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NEWS

U. S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER

****EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE UPON
COMPLETION OF PRESIDENT'S REMARKS**
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STATE OF THE UNION

**PRESIDENT DELIVERS IN CLUTCH;
AMERICAN PEOPLE WATCHING TO SEE IF CONGRESS UP TO CHALLENGE**

THE PRESIDENT CAME THROUGH IN THE CLUTCH WITH HIS BOLD STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS. HE UNVEILED A RESPONSIBLE, COMPASSIONATE PLAN FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH, HEALTH CARE REFORM, EDUCATION, DEFENSE REDUCTIONS AND SECURING A NEW WORLD ORDER. BUT JUST AS IMPORTANT, HE RESISTED THE LIBERALS' CRY TO BUST THE BUDGET, TURN ON THE SPENDING MACHINE AND JACK UP THE DEFICIT EVEN MORE.

THE PRESIDENT DISPLAYED LEADERSHIP, FOR THE PRESENT AND FOR THE FUTURE, AND NOW IT'S TIME FOR CONGRESS TO DO THE SAME. LET'S FACE IT, THE AMERICAN PEOPLE ARE IN NO MOOD FOR POLITICAL GAMES ON CAPITOL HILL -- THEY KNOW THE BOTTOM LINE: IT ISN'T ONLY WHAT THE PRESIDENT SAYS, IT'S WHAT THE CONGRESS DOES.

SO THE CLOCK'S TICKING, AND THE AMERICAN PEOPLE WILL BE WATCHING -- AND TAKING NAMES -- TO SEE IF CONGRESS IS UP TO THE PRESIDENT'S CHALLENGE. CONGRESS CAN BE PART OF THE PROBLEM, OR PART OF THE SOLUTION.

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ENCOURAGING MORE SAVINGS IS ANOTHER IMPORTANT FACTOR IN A HEALTHY ECONOMY, AND I KNOW THE ADMINISTRATION IS TAKING A CLOSE LOOK AT INDIVIDUAL RETIREMENT ACCOUNTS TO BOOST THE SAVINGS RATE.

HEALTH CARE

ON THE HEALTH CARE FRONT, WE SIMPLY HAVE TO FIND A WAY TO PROVIDE QUALITY, AFFORDABLE CARE FOR AMERICA. UNFORTUNATELY, THERE ARE STILL TOO MANY FAMILIES WITH SICK CHILDREN WHO CAN'T AFFORD THE INSURANCE THEY NEED. AND THERE ARE STILL TOO MANY FAMILIES WHO CAN'T TAKE CARE OF THEIR ELDERLY PARENTS' WHO ARE IN NEED OF LONGTERM CARE. THESE ARE THE PEOPLE WE HAVE TO HELP.

IN MY VIEW, THE NATION IS ALREADY SPENDING ENOUGH ON HEALTH CARE -- A WHOPPING \$660 BILLION A YEAR. NOW IT'S TIME TO GET OUR MONEYSWORTH, AND TO MAKE THE SYSTEM MORE FAIR.

WE CAN START BY MEANS-TESTING GOVERNMENT-PROVIDED MEDICAL SERVICES, SO THAT THOSE WHO CAN AFFORD TO PAY WILL PAY THEIR FAIR SHARE, AND THOSE WHO CAN'T WILL GET THE ASSISTANCE THEY NEED.

THE CHALLENGE IS TO MAKE HEALTH CARE MORE AFFORDABLE AND MORE ACCESSIBLE, NOT TO MENTION FINDING A WAY TO PAY FOR IT ALL. THERE HAS TO BE A BALANCE, TOO. THE SMALL BUSINESSES ON OUR MAIN STREETS OF KANSAS CAN'T BE MANDATED OUT OF EXISTENCE TO PAY FOR HEALTH CARE BENEFITS, NOR SHOULD THE TAXPAYERS HAVE TO PICK UP THE WHOLE TAB, EITHER. AGAIN, TAX INCENTIVES COULD BE THE KEY, GIVING EMPLOYERS THE ENCOURAGEMENT THEY NEED TO PURCHASE AFFORDABLE INSURANCE FOR THEIR EMPLOYEES.

I HAVE BEEN AT THE FOREFRONT OF THE HEALTH CARE ISSUE FOR DECADES, AND I HAVE COME TO UNDERSTAND THAT THERE ARE NO EASY ANSWERS. COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH CARE REFORM LEGISLATION IS GETTING PLENTY OF ATTENTION ON CAPITOL HILL, AND I'LL CONTINUE TO WORK WITH THE WHITE HOUSE AND OTHER CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS TO GET THE JOB DONE.

ACTION...EVEN IN AN ELECTION YEAR

WHEN YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT THE DEFICIT AND HEALTH CARE, YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT TWO OF THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES EVER TO CONFRONT CONGRESS. SO IT'S TIME TO ACT; AND IT'S TIME TO LISTEN TO THE PEOPLE -- EVEN ON CAPITOL HILL, EVEN IN THE WHITE HOUSE, AND, YES, EVEN IN AN ELECTION YEAR.

OH, THE TEMPTATION WILL BE GREAT, WHAT WITH ELECTION DAY ONLY 284 DAYS AWAY. THE TEMPTATION WILL BE GREAT, INDEED, TO BLOCK ANYTHING THE PRESIDENT MIGHT WANT TO DO, OR PLAY GAMES WITH SOME DEMOCRAT OR REPUBLICAN INITIATIVE.

I KNOW A LOT OF ATTENTION IS BEING PAID TO POLLS AND PRESIDENTIAL POPULARITY. NO DOUBT ABOUT IT, THE PRESIDENT IS THE BIGGEST TARGET IN WASHINGTON.

BUT THE PEOPLE KNOW, TOO, THAT CONGRESS IS ALSO ACCOUNTABLE, AND RIGHT NOW MOST AMERICANS SEE CONGRESS AS PART OF THE PROBLEM -- AND THEY'LL BE TAKING NAMES.

IF I HAD TO TELL ANYBODY HOW OUR SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT WORKS THESE DAYS, I'D HAVE TO SAY: THE PRESIDENT PROPOSES, AND THE CONGRESS, TOO OFTEN, OPPOSES. UNFORTUNATELY, THAT'S A FORMULA FOR FAILURE.

LET ME RE-EMPHASIZE ONE POINT AS LONG AS I AM TALKING ABOUT FAILURE: MORE DEFICIT SPENDING WOULD BE A DISASTER FOR AMERICA. THE FACT IS, THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT CAN'T DO EVERYTHING FOR EVERYBODY. OUR TOUGH TIMES DEMAND TOUGH CHOICES, A REARRANGING OF PRIORITIES, AND THE KIND OF COOL, RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP AMERICA HAS ALWAYS LOOKED FOR IN TOUGH TIMES.

WE MUST RESIST THE CALLS FOR BIGGER TAXES, BIGGER SPENDING AND BIGGER GOVERNMENT: THAT'S NOT, REPEAT NOT THE MESSAGE AMERICANS ARE SENDING ITS ELECTED OFFICIALS.

SO, IF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE ARE TO BELIEVE ALL THE RHETORIC AND ALL THE SPEECHES THEY'VE BEEN HEARING ABOUT THE ECONOMY AND HEALTH CARE AND ALL THE OTHER CHALLENGES FACING US THIS YEAR, THEN WE IN CONGRESS, IN BOTH PARTIES, BETTER START DELIVERING INSTEAD OF JUST COMPLAINING, OR PROMISING.

THANK YOU, KANSAS

IN CONCLUSION, I WOULD JUST LIKE TO SAY THANK YOU TO EVERY KANSAN WHO TOOK THE TIME TO WRITE OR CALL ME, TO WISH ME WELL DURING MY RECENT HOSPITALIZATION AND THROUGHOUT MY CONTINUING RECOVERY.

I CAN NOT ADEQUATELY DESCRIBE WHAT THAT OUTPOURING MEANT TO ME AND ELIZABETH. I WILL NEVER FORGET IT. IT REMINDED ME AGAIN WHAT A SPECIAL PLACE KANSAS IS. THANK YOU.