

Press Release

June 7, 2006

SCHAKOWSKY ANSWERS YOUR QUESTIONS, PARTICIPATES IN ONLINE TOWN HALL MEETING

WASHINGTON, DC - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky today participated in an Online Town Hall Meeting with other Region 4 (IL, IN, KS, OK, MO) Congressional colleagues, answering constituents questions and concerns. Please click [here](#) to view a full transcript of the Online Town Hall Meeting.

Below is a transcript of the questions that Congresswoman Schakowsky answered:

Gary from Rosemont asks: Rep. Schakowsky: What in Washington DC are you doing to help bring down the national debt?

Dear Gary, Thanks for your question. I am sitting at the computer in Washington D.C. at the first on-line Town Hall Meeting for our region of the country. Here goes. First, you may be aware that President Bush inherited a budget from President Clinton that was in surplus for the first time in recent history, with surpluses projected as far as the eye can see. Since Bush has been President, the deficit is \$420 Billion and the debt is \$8.3 TRILLION, which amounts to \$28,000 for every man, woman, and child in America. During 4 of the 5 years of the Bush presidency, he has asked and the Congress has granted an increase in the allowable debt ceiling which now has risen to \$9 TRILLION. What am I doing about it? I am trying to address the causes of this out-of-control borrowing. A large part of the problem can be attributed to the tax breaks, the vast majority of which are going to the already rich in our country. In fact, this week the Senate will be considering a repeal of the estate tax (which already passed the house), a measure whose main beneficiaries are the Paris Hilton's of the world. Even though the rhetoric in favor says the repeal is meant to benefit the passing on of small businesses and family farms, the facts prove otherwise. The American Farm Bureau cannot identify even a single farm that has been lost because of the inheritance tax, which under CURRENT law, is only paid by only a tiny number of families. The \$70 Billion in tax breaks passed a few week ago in the House offers little relief to ordinary taxpayers. If you make \$40,000 you get a \$10 tax break. But if you make \$1 million per year you get \$40,000 and if you make \$10 million you get \$500,000 in a tax break you probably don't

need. Would you call this fiscal responsibility? I don't. In addition, the war in Iraq is costing \$11 million every hour, 24/7. I was opposed to the war to begin with and remain opposed for many reasons, the vast expense being one of them. Ending unnecessary tax breaks and ending the war in Iraq are two ways to bring down the national debt, combined with prudent investment and expenditures. Again, thanks for participating.

Walter from Evanston asks: Ms. Schakowsky, I am a retired police officer of 29 years. I was proud to serve the public and loved helping people. I am writing because I am concerned about social security and its future. I cannot seem to find actual facts on social security. It seems to me that everyone has a different timetable on SS. What genuine information can you tell me about social security and how worried should i be about it? thank you

Dear Walter, Thank you so much for participating in our on-line Town Hall Meeting and thank you for your former service as a police officer. The centerpiece of President Bush's domestic agenda was the privatization of Social Security -- having individuals invest part of the their benefit in the stock market. The problem with that is that it changes a guaranteed benefit into a guaranteed risk. Your retirement check would depend on how well your investments did. There is always the risk that you could lose a significant part of your retirement security. Rather than protecting Social Security, the President's plan put the whole program in great jeopardy. In order to win support for his plan, the President tried to make the case that Social Security was on the brink of collapse. Nothing could be further from the truth. Social Security will be able to pay full benefits for decades to come. Slight adjustments in the program (raising the limit on income on which people pay Social Security taxes for example) will make the program solvent through the 21st century. The only ones to really benefit from privatization of Social Security are on Wall Street. They want to get their hands on the money of millions of Americans. Fortunately, most American strongly opposed the idea once they learned more about it. For now, privatization is dead.

Bottom line -- you should be worried if the Congress decides to revisit the issue of privatizing social security. They call it creating Private Accounts or Individuals Accounts. Otherwise, there is nothing to worry about.

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Roger from Niles asks: Dear Congresswoman Schakowsky, How do you decide what projects need your attention first. Our roads here need repair and it seems to me that others in our state get road repair at a quicker pace than us. Please do not forget those of us outside of Chicago.

Dear Roger, Thank you so much for participating in our on-line Town Meeting. I have a process for deciding which projects in the 9th district need my attention. The main thing I do, is approach each Mayor in the district and ask him or her to provide a list of projects they want funded, including roads. Then we look at the Appropriations Bills and try to find the appropriate place to make the request. We accept all of the projects and work hard to get them funded. Sometimes there is money and sometimes there is not. When limited funds are available, we try to spread the money around the district so that it is fairly distributed. If money is not available one year for a project, we try to get it the next year. I have been pretty successful in bringing back millions of dollars in funding every year. In addition, my Suburban Director, Ra Joy, helps local organizations get Federal as well as state, local and private funding for their projects. There too we have been quite successful. If you have a particular concern, please call my office (773)506-7100 and ask for Ra Joy. Thanks again. Jan Schakowsky

Mason from Glenview asks: representative schakowsky are you a practicing christian? and if so, how can you defend your views on gay marriage? when is it a good time to talk about this subject?

Dear Mr. Peterson, I am not a practicing Christian. I am Jewish and now is a good time to talk about the subject. I find no contradiction in upholding the principles of my religion and supporting loving couples who pledge their fidelity to each other. I know many practicing Christians who agree with me. As someone who has been happily married for 25 years (to a man), I can't figure out how the 28 year relationship of my friends Roger and Michael in any way threatens my marriage. Michael has been ill recently, and Roger has been there to take care of him, and nurse him back to health. My friends Jackie and Ann adopted an orphan boy from Russia and are providing him a loving and nurturing home. My grandchildrfen often play with him, and he is flourishing under their care. Are not these things a blessing? I find it easy to defend love and caring and families. Though we disagree, I appreciate your participating in our on-line Town Hall Meeting. Sincerely, Jan Schakowsky ☐