans with rising costs **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Extended Unemployment benefits for 3.5 million Americans **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ First increase in the minimum wage in a decade **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Saving 380,000 good-paying jobs by meeting shortfall in Highway Trust Fund **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Authorizing completion of key highway projects, creating 40,000 good-paying jobs **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Farm Bill with historic new investments in nutrition, energy, and conservation, and launching reforms to farm payments to reflect farmer need **VETO OVERRIDDEN BY CONGRESS, ENACTED INTO LAW**
- ★ Terrorism risk insurance extension, aiding economic growth **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Curtailing tax loopholes for companies that ship American jobs offshore **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Making CEO pay subject to shareholder approval **PASSED HOUSE**

## HOUSING FORECLOSURE CRISIS

- ★ Comprehensive housing foreclosure crisis bill, preventing families from losing their homes and their neighbors from losing value in their homes, and creating a federal backstop and tough, independent regulation of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, which hold half the nation's mortgage debt **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Helping states/localities purchase foreclosed homes, stabilizing communities **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Tax credit for first-time homebuyers, and property tax deduction for non-itemizers **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Reform of the Federal Housing Administration, expanding access to affordable mortgages, and to "reverse mortgages" for seniors who need equity from their homes **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Stopping tax on "income" when lender forgives part of mortgage in foreclosure **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Creating an Affordable Housing Trust Fund for rental housing **SIGNED INTO LAW**

## EDUCATION AND COMPETITIVENESS

- ★ Largest college aid expansion since the first GI Bill in 1944, cutting college loan rates in half **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Uninterrupted access to low-cost student loans, despite credit crunch **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Giving colleges incentives to rein in tuition increases and expanding college access for low-income students **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Cleaning up abuses in the student loan industry **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Innovation agenda creating a math/science teacher corps; doubling research funding **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Head Start preschool improved and expanded **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Extended tax cut for innovative research & development **PASSED HOUSE AND SENATE**
- ★ Key investments in education **VETOED BY PRESIDENT**

## REDUCING TAXES

- ★ A tax cut for 19 million middle-income American families facing the AMT in '07 **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ A tax cut for 25 million middle-income American families facing the AMT in '08 **ON WAY TO PRESIDENT'S DESK**
- ★ Internet tax moratorium extension **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Extended tax cuts for homeowners, families, college students, teachers **ON WAY TO PRESIDENT'S DESK**

## AMERICAN WORKERS

- ★ Minimum wage increased for the first time in a decade **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Reversing Supreme Court decisions that had weakened Americans with Disabilities Act **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Extending & improving help for workers who lose jobs to foreign competition **PASSED HOUSE**
- ★ Strengthening the Equal Pay Act by providing more effective remedies **PASSED HOUSE**
- ★ Rectifying a Supreme Court decision to allow workers to pursue pay discrimination claims **PASSED HOUSE**
- ★ Prohibiting employment discrimination based on sexual orientation **PASSED HOUSE**
- ★ Collective bargaining rights for first responders **PASSED HOUSE**
- ★ Free choice for workers to choose their own bargaining representative **PASSED HOUSE**

## AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE

- ★ Health care coverage for 10 million American children **VETOED BY PRESIDENT**
- ★ Expansion of life-saving stem cell research to cure or prevent chronic diseases **VETOED BY PRESIDENT**
- ★ Key investments in health care **VETOED BY PRESIDENT**
- ★ Ensuring 44 million American seniors and people with disabilities have access to doctors they know and trust **VETO OVERRIDDEN BY CONGRESS, ENACTED INTO LAW**
- ★ Ban on genetic information discrimination in health coverage **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Ending discriminatory treatment of mental health care coverage **ON WAY TO PRESIDENT'S DESK**
- ★ Medicare required to negotiate cheaper drugs for seniors and disabled Americans **PASSED HOUSE**
- ★ Blocking \$18 billion cut in health care for low-income children & seniors **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Making America healthier with FDA regulation of tobacco **PASSED HOUSE**

## NATIONAL SECURITY

- ★ 9/11 Commission terrorism recommendations given force of law **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Investments to begin to fix the military readiness crisis **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Iraq benchmarks, progress reports required **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Providing for responsible redeployment of U.S. troops from Iraq **VETOED BY PRESIDENT**
- ★ Extending ban on torture to U.S. intelligence personnel **VETOED BY PRESIDENT**
- ★ Tighter foreign investment rules, after Dubai Ports scandal **SIGNED INTO LAW**

## TROOPS AND VETERANS

- ★ New GI Bill to give free college education to Iraq and Afghanistan veterans **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Largest veterans' health care funding increase in history **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Wounded Warrior Act, improving health care after Walter Reed scandal **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Major pay raise for troops in both FY2008 and FY2009 **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Tax relief for military families **SIGNED INTO LAW**

## ENERGY INDEPENDENCE AND GLOBAL WARMING

- ★ Landmark Energy Independence law: first new fuel efficiency standards in 32 years, historic commitment to renewable American bio-fuels **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Historic new support for non-food bio-fuels in the Farm Bill **VETO OVERRIDDEN BY CONGRESS, ENACTED INTO LAW**
- ★ Tax incentives to invest in clean, renewable energy and create hundreds of thousands of green jobs **ON WAY TO PRESIDENT'S DESK**
- ★ Comprehensive Energy Security & Consumer Protection Act **PASSED HOUSE**
  - ★ Making Big Oil pay its fair share for taxpayer-owned resources and transition to energy independence
  - ★ Protect consumers by releasing oil from the government stockpile and increasing home heating assistance
  - ★ National Renewable Electricity Standard (15% by 2020)
  - ★ Responsible compromise on offshore drilling and increased American production
  - ★ Standards for more efficient homes and buildings
  - ★ Reduced transit fares and expanded service
- ★ Further close "Enron-like Loophole" to curb excessive petroleum speculation **PASSED HOUSE**
- ★ Holding OPEC and Big Oil accountable for price fixing; cracking down on price gouging **PASSED HOUSE AND SENATE**
- ★ Greening the Capitol, making Congress carbon neutral **ENACTED BY HOUSE**

## REBUILDING AMERICA

- ★ Aid to the Gulf Coast recovering from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Major new commitment to flood control & environmental restoration projects **VETO OVERRIDDEN BY CONGRESS, ENACTED INTO LAW**
- ★ Omnibus Public Lands Bill, with new protections for national parks, wilderness, historic sites, trails, and water resources from coast to coast **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Modernizing and improving Amtrak and other inter-city passenger rail for energy efficiency **ON WAY TO PRESIDENT'S DESK**

## CONSUMER PROTECTION

- ★ Most sweeping FDA drug safety provisions in more than a decade **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Banning toxic toys and children's products from China and other countries and toughening enforcement of the Consumer Product Safety Commission **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Credit Cardholders' Bill of Rights **PASSED HOUSE**
- ★ Passenger Bill of Rights for airline travelers **PASSED HOUSE**



## FIGHTING CRIME

- ★ Improved background checks for gun purchases **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ 5,200 New Border Patrol Officers over two years **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Saved the critical COPS program, proposed for elimination by the President **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Reauthorized and strengthened Byrne Justice Assistance Grants (JAG) for local law enforcement, which the President had proposed eliminating **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Tools and resources to prevent and prosecute hate crimes **PASSED BY HOUSE**

## FISCAL DISCIPLINE

- ★ Pay-as-you-go budget discipline **ADOPTED IN HOUSE RULES**
- ★ A fiscally responsible budget that balances by 2012 and invests in key priorities **PASSED BY HOUSE AND SENATE, NO PRESIDENTIAL ACTION REQUIRED**
- ★ Cracking down on "no-bid" contracts **PASSED BY HOUSE AND SENATE**
- ★ Prohibiting profiteering by U.S. contractors operating in war zones **PASSED BY HOUSE**
- ★ Requiring mandatory fraud reporting for U.S. contractors **PASSED BY HOUSE**

## RESTORING ACCOUNTABILITY

- ★ Widely-acclaimed landmark lobbying and ethics reform **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ New historic independent Office of Congressional Ethics **ADOPTED IN HOUSE RULES**
- ★ Banning pensions for Members of Congress convicted of certain crimes **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Strengthening Freedom of Information Act for government transparency **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ U.S. Attorney appointments depoliticized **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Reducing enormous backlog in passport processing **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Closing offshore tax loopholes for federal contractors **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Strengthening independence of federal Inspectors General **ON WAY TO PRESIDENT'S DESK**
- ★ Whistleblower protections strengthened **PASSED BY HOUSE AND SENATE**
- ★ Holding private security firms in war zones accountable for criminal actions **PASSED BY HOUSE**
- ★ Withholding federal contracts from tax-delinquent companies **PASSED BY HOUSE**
- ★ Requiring more transparency by companies that rely on federal contracts **PASSED BY HOUSE**
- ★ Requiring standards for the preservation of White House and federal agency e-mails **PASSED BY HOUSE**

