

JANUARY 29, 2002

**SCHAKOWSKY RESPONDS TO PRESIDENT BUSH'S STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS**

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Following President Bush's State of the Union Address, U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) said, *"Our fight today is not about whether Congress will fund the war effort or allocate the necessary resources for local, state, and federal authorities to keep us safe. We have all made that commitment. It is about whether, in order to provide tax cuts for the wealthy, we will ignore critical national needs that existed well before September 11 and still exist today. It's about Enron economics: giving to the rich and taking away from the rest."*

Schakowsky is the author of

[First Things First \(H.R. 2999\)](#)

to put on hold parts of President Bush's tax cut that benefit the wealthy, thus freeing hundreds of billions of dollars to help the nation meet its domestic priorities.

[H.R. 2999](#)

was introduced on October 2, 2001.

Below is Schakowsky's full statement.

On September 11, a few hours after the deadliest attack on our nation, Republicans and Democrats stood shoulder to shoulder on the steps of the Capitol. We showed the world that we are united, that we are strong, and that we will support President Bush in the battle to root out terrorism and secure our homeland defense. And we have. Our fight today is not about whether Congress will fund the war effort or allocate the necessary resources for local, state, and federal authorities to keep us safe. We have all made that commitment. It is about whether, in order to provide tax cuts for the wealthy, we will ignore critical national needs that existed well before September 11 and still exist today. It's about Enron economics: giving to the rich and taking away from the rest. I want to hear the President say:

- That he's going to follow through on his campaign promise that we add a prescription drug benefit to Medicare for all seniors.

- That he will fully fund an education plan that will fix our crumbling schools now, build 21st Century learning institutions, and ensure that every classroom is staffed by a well paid, qualified, and motivated teacher. And wouldn't it make sense for the President to acknowledge that the 12 million American children living in poverty are at least on his radar screen.

- That for a real change, the Fortune 500 will take a back seat to the 8 million unemployed workers who need help today.

- That he will change course and not dip into Social Security and Medicare so that rich Enron executives, like Ken Lay, get a huge bonus from the federal government and that he won't ignore thousands of their former employees who are out of work, out of money, and out of luck.
- That he is going to offer real help to families without healthcare who pray every day that their children won't get sick.
- That he has an affordable housing plan to guarantee that the 5.4 million families with worst case housing needs have a permanent roof over their heads.

**Our fight is about priorities, but President Bush has a different set - a tax cut for the rich and giveaways to mega corporations. At a time of recession, war, and massive layoffs, he's decided to place the wants of the few rich ahead of the needs of the many. Every one who pays income tax already got a tax break. It is not too much to ask the richest of the rich to wait for another tax windfall so that our country can deal responsibly with the economic and national security crises we face today. It is time to put the brakes on this reckless and irresponsible tax cut that sucked the surplus right out of the budget and to start putting our critical needs first.**

**That is why I introduced the First Things First Act of 2001 last October. It frees up \$340 billion by delaying portions of the tax cut that benefit the rich until we meet the long term critical needs of millions of Americans and respond to the September 11th terrorist attacks. It is a sound economic plan, a responsible way to invest federal dollars and a down payment on our future. Seniors, workers, and the most vulnerable in our society are unjustly expected to sacrifice so that the rich can keep on getting more tax breaks. It is fiscally irresponsible and is just plain wrong. A majority of Americans believe that in order to pay for our priorities, we should put the tax cut for the rich on hold. And that is right.**

**Democrats see priorities like prescription drugs, education, healthcare, and affordable housing as rights not luxuries. In the spirit of September 11th, let us stand together once again and deliver those priorities to the American people.**