

CONGRESSMAN

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“A PLEDGE TO AMERICA” OFFERS ALTERNATIVE TO BIG GOVERNMENT

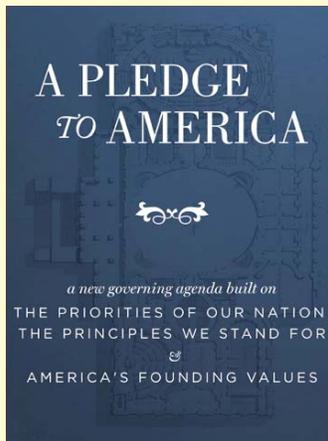
On the eve of the six-month anniversary of the enactment of President Obama’s controversial national health care program, the House Republican leadership unveiled a new legislative agenda for Congress that seeks to reverse the massive growth in government spending and Washington bureaucrats’ encroachment into our personal lives that has taken hold over the last two years.

Dubbed “A Pledge to America,” the 45-page House Republican policy blueprint was compiled from ideas Americans voiced at town halls and listening sessions and submitted to House Republican websites such as [America Speaking Out](#) and [You Cut](#). The websites alone, received over a million hits.

I’m pleased to point out the “Pledge” incorporates many of the same suggestions I received from folks during my South Alabama town meetings in August. For example, the “Pledge” promises to subject all legislation considered by Congress to a Constitutionality test. It also calls for posting all bills online 72 hours prior to a vote. The repeal and replacement of “Obamacare” — perhaps the most common request made by South Alabamians — is a major part of the new GOP “Pledge.” And that’s just the beginning.

Simply put, the Republican “Pledge to America” is an agenda designed to create jobs, cut Washington spending, and change the way Congress works. It was drafted upon the principles of a more limited government as intended by the framers of the Constitution. It seeks to bring the country back to the uniquely American belief that “any man or woman — given economic, political, and religious liberty — advance themselves, their families, and the common good.”

In the week since the “Pledge” was introduced to the American people, some conservatives have voiced disappointment that it does not immediately halt all federal red ink spending. It is important to realize the “Pledge” is a starting point, representing what House Republicans would do first if given a chance to control the Congressional agenda. Turning around a \$1.3 trillion federal budget deficit and paying down \$13 trillion in federal debt is going to take a tremendous amount of dedication and teamwork from all Americans. It cannot be accomplished in a few months, but it can be



achieved if we work together. “A Pledge to America” is a rallying cry for all conservatives to begin this enormous but worthy challenge.

Among our first priorities is to quickly restore lost confidence in our economy by giving businesses a reason to invest in jobs and growth. We propose to permanently extend the 2001 and 2003 tax cuts for all Americans, ensuring that taxes do not increase on already overburdened jobs providers and struggling workers, trying desperately to overcome the effects of the worst recession since the Great Depression.

Second, we propose to repeal “Obamacare” and start over with targeted reforms designed to

improve health care cost and accessibility for Americans. We would also put a halt to a destructive federal mandate requiring all businesses to file burdensome and costly 1099 forms each time they spend over \$600.

Third, we propose to reduce all non-security discretionary federal spending to 2008 levels and cancel federal stimulus spending, returning the unspent funds to the U.S. Treasury to pay down the debt. This measure alone would save over \$1.5 trillion in taxpayer funds over a decade. We would also institute a hiring freeze in all non-security federal jobs and reduce Congress’s own operating budget.

Other provisions of the Pledge include passing a law requiring congressional approval of every federal regulation with an impact greater than \$100 million — preventing the administration from enacting job-killing regulations without a Congressional vote.

These steps and others in our pledge will demonstrate that Congress is finally serious about getting its own fiscal house in order — growing the economy, not the federal government — while also operating with greater transparency and accountability.

While “A Pledge to America” was introduced by House Republicans, we have asked Speaker Pelosi to allow lawmakers to vote on its provisions right now. We believe that Americans should not have to wait to see these badly-needed reforms enacted. Regrettably, it does not appear that the speaker will allow any votes on our “Pledge” this Congress.

I invite everyone to download and read “A Pledge to America” by visiting <http://pledge.gop.gov/>.

GULF OIL WELL SEALED, BUT DISASTER FAR FROM OVER

On September 18, five months after the blowout of the Macondo oil well, the mile-deep gusher was permanently sealed. The event, which garnered national publicity, was met with muted enthusiasm along the Gulf Coast.

No doubt, we are all relieved the source of the unprecedented fouling of our coastal waters has been closed for good, but unfortunately, the process to make our region whole still awaits conclusion.

From the beginning of the blowout, Gulf Coast residents have endured an unacceptably slow and inconsistent damage claims process, first implemented by BP, then recently handed over to the independent Gulf Coast Claims Facility (GCCF).

For weeks and months, businesses and private citizens have steadily complained to me about the uneven treatment of their economic damage claims. Some were paid, others with similar claims were not. Many business claims have been held indefinitely without response while many others were denied.

Frankly, the early track record of the GCCF did not look good. In the first few weeks after the transfer from BP, the facility was paying on average less than 35 percent of claim amounts. I wrote to GCCF administrator Ken Feinberg on September 24, pressing him to act.

On September 29, it was reported that the GCCF had suddenly paid out nearly \$200 million in claims and area business owners were expressing relief. Time will tell if this signals a new direction in responding to the public's claims, but it's certainly encouraging.

I also welcome Mr. Feinberg's pledge to reexamine past claims payments to determine if supplemental payments are warranted. These are positive signs and I urge Mr. Feinberg to build on this progress to ensure that all claims are evaluated more quickly and fairly.

Like many of you, I am frustrated over the slow pace of the claims officials in addressing the needs of many along the Gulf Coast. Too many people and businesses are at the breaking point and stand on the precipice of total ruin.

There can be no excuse for poor performance and delays. The people of the Gulf Coast don't want more promises, we want results.

A REMARKABLE DAY FOR SOUTH ALABAMA VETERANS

On September 22, I was honored to welcome nearly 90 World War II veterans from southwest Alabama to the National World War II Memorial in Washington.

Honor Flight South Alabama left Mobile at 7AM, arriving on the National Mall by noon. Accompanied by Governor Bob Riley, the South Alabama World War II veterans toured the magnificent memorial dedicated to their service and laid a wreath at the Alabama column.

During their visit, I presented the veterans with a flag flown over the U.S. Capitol and a tribute honoring their historic and emotional journey.

Each of these patriots answered their country's call and, in so doing, became part of what has been called the "greatest generation." They are all heroes – a unique band of Americans who stood shoulder to shoulder to defend America's liberty during one of the greatest tests our nation has ever faced.

Even more than that, they are liberators. They were part of one of the noblest struggles in history, freeing millions from the terrible yoke of oppression in foreign lands and protecting the American way of life for their families and their countrymen back home.

This was the fourth Honor Flight from South Alabama to have visited Washington. For many of these veterans, this was their first and possibly last trip to see their memorial. It was a very special experience and a fitting way to honor their remarkable service.



I was pleased to welcome veterans from across southwest Alabama to Washington, DC and thank them for their service to America.



A moment of silence is shared as South Alabama veterans remember their fallen comrades and loved ones at the Alabama column of the World War II Memorial.



Governor Bob Riley flew with local veterans aboard Honor Flight South Alabama to Washington, DC on September 22. Riley served as a "guardian" for the veteran delegation which numbered nearly 90 and ranged in age from 83 to 93.

BOEING CONTINUES TO SEEK UNFAIR ADVANTAGE IN TANKER COMPETITION



Earlier this month, the World Trade Organization released a preliminary report revealing that Boeing has received major aircraft development and manufacturing subsidies. The report exposes Boeing's hypocrisy for claiming its competitor, EADS-Airbus, has solely benefited from subsidies. This is a significant development in the ongoing competition between the two aircraft companies to land the new US Air Force tanker contract.

Since June, the WTO's investigations have found that both manufacturers received government subsidies, taking away Boeing's argument that it has been placed at a competitive disadvantage. The Air Force has rightly refused to consider subsidies in its evaluation of the EADS and Boeing tanker bids.

Boeing's continued efforts to distract the focus of the tanker competition is a disservice to our military who are anxiously awaiting a new tanker fleet after nearly a decade of delays. As you know, EADS will assemble its KC-45 refueling aircraft in Mobile, generating thousands of local jobs and positively impacting some 48,000 jobs nationwide if the company wins the tanker contract this fall.

While EADS has produced a mission-capable tanker to fulfill the U.S. Air force's requirements for the future, Boeing has no current prototype. It's time for Boeing to stop making excuses and allow the tanker competition to move forward without further delay or interference.

From the mailbox...

Dear Congressman Bonner,
 Thank you for meeting the Honor Flight veterans from Mobile. I also thank you for your kind remarks in Congress and especially for the grand American flag that flew over the U.S. Capitol on September 16, 2009. It will be on my coffin when the Lord calls me home.



With kindest regards,
 A World War II Veteran
 October 10, 2009

MANY CONCERNS VOICED AT AUGUST TOWN HALL MEETINGS



Washington County residents gave me their views about the growth of government and the impact of President Obama's planned tax increases on our economy during an August town meeting at the Chatom Community Center.

In late August, I held 13 congressional town meetings across South Alabama where I heard from many of you about the direction our country is heading. While the crowds were down from the record turnout we experienced last summer, there was still plenty of enthusiasm.

I want to thank everyone who took time away from work or vacation to come and voice their opinions in person in Dauphin Island, Bayou La Batre, Satsuma, Semmes, Chatom, Jackson, Monroeville, Brewton, Flomaton, Atmore, Fairhope, Gulf Shores and Orange Beach.

Suffice it to say strong views were expressed over the way Congress and the president are governing the nation, and I received many good suggestions for reforming Washington and making government more accountable to the people. Some of those same ideas have been used in the House Republican "A Pledge to America."



Monroe County residents joined me at the Old Monroe County Courthouse in August for a frank discussion about health care, the federal budget deficit, and taxes.