

Chairman Dingell on the President's State of the Union Remarks

Statement of Congressman John D. Dingell, Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce

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Washington, DC - Rep. John D. Dingell (MI-15), Chairman of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, made the following comments tonight regarding President Bush's State of the Union remarks:

"This White House has gotten far too comfortable with placing unreasonable burdens on some Americans at the expense of all of us. In Iraq, the President wants our heroic soldiers to stand between warring factions, while failing to provide diplomatic, political and economic solutions. This war was oversold and remains understaffed -- even with the additional troops.

"The President also wants to disguise a tax break as a major new healthcare initiative. His proposal would do little to help the uninsured, most of whom have limited incomes and are in low tax brackets. This proposal will undermine the employer-based health system through which 160 million people get coverage today. By pushing people to the individual insurance market, which is largely unregulated and notorious for denying coverage to the sick and those with pre-existing conditions, it puts insurance out of reach for those who need it most.

"I'm glad the President raised the issue of climate change, but addressing this problem will require a broader vision. Unfortunately, the President did not offer significant new initiatives to implement this subject of growing public concern. Addressing climate change will require a substantial contribution from every sector of our economy.

"CAFE is an issue that needs to be addressed as well. I have not seen the President's proposal, but it sounds similar to one he made last year that did not fly. I do not want to prejudge it, however, as it may serve as a fine starting point upon which we can build.

"Biodiesel, ethanol, and other renewable fuels are vital to this nation reducing its reliance on foreign oil. Vehicles that run on these fuels are being produced in record numbers -- right here in the United States. I agree with the President that we need to do more to increase their availability as an alternative to petroleum, but the President also needs to put pressure on the oil industry to get these alternative fuels into the hands of American consumers."

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