

Congresswoman Matsui Response to the 2007 State of the Union

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Washington, DC — Congresswoman Doris O. Matsui (CA-5) issued the following statement on the President's State of the Union address this evening:

"Tonight the President reported on the State of our Union. And on the most pressing issue our nation faces, the War in Iraq, the President's stubbornness demonstrates his unwillingness to acknowledge the realities on the ground in Iraq. The President tried to make the case, yet again, for his proposed troop increase. The President's decision to escalate the Iraq war is a mistake of tragic proportions. Its costs will be borne by our men and women in uniform and their families who have already been asked to sacrifice too much. He will find that most of the Members of Congress he saw tonight, including a growing number of Republicans, are saying 'enough is enough.' A Congress that will work together to confront the President to force him to change direction — we will look at every possible way to prevent the President's escalation of the war and to bring our troops home. It is time for the President to listen to military leaders, a bipartisan majority in Congress, the independent Iraq Study Group, and the majority of the American people. It is time for the President to issue a plan to bring our troops home. While we strongly disagree on the War in Iraq, I do welcome his words of bipartisanship — to work across the aisle to address the priorities of the American people. I hope these comments are more than just rhetoric, although I have my doubts. Already this year, with the completion of the 100 hours agenda, Congress has demonstrated that we can work together to the benefit of this country. On a bipartisan basis we took the steps to make the American people safer, make our economy fairer, make our Congress more honest, and build a better future for all of America's children. But there is more work to be done — the President needs to work with the Democratic-controlled Congress to advance those priorities. Reducing the number of uninsured — Setting this nation on the path to energy independence. This is what the American people demanded of us in November. This country continues to face a health care crisis. Yet the President's solution is to propose a new tax incentive. This approach is just wrong. We need to cover the 47 million uninsured Americans. People without health coverage have plenty of incentive to get health insurance. They simply can't get access to it. Those without insurance generally can't afford it or are locked out by pre-existing conditions. A tax cut does nothing to make insurance more affordable. Nor does raising taxes on the millions of workers who do have coverage help this system. This will merely undermine the employer-based system that works for 160 million Americans. Our nation's health system is broken and simply making changes to the tax code won't fix it.

"I am encouraged that for the first time since taking office the President acknowledged that global warming is a serious problem — despite being late to the conversation. It is high time that he recognize the connection between reducing our energy dependence and stopping climate change.

" However, the President has said he would reduce energy dependence in every State of the Union he has delivered since taking office. At the same time, the United States has become increasingly dependent on foreign oil, which went

from 58 percent of all the oil consumed in the U.S. in 2000 to 70 percent in September 2006. "Over the past 6 years, President Bush has consistently used the promise of technology to avoid taking immediate, meaningful action on global warming. In reality, his energy policy has been a series of empty promises that have made the problem worse. "That needs to change. We must take real, substantive steps as soon as possible to reduce consumption of the fossil fuels that cause global warming. That means deploying available methods of solar, wind, geothermal, and biomass energy sources immediately, while also increasing conservation and efficiency. In addition, we must create a system that places limits on the polluting emissions that cause global warming. "Over the long term, we need to invest in the research and development that will lead to breakthrough technologies and solutions that will transform our energy economy. This is a generational challenge and the federal government needs to make a long-term commitment to meeting it head-on.

"It's time for the President's priorities to reflect American's priorities."

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