

*John Boehner:  
For a Majority That Matters  
January 9, 2006*

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*We've taken our lumps over the last year. Morale is low within our Conference and among our strongest supporters. It's time to bounce back -- not by expecting someone else to bail us out or trying to avoid risk but by planning and working together toward a majority with the confidence and courage to take on big problems and achieve big goals. A Majority that Matters.*

## *Where are we? Stuck in neutral, and hesitant to push the accelerator.*

Over the last 10 years we've accomplished some truly historic goals. We've balanced the budget, cut taxes, modernized uncompetitive laws governing dynamic new industries, and helped keep the economy on track through the Dotcom bubble and 9/11. As a result, our economy has soared – 14 million more people have jobs than when we took over, and living standards have risen by over 30%.

We've brought overdue accountability to the spending of federal taxpayer money. We've given young people who are trapped in failing schools a better chance at a bright future. We've helped our less fortunate find hope for their lives through faith.

And we've freed two civilizations from brutal dictatorships, with democracy's roots growing quickly in one and slower but still surely in the other.

For all this, we seem to be on a losing streak. We seem adrift, uncomfortable with our ability to reach big goals and unsure about what we stand for as a Conference. Lacking a common vision that expresses our hopes for what America can still become and our shared commitment to realizing those hopes, we've fallen into a dangerous and demoralizing cycle of the status quo, where we struggle instead of strive.

America needs more from us. The problems we face are substantial, and only Republicans have the resolve to solve them. The opportunities we face are staggering, and only Republicans have the underlying confidence in the American people to realize them. We need to get our act together, now, and show action, not just words.

How? I'd suggest that the road to our continued success as a Conference and as the ruling majority party lies in this direction:

- *We need to identify a vision – what we stand for, the America we hope to bring about – which engages our passion and common commitment. And we need to relentlessly communicate and act on that vision.*
- *We need to constantly earn the trust of our constituents: they need to feel that they can trust us to produce policies that will respond fairly to their needs, respect their values, and offer greater opportunities for reaching their own dreams.*
- *We need to set big goals that express our vision, and fully commit ourselves to achieving those goals.*
- *And we need to develop mechanisms that ground these principles in the everyday work of the House.*

This is the leadership I'd like to offer as your Majority Leader. My goal is to create a ***confident*** majority which believes that with the necessary effort, ambitious goals are achievable, and then dedicates itself to those goals – a majority that's not satisfied with surviving from one election to the next – a majority that is determined to take on big problems and solve them. ***A Majority that Matters.***

If we do these things I'm completely confident we'll reach an important political goal:

***To be a Republican Conference that, both together and as individual Members, is so trusted to act responsively and effectively in the interest of Americans and their families that we are the true dominant political party for the next generation.***

## **VISION: The City on the Hill.**

*“If we look to the answer as to why, for so many years, we achieved so much, prospered as no other people on Earth, it was because here, in this land, we unleashed the energy and individual genius of man to a greater extent than has ever been done before.” Ronald Reagan, First Inaugural Address, Washington, DC, January 20, 1981.*

*“We are fighting to save the whole world from the pestilence of Nazi tyranny and in defense of all that is most sacred to man. This is no war of domination or imperial aggrandizement or material gain; no war to shut any country out of its sunlight and means of progress. It is a war, viewed in its inherent quality, to establish, on impregnable rocks, the rights of the individual, and it is a war to establish and revive the stature of man.” Winston S. Churchill, September 3, 1939.*

*"Do not be afraid to tell the truth. Do not be afraid of the system. People are created not to enmity but to solidarity. Let the Holy Spirit descend and renew the face of the land, this land." Pope John Paul II, Warsaw, Poland, June 2, 1979.*

A vision is a beacon that lights the way to the future. It inspires you and others to great things, it helps structure priorities, and it tells you what you

*shouldn't* be doing as well as what you should. It insists on commitment to principle. A vision doesn't have to be achievable in the foreseeable future: Ronald Reagan was still talking about reaching his "City on the Hill" after communism had been vanquished and the American economy set on a course of entrepreneurial growth that sustains us to this day. If you're making steady, principled progress, you're serving your vision well.

But you never know. If a vision is powerful enough and the commitment to it great enough, it might even come true. President Reagan left the White House with America much as he hoped it would be in that first inaugural address. The Nazis were defeated. And in August 1989, Poland became free.

A vision is important for a group like our Conference for other reasons as well. The very act of crafting a vision engages us all at our most fundamental levels: what we believe in, what our constituents believe in, what drives us as people and as legislators. Just as important for an institution like the House, a vision confers ownership – you may not be on the committee that produced a given bill, but if the bill is consistent with the vision you participated in, it's just as much your bill as anyone else's.

There are huge tactical benefits as well. When we are united behind a common vision, the necessary compromise of the legislative process, with both Democrats and the Senate, takes place on our terms. That has been a huge lesson of my Committee Chairmanship, and why we've been able to drive policies grounded soundly in conservative principles and still get significant bipartisan support.

As a critical part of the overall effort to get back on the offensive, we need to go back to our collective drawing board and figure out what our vision is. This will be – and should be – hard work. We bring diverse experiences, constituencies, and priorities to the mix, and it must engage *all* of us. To do what a vision needs to do – inspire, guide, allow priorities to be set and challenges identified – it needs your input. The words have to matter to you, because if they matter to you they'll matter to your constituents, and because the very process of finding the right vision will bring us together as a conference.

I hope the conversations I'll be having with you and the rest of our colleagues over the next few weeks will give me enough to start our work. Here's what I'd contemplate:



- Immediately upon concluding our leadership elections, I'll circulate a questionnaire asking your thoughts on what a vision statement should include. I'll name a dozen Members, representing a broad cross-section of the Conference, to produce a draft vision. They'll be responsible for seeking your thoughts and concerns as well. I'll be directly involved but my role will be to facilitate: this is our vision, not my vision. I commit to you that every Member will have a voice in what that vision is, and how we achieve it.
- By the first week of March, we'll take the draft vision to the entire Conference and, if there's sufficient agreement, we'll ratify it.
- Once we agree, I will relentlessly use every opportunity possible to communicate to our entire national audience what our vision is and how, in the short term, we're going to make progress toward it. I will hound Committee Chairs, I will insist that any bill going to the floor be consistent with our vision, and I will push for new initiatives to carry it out.

Some will question whether tying ourselves to a common vision exposes us to greater political risk. I think it's just the opposite. I think that if we

combine vision and responsible action, voters will respect us for standing for more than just reelection. Our top-tier recruiting targets will want to join a team that believes it can accomplish great things. And our more senior Members will think twice about leaving a group whose real achievement is yet to come.

**A vision means action, not just words.** To show that we're serious about our vision, I want us to identify one big, bold goal drawn from it which we will pass through the House next year. Maybe it's a tax reform bill; maybe it's budget reform. What's important is that it's bold, it's achievable, and it's representative of where we, as a ruling majority, want to take the country. Again, I'd like us to talk about this and decide it at our retreat.

I've talked a lot about vision. What's my vision? Here's what my staff and I have used, mostly unchanged, for the last 10 years:

***“A better America based on individual freedoms and opportunities, empowered citizens, personal and community responsibility, and restored trust between citizens and their government.”***

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**What's yours?**

**What's OURS?**

## **Building Trust: Jack Abramoff, and Our Response.**

Developing and communicating a vision with our voters requires trust, and clearly the recent events surrounding Jack Abramoff have had a major impact on that trust. We need to address what the Abramoff scandal represents, directly and honestly. After all, to keep the trust, you have to earn the trust.

It might surprise those who entered the House over the last 10 years that I cut my teeth here as a reformer. Along with several of my colleagues – the so-called “Gang of Seven” – I exposed and closed a House bank upon which dozens of Members had written bad checks, exposed House accounting books that were so bad they couldn’t even be audited, and exposed how some Members used the House Post Office to cash in unused official postage stamps for their own personal benefit.

Several senior Democrat Members lost their seats because of those exposures, along with some Republicans. Some Democrats, including former Ways and Means Committee Chairman Dan Rostenkowski, went to jail. These patterns of corruption showed a Democrat Party that had grown

complacent and self-serving after 40 years of control of Congress, and were a big reason Americans gave control of the House to Republicans in 1994.

So when it comes to institutional ethics and reform, I've got some experience, and some thoughts I'd like to share with you.

The sordid spectacle of Jack Abramoff arises from two factors whose connection he personified, and I would suggest that any response that's actually going to be effective will have to address those factors.

The first factor is the tremendous power of the federal government and the role of Congress in funding the federal government. When a few words in a bill we pass can mean tens of millions – even hundreds of millions – to a company or a group, there is every incentive for them to spend the relative pittance that they think – or are led to think – might help them get those few words in law.

Second is that many of the lobbyists who enter our offices every day to represent their clients are, for all practical purposes, complete mysteries to us. Yet for the House to function, some degree of trust is necessary. Many lobbyists are of the highest integrity and feel as much of a duty to the House

as a democratic institution as they do to their clients. But there's every incentive for those with more questionable ethics to shortchange us and the House. And absent our personal, longstanding relationships, there is no way for us to tell the difference between the two.

So I'd offer a few thoughts for how to respond to the Abramoff scandal:

- What Abramoff and his colleagues have admitted to doing is already illegal; the allegations against House colleagues, if proven, are already impermissible under House rules.
- We should think seriously about bringing greater transparency to the lobbying industry. Anyone – *anyone* – can call himself or herself a lobbyist, recruit clients, and make appearances on their behalf on the Hill. Clearer standards and greater transparency would promote greater institutional integrity and protect us against those in the industry who put their own short-term interests against the public trust.
- Many of us have served in state government, which have their own systems in place for ensuring integrity in public office. We need to take full advantage of their experience with these systems and how they've worked.

Accordingly, I'd convene a task force of current House Members who have previously served in state government to identify best practices currently in place at the state level.

- We need to get our arms around the power that our budget represents. We need to distinguish, for example, between legitimate earmarks with a clear local need and those for which the merits are less well demonstrated.
- But finally, we need to dedicate ourselves to serving the real needs and principles of our constituents. The corruption of Dan Rostenkowski and other Democrats in the early 1990s stuck to their colleagues because Americans thought House Democrats were putting their own welfare above the welfare of Americans. *We can't let voters think the same about us.* So just as important as any specific reform is our commitment to legislating. If we are bold and dutiful in doing our jobs – if we show action, not just words – voters will respect that.

## **TRUST: The Foundation of Leadership.**

*“I've had my share of victories in the Congress, but what few people noticed is that I never won anything you didn't win for me. They never saw my troops, they never saw Reagan's regiments, the American people. You won every battle with every call you made and letter you wrote demanding action.” Ronald Reagan, Farewell Address, January 11, 1989.*

**Building trust is a long-term necessity as well. To reach our vision, voters have to trust us – to know that everything we do is driven by our belief in how best to promote the prosperity, freedom, and opportunity of the American people. Ronald Reagan earned this trust and was consequently able to bring change to Washington. We have to as well.**

Earning and maintaining this trust is particularly important because of our philosophy. We fundamentally don't believe that every problem needs a federal solution or that every crisis demands a program. We believe much more deeply in the power of individuals, communities, and markets to solve problems effectively, and most of our efforts go into removing obstacles to their ability to do so.



This isn't what the press expects, and it's not what most Beltway constituencies expect. When a crisis hits, they want a specific response. It might be legislation to make sure the crisis never happens again, though the same legislation might also make sure a number of good things don't happen as well. If it's a long-term trend, they might expect subsidies or preferences to protect the status quo, even if the status quo isn't viable. But there's less of a built-in Beltway constituency for a party that, like ours, believes in its bones that we will be better off if people have more freedom and more opportunity.

That's why constantly building a relationship of trust with voters – some our constituents, some we hope will be – is so critical. Trust gets you the benefit of the doubt. Trust allows you to persuade voters that well-intentioned fixes can have serious negative consequences down the road. Trust allows you to take the risks necessary to approach big problems with bold solutions.

We need to think of building trust as a critical principle, and take it as seriously as we do our legislative goals. I'd suggest thinking of it this way:

➤ *Are we engaging the issues that voters care about?*

- *Are we solving the problems that affect them?*
- *Are our solutions consistent with their values – and do they feel this way?*

If we conduct ourselves in a manner that satisfies these questions, I think we're well on our way toward a Majority that Matters. But building trust is in itself a huge commitment. It's hard work generating policies that broad numbers of voters can identify with; it's hard work holding government accountable to them and their values; it's hard work communicating freedom when the press sees freedom as just more risk. It's especially hard work when the act of public service is seen by so many as self-serving and cynical. But *it must be done*. I'll have more to say later about specific mechanisms that will help us build trust over the long term.

I should note that everything I'm saying here about trust between us and our constituents also goes for the trust between the Leadership and the Members. It's hard work to earn it and harder work to keep it. *Again: Action, not just words*. I'll do both: that's my commitment to you.

## **Setting Big Goals: Putting Vision to Work.**

*“We choose to go to the moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard, because that goal will serve to organize and measure the best of our energies and skills, because that challenge is one that we are willing to accept, one we are unwilling to postpone, and one which we intend to win, and the others, too.” John F. Kennedy, Houston, Texas, September 12, 1962.*

*“Of all the things I’ve done, the most vital is coordinating the talents of those who work for us and pointing them toward a certain goal.” Walt Disney, 1954.*

*“The most powerful limitations are those we put on ourselves.” Me. Now.*

It was December 1992. The first Democratic President since Jimmy Carter had just been elected. For the first time in a dozen years, Republicans in Washington had *nothing*: the entire federal government was under Democratic control. And Democrats were planning the biggest inauguration parties in years to celebrate.

Yet some of us had a goal: to bring about a Republican Majority in the House of Representatives for the first time since 1957. This wasn't a pie-in-the-sky or an idle hope. We had studied all sorts of voting and demographic data going back years and going into every county and every precinct in the country. We had looked at the Democrat agenda and calculated how most voters would respond to it. We wrestled – with toughness and candor – with the reasons President Bush had lost and Bill Clinton had won. We looked at the ossified and unaccountable institution that the House had become under 40 years of Democrat leadership.

And we calculated that if Republicans could show that we were up to the job – that we would represent voters' principles and values, and we would gladly hold ourselves accountable to them – we could do something widely assumed to be impossible.

If you were here then, you have your own memories of this. I remember being regularly laughed at throughout 1994 when predicting a Republican landslide (and a landslide it was – a 53-seat pickup in one night). I remember lots and lots of travel, often to districts that hadn't voted for a Republican Member of Congress in the history of our nation. I remember brilliant

legislative tacticians like our colleague David Dreier and Bob Walker tying the Democrats in knots on the House floor. And I remember the countless hours of work by overburdened Members and their staffs to develop Republican initiatives which represented our philosophy and served important voter needs – the *Contract with America*.

My point for this isn't a walk through memory lane, but to talk about goals. Taking back the House was a wildly audacious goal, but it was based on hard data, responsible assumptions, and shared commitment. We could have aimed lower and gotten laughed at less. We didn't, and in going for the audacious (but well-founded) goal over the safe one, and seizing it, we revitalized our party, demonstrated conservative government more broadly even than President Reagan (who had to work with legislation passed by a Democratic House), and changed America.

So we, as a conference in 2006, should continue to set big goals, and we should commit to achieving them. But we should do this with these things in mind:

- *Boldness is itself a virtue.* It cuts through the media clutter, commands attention, and conveys both your seriousness and commitment to

principle. No one understands this better than President Bush, who made boldness the signature of his first term.

- *But brashness is not.* Setting a bold goal without doing the homework is simply suicidal. Before identifying a big goal, it's critical to identify obstacles as well as opportunities, and try to solve them before they get out of hand. Goals should be bold but, with reasonable assumptions and committed effort, achievable.
  
- *Once you've identified a goal and a strategy to reach it, you must use every resource at hand to succeed.* When I became Chairman of the Education and Workforce Committee, I made a big investment in significantly beefing up our planning, communications and coalitions operations. Now, for every substantive initiative we pursue, there's a well-considered strategy that coordinates policy, Member outreach, communications, and coalition support. Because we're hitting on all cylinders, we've been able to pursue a conservative Republican agenda – greater governmental accountability, greater individual freedom – in a way that's positive for our Republican Members and successful on the floor.

A Majority that Matters sets big goals and plays to win. As a precursor to the conversations I'll be having with you over the next few days and months, here are some big goals I'd like to see us take up in 2006:

- *Pass through the House a major initiative that directly reflects our shared vision.*
- *Pass a Budget conference report that holds the line on spending by early April at the latest.*
- *Enact all our appropriations bills by September 30.*
- *Develop an agenda we will run on for 2006, reflecting principles of economic growth, fiscal discipline, our cultural values, and enhanced access to critical needs like health care, retirement security, and education.*
- *Limit our own retirements and recruit the best candidates possible to hold Republican seats and beat incumbent Democrats.*

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**What do you think? Are these worthwhile goals for ourselves and our constituents? For you and your constituents?**



## **Making the House Work: Grounding our Goals and our Vision in our Daily Lives.**

*“Plans are only good intentions unless they immediately degenerate into hard work.” Peter Drucker.*

To do any of what I’ve described will take all our talents, energy, and experience. The Leadership has made huge progress reorganizing critical institutions like the Steering Committee process and the Appropriations Committee structure, so that they’re more conducive to our ongoing priorities. But we need to do more to achieve the bigger goals and solve the bigger problems ahead of us. Here’s what I’d suggest.

First, we need to rethink the way Committees relate to the Leadership and to each other. For the most part, the Committees focus on reporting bills to the House, and then the Leadership determines whether there is adequate support within the conference for putting them on the floor, and then does the necessary outreach to pass them. On occasion, the Leadership will urge Committees to take up specific legislation for political purposes, and generally

Committees will cooperate. It is rare to watch multiple Committees work together on the same project.

This sounds logical, but in fact is a prescription for being reactive instead of proactive. Without clear guidance at the outset, Committees don't know how to allocate their time and efforts toward projects which would truly most benefit the conference. Without a political and communications strategy aimed for the entire House, it's hard for Committees to be as successful on the floor as they could be. And unless we get Committees used to working together on common goals, we sacrifice a lot of good ideas because of jurisdictional concerns.

The elected Leadership is important, but the lifeblood of the House runs through the Committees and their members. Making sure our Leadership and Committees are acting effectively and efficiently together is the single most vital thing that Leadership can do.

So what I'm proposing is to establish consistent practices that will help us be proactive, help us make progress toward our vision, and help us make the most of our talents, interests, and imagination.

- ***Implementing our vision across jurisdictional lines.***  
Committee jurisdictional lines are necessary for the efficient working of the House, but they can also present obstacles to developing and advancing our very best ideas. And many important themes cross jurisdictional lines. I would propose identifying key substantive themes, based on our vision, and then creating groups of Committees whose jurisdictions relate to those themes. These groups would then be responsible for developing agendas to drive those themes. Leadership would facilitate, but responsibility for developing and advancing these agendas would remain with the Committees.
  
- ***Planning for Success.*** As I've said before, battles are ultimately won with superior preparation – planning, strategy, identifying weaknesses early and solving them before they become exposed. We are most successful advancing both policy and political goals when we integrate policymaking with strategy. Big goals take communications and outreach strategies as well as policy strategies, and each is stronger when informed by the others.

Sometimes a lot of planning is unnecessary, and I'm not suggesting we create more work for our staffs and our Members solely to fill out paperwork. But if our goals are serious, we have to take them seriously. My job will be to facilitate planning for success without interfering with the Committees' prerogatives to set policy, and to make sure that any bill that will subject Members to political risk will have sufficient political and communications support.

- ***Win the debate as well as the vote.*** A confident Majority isn't satisfied with winning just because we have more votes; we want to win because we're right on the merits as well.

We are used to working so hard to get the votes necessary to pass legislation that in some cases, formal debate becomes an unnecessary interruption toward a known conclusion. I've been guilty of this as well: "Let the Democrats talk – I've got the votes."

We need to be more ambitious. Democrats live for debate because, as the minority party, it's all they have. They have the

advantage of being able to spend more time preparing for debate. We have the advantage of being right on 99% of the issues we address. When we stop caring urgently about winning the debate as well as the vote, we lose confidence in that, and even victories seem a little hollow. On the other hand, their confidence rises with their own performance.

We need to win debates on the House floor, and win them emphatically. We need to make consideration of bills more open – and always guaranteeing the Democrats the right to offer a substitute amendment, *even when they don't want to offer one*, so that voters can size us both up and see which philosophy and which proposal they support. It's a way of communicating our confidence to our Democrats, of everyone participating in team successes, and ultimately of persuading both the Washington establishment and our constituents that we can always be trusted to act responsibly and effectively.

## **Taking Control of the Budget.**

The single most direct challenge I think we all face is the budget. Whether you're a budget hawk or a tax-cutter, you know that federal spending is on a path that directly imperils the future of our children and our nation. But we've learned all too well that both the current process and the Washington culture are stacked against fiscal discipline.

Here's what I'd propose:

Fix the Congressional Budget Act. Essentially, we're the victim of a process set up by Democrats in 1974 – who were so committed to increasing federal spending that they tried to impeach the sitting President for not spending enough. The CBA locks in annual increases so that even a slight reduction in the rate of a program's growth is labeled a cut, even if the program is reformed to provide greater benefits for less money. The tax policy scoring process dramatically underestimates the real revenue generated by growth-building tax policies. And year-in and year-out, their numbers are consistently wrong, almost always underestimating the importance to the federal budget of a strong and growing economy.

We need to fix the CBA and the scoring models so that they respect growth and they don't affirmatively discourage fiscal responsibility which is politically viable. Several of our colleagues have explored the idea at length and I think it's important we give their ideas urgency and action.

Prioritize Budgetary Discipline. We simply have to make spending discipline as specific and vital a part of our individual and committee responsibilities as any other part of our agenda. Just as we seek individual ways to cut taxes, we need to look for, identify, and move on ways to spend less money while still respecting the vital commitments from the federal government that many Americans rely on. If you have an idea for cutting spending, I'll want to hear about it, and I'll make sure it gets heard and, if it's viable, acted on.

### **Planning for the Long Term.**

Many of our greatest achievements took years to reach fruition. Many of the achievements that still lie ahead of us will also. I believe it makes more sense to be candid about how long an initiative will take to be enacted, and to

plan and act accordingly, than to rush something and then get frustrated when the Senate doesn't act.

Here's what I'd propose:

1. As part of the Steering Committee process of selecting Chairmen, ask Members to identify their top goals for their entire six-year term, and for the larger and longer-term goals, ask for strategies and yearly progress targets.
2. Use the same process to get commitment to educate Committee Members, press, and constituencies on long-term trends affecting the issues within their jurisdiction.
3. Identify interest from Committee Members in similar long-term projects and in supporting those projects over long-term.
4. Finally, we should ourselves map out long-term goals for the conference. What do we intend to achieve in five years? Ten years? How?



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One reason I think the Social Security effort failed last year was that we thought of it as a big project that had to be accomplished over one year. Often, that's true – we need to act quickly to take advantage of a political environment that might change quickly. But just as often, we are more successful pursuing big goals by breaking them up and pursuing them in pieces.

## ***My Own View – Our Challenges and Opportunities.***

I'd be remiss if I didn't share with you what I see as some major challenges and opportunities that will be facing us in the next several years.

First is the budget. We all know Social Security receipts start slowing down next year, that payments will start exceeding receipts within a dozen years, and that the trust fund will be exhausted within 20 years after that – probably faster, given current increases in life expectancy. Other entitlement programs are also on unsustainable paths. As I've said in every campaign in my district since 1990, we need to fix these problems soon because they just get harder over time. And I believe that if we as a Republican Congress can pass fair, responsible reforms that preserve the key promises of these programs while protecting their long-term health, we'll be rewarded at election time.

Terrorism and national security challenges are both different and more directly challenging than ever before. We now have enemies who are willing to kill themselves to inflict harm on Americans, anywhere. I fully agree with the U.S. soldiers on the ground and with Iraqis that democracy will ultimately

prevail in Iraq, but it will take patience and continued commitment on our part. And for the first time, our chief rival as a world power has strong economic relationships with U.S. firms but is potentially hostile to us militarily and repugnant to us politically.

I'm also concerned, though, about the tremendous change that our economy has undergone over the last several years. This change will accelerate as quickly as new technology develops. We have gone from an economy based in producing things to one that trades in knowledge. U.S. employers whose businesses are rooted in superior knowledge – business models, management practices, high worker skill base, technology – will do well and thrive. Those that won't will have a harder go of it.

This means that everything, every day, is up for grabs. We've already seen entire industries develop in a matter of years, where it once took decades. Google now sells more advertising than any media outlet in the country; it didn't even exist 10 years ago. Jobs are being destroyed and created at an incredible pace – over 800,000 every three months. And the very nature of work is changing, from showing up every day and “doing your job” to creating new products, services, and ways of delivering them.

In this kind of world, past success is no indicator of future success. As never before we're going to rely on our entrepreneurs – the wellspring of our economy – to break with the old and create the new industries, companies, and jobs of tomorrow. But we're asking them to do it with an endlessly complex tax code that, for the most part, is 50 years old and regulatory structures that developed during the Great Depression. The concept of lifelong employment with a single private sector employer will soon become a thing of the past, if it hasn't already, and we need to provide American workers and their families with vehicles for health care, retirement security, and job training so that they can thrive in this environment of change.

And we need to do a much better job educating our children. We spend more on education per student than any country in the developed world, yet our children's performance on international science and math tests is at best mediocre. As Alan Greenspan told my committee in March of 2004, in today's world, we'll need not just to set high standards for our schools and meet them, we'll have to constantly raise those standards, and constantly meet those higher expectations.

Yet for all that, if we meet our challenges and solve the problems that need to be solved, *if we show action, not just words*, we could leave our

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children and grandchildren a world we can barely dream of, and would never have dared hope for. Where doctors succeed in taming diseases that today are fatal, where democracy turns back the tide of terrorist hatred and replaces it with peace, where as never before the highest aspirations of individuals, their families, and communities are within reach.

Where our children, and their children, endlessly express their abiding faith in themselves and their future with the same determined confidence of my hero (and maybe yours) Ronald Reagan: “*You ain’t seen nothing yet.*”

I’m up for it if you are.