

**Washington, DC** - 12th District Representative John Barrow (D-GA) issued the following statement in response to President Bush's State of the Union address, delivered earlier this evening:

"Tonight, President Bush spoke to Americans regarding the health of our nation and detailing the challenges facing our future.

"I share the President's pride in the successful election in Iraq this past weekend, and our troops deserve our gratitude. The election in Iraq is an historic event that the entire world should celebrate. We can only pray that Sunday's success is a sign of progress to come. As we work with the Iraqi people to form a wall against terrorism in all its forms, it's important that we give our troops the tools they need to do their jobs.

"I also share the President's desire to enact real fiscal discipline to reduce our nation's ballooning deficit. We own it to our children and grandchildren not to pass that burden on to the next generation.

“This evening's speech was billed as a roadmap for the President's legislative agenda this year. Unfortunately, the speech highlighted the President's plan to take Social Security in the wrong direction.

“It was irresponsible for the President to claim that Social Security ‘is headed toward bankruptcy.’ That couldn't be further from the truth. Georgians deserve to hear the truth about Social Security, not exaggerations and scare tactics.

And the fact is that Social Security will be fully solvent until at least 2042.

The sky is not falling - Social Security is not headed toward bankruptcy - and cutting benefits is not the answer to solving its long term challenges.

“The President argues that Social Security is outdated. I disagree. As our country grows and times change, it becomes even more important that we keep the promise of Social Security. The President said he ‘will work with members of Congress to find the most effective combination of reforms’ to strengthen Social Security, and I take him at his word.

That was the spirit of bipartisanship that guided the last series of Social Security reforms over 20 years ago, and the same approach should apply today.

If two leaders with as many differences as Ronald Reagan and Tip O'Neill could come together to solve this problem back then, then we ought to be able to do the same today.”

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