

Washington, DC - Georgia Congressman John Barrow (D-Savannah) issued the following statement regarding President Bush's State of the Union address, delivered earlier this evening:

"Tonight, President Bush outlined many of the challenges facing our nation, both foreign and domestic. He described what he believes it will take to keep America 'competitive' as our nation moves forward in the world.

"Keeping our nation competitive starts by putting America first. I'm pleased that the President spoke about two important challenges facing the people I represent - the out of control costs of both healthcare and energy.

"I strongly agree with President Bush when he says that we can't compete if we can't make health care more affordable. However, while Health Savings Accounts may be good for people who already have health insurance, they don't help those people who can't afford health insurance premiums to begin with. The problem at the heart of our nation's healthcare crisis is that out of control premium costs have put affordable health insurance out of reach for too many American working families - and that's where Congress needs to focus its attention."

"When the number of Americans without health insurance goes up, the cost of health insurance for the rest of us goes up. That's why I introduced the Small Business Health Insurance Promotion Act, which provides small businesses with the tax credits and purchasing power they need to offer their employees decent health insurance at a decent price."

"President Bush also talked about the importance of weaning our country off its 'addiction' to foreign oil. We shouldn't have to depend on countries half a world away - countries that often don't share our values and are opposed to our way of life - to run our cars and to power our homes and businesses.

"Energy independence is as much a national security issue as it is an economic security issue. The President's right: the future of energy is in innovation. Congress must make a serious investment in the technology and science that will turn our nation into the leading producer of energy, not just the leading consumer.

"To get anything done for the American people, Congress has got to work together. I hope we can put our differences aside, work with the President, and come together to do what's best for the people we represent."

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Contact: Harper Lawson, (202) 225-2823

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