

JANUARY 28, 2003

SCHAKOWSKY'S STATEMENT ON STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS BY PRESIDENT BUSH

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL), a Chief Deputy Whip and a member of the Energy and Commerce Committee, released the following statement on President Bush's State of the Union Address.

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"Across our country, workers are losing their jobs, people can't afford health care, children are being educated in overcrowded schools and families are sending their sons and daughters off to war.□ And around the world, President Bush managed to squander the international goodwill felt towards the United States following the tragedies of 9/11 and to alienate our closest allies.□

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"The State of the Union is not secure.□ Since President Bush took office, two million private sector jobs have been lost; unemployment is up to 6%, and nearly 2 million Americans have been out of work for six months or more.□ Illinois and other states have been forced to consider major cuts in health care, education and transportation programs in the face of a combined \$64 billion budget deficit.□ A \$5.6 trillion federal budget surplus was squandered because of Bush economic policies.□ Health care costs are rising at double-digit levels and 1.4 million people have joined the ranks of the uninsured.□ President Bush has been setting economic and domestic records, but they're all heading in the wrong direction.

President Bush continues to be a one-trick pony with the same trick for every situation: More tax cuts for the wealthy.□ Tax cuts for the few are higher on the White House priority list than the unmet national security, public health and educational needs of a nation.□ □

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"The American people are paying a hefty price for a Bush agenda that has ignored their priorities, squandered our nation's wealth on tax cuts for the rich, and brought us closer to war.□ In his State of the Union, instead of offering real compassionate solutions to address our nation's growing economic and domestic insecurity, President Bush will stay the course, the far right course.

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"Instead of working with Democrats to spur economic growth, help working families and create jobs, President Bush is proposing to eliminate the tax on stock dividends and to speed up the tax cuts of 2001 that overwhelmingly benefit the wealthy.□ Under his plan, millionaires would receive an average yearly tax cut of over \$90,000, while one-half of taxpayers will receive \$100 or less and one-third would get nothing at all.□ □ □

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"Are the majority of Americans better off today than they were two years ago?□ The answer is no.□ President Bush held a Rose Garden ceremony to sign the No Child Left

Behind Act, and then underfunded it by \$7 billion. He will pledge to provide affordable prescription drugs to Medicare beneficiaries but fail to mention that they'll have to join an HMO first and that he won't actually do anything to a lower drug costs. He spouts support for Homeland Security but actually cuts additional resources for the fire fighters, police and emergency health care responders who can in fact keep us safe.

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"Are we more secure today than we were two years ago? Clearly not. The President has brought us to the brink of war and alienated most of our allies by adopting a 'my way or the highway' posture. Rather than use our Superpower status to lead our allies toward forceful but peaceful disarmament of Saddam Hussein, the U.S. seems hell bent on military action. The new Bush doctrine based on the use of pre-emptive strikes, including the potential use of nuclear weapons, has put the U.S. in greater danger and has made the world a more dangerous place. The Administration, in its focus on war with Iraq, is short-changing the fight against those who actually pose an imminent threat - Al Queda and Osama bin Laden.

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"Democrats have a better answer. We know that the economy grows from the bottom up, not the top down. Our economic security and growth plan will put money in the hands of middle class consumers who will spend it, create one million jobs, provide critical aid to the states for health care and homeland security and give one million jobless workers suffering in the Bush economy a helping hand. Our prescription drug plan will not force seniors and persons with disabilities into HMOs. We will deliver comprehensive, affordable drug coverage through Medicare, not private insurers.

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"Homeland security for the American people is not only a strong defense, it is good jobs, access to healthcare, top rate education, clean environment, and leaders committed to peace and prosperity around the world. That is the Democratic vision for the State of our Union."