



Statement by Senator Dianne Feinstein
On the State of the Union Address

January 31, 2006

“On the whole, I thought the speech was a mixed bag. We received a litany of different things and too few details on how the President would address the nation’s most serious problems.

First of all, regarding Iraq, the time has come for the President to stand up and say what the plan is: How and when American forces are going to be able to come home or be repositioned elsewhere in the region. Most of us know the United States cannot just withdraw immediately, because that would lead to a civil war and a terrorist state. But there needs to be a strategy and a framework, and the President has never said what that is.

Second, the initiation of the Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit has been a real mess. I had hoped that he would address it and announce what the Administration was going to do to correct the problem. But he didn’t do that.

Third, the biggest environmental issue facing us today is global warming. The President should acknowledge that global warming is real and lay out a plan for dealing with it.

There were a few minor initiatives that I liked – one which would provide 70,000 more high school teachers and 30,000 more professionals to teach math and science. That’s constructive and helpful.

But there were far more issues that I disagreed with:.

- While I agree with the President’s goal of reducing the supply of oil from the Persian Gulf, the very first thing we should be doing to break the ‘addiction to oil’ is to increase fuel economy standards for cars, trucks and SUVs.**
- There are now 46 million people in America without health insurance, but the President’s proposal to expand Health Savings Accounts would help very few of these people. Most of them cannot afford to save and the President’s plan fails to address how they would get some kind of coverage.**
- I am also concerned about the rising deficit. The President inherited a budget surplus of \$236 billion from President Clinton, the largest surplus in American history. The deficit is now projected to be \$337 billion in 2006, not**

counting new hurricane and war-related spending. The total national debt was \$5.7 trillion in 2001, and if the tax cuts are made permanent it could reach \$11.3 trillion by 2010. We cannot afford to continue down this path of fiscal irresponsibility.”

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