

**JANUARY 31, 2006**

**SCHAKOWSKY: BUSH REFUSES TO ADMIT MISTAKES, BUT AMERICANS KNOW IT'S TIME FOR A NEW DIRECTION**

**SAYS 2005 MAY BE WORST YEAR OF BUSH PRESIDENCY**

WASHINGTON, DC - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky, a Chief Deputy Democratic Whip, released the following statement following President Bush's State of the Union Address. Representative Schakowsky wrote to President Bush last week to ask that he level with the American people about the flaws in his Medicare Part D plan and call on energy industry officials to bring down energy costs. Representative Schakowsky's calls went unanswered in the President's speech.

The full text of Representative Schakowsky's statement is below:

Two years ago, when asked to admit a mistake he had made as President, George Bush couldn't think of one. The President remained unable to admit mistakes tonight after what may have been the worst year of his presidency.

Americans have a long list of mistakes President Bush and his allies in Congress made in 2005. The Republicans have supported the interests of their cronies and big business at the expense of the American people.

The American people paid a price in 2005 because President Bush and his Republican allies made the following mistakes:

The President's disastrous Medicare Part D plans have caused headaches for millions of seniors and have caused some to pay more for drugs. Part D is a disaster because President Bush and the Republicans created a benefit that protects insurance and drug companies instead of providing a uniform, affordable benefit that helps beneficiaries.

President Bush and the Republican Congress rewarded record profit-making oil and gas companies with subsidies and giveaways this year as consumers were burned by record energy prices. Despite a warm winter, the average Midwestern consumer is paying 40% more to heat their homes this winter.

Hurricane Katrina exposed shocking holes in the Bush Administration's emergency response capabilities. Thousands of Americans were trapped in their homes and on their roofs, waiting for help that came days too late. We remain unprepared for another national emergency today. President Bush still hasn't patched significant holes in our homeland security by failing to secure our ports, our chemical and nuclear plants, and our transit systems.

Violence and instability in Iraq increased in 2005. Nearly three years after President Bush declared "Mission Accomplished" in Iraq, 846 American soldiers were killed and insurgent attacks swept across the nation. A Pentagon study this month found that 80 percent of the marines who have been killed in Iraq from wounds to the upper body could have survived if they had the extra body armor that has been available since 2003.

Last year, the President tried to replace the guarantee of lifelong Social Security benefits with risky private accounts. Now, he's on the verge of making another big mistake, trying to replace comprehensive health coverage with risky Health Savings Accounts. American families don't need to pay more for health care and they don't want barebones coverage. They want guaranteed, affordable health care and only the Democrats can do that because we put patients first, and drug and insurance company profits last.

Democrats have introduced a strong agenda to put America back on track. Our innovation agenda will keep America competitive in the 21st Century by investing in education, energy independence, broadband, and small business. Our Honest Leadership and Open Government Act will take the 'For Sale' sign off of the halls Congress, and begin to restore integrity to the legislative process.

President Bush may think he's on the right track, but Americans know we need a new direction.