



WASHINGTON, D.C. - Today, Congressman John W. Olver (D-1st District) released the following in response to the President's State of the Union address:

Middle East Peace

"Brokering a Middle East peace agreement has clearly taken a back seat to the president's other interests in the Middle East. Bush could have built upon Clinton's momentum, but instead he removed our voice completely from the dialogue. Hopefully we still have the political capital in the region necessary to bring everyone to the table to reach an agreement."

The Iraq Surge

"The president said the surge would be a short-term effort to give the Iraqis room to make political accommodations to meet a series of benchmarks for success. While violence has decreased over the past months, the surge has failed in its chief objective to bring about political compromise on a national level.

"The bottom line is that peace and stability for Iraq cannot be secured militarily but only politically. The President's continued reliance on military solutions to address Iraq's deep political and religious divisions will not work. We must replace our military surge with a

diplomatic surge, including all of Iraq's neighbors without precondition. Only then can we begin to reverse the erosion of our international clout caused by the Iraq War."

The Economy

"Families are struggling every day to pay their bills, heat their homes and pay their mortgages. As we look at what's happening in the economy, it's very important to recognize how the policies of the last seven years have contributed.

"I am glad it looks like something will be done because a compromise package is better than no package at all. And this rebate, unlike the president's previous tax policies that only benefitted the wealthy, will go to those who need it most. Our economy needs a real shot in the arm; we could not have afforded to hit rock bottom before coming up with a fix."

Energy

"The landmark energy legislation that recently became law was a long-overdue first step, but we cannot stop there. We must make major investments in developing renewable energy technologies, energy conservation and energy efficiency that will reduce consumer costs, create new jobs and combat the risks of climate change. It would be a real shame if we lost momentum and did not take that next step."

FISA Reauthorization

"This is a clear cut case of the administration using fear mongering tactics to expand executive power at the expense of civil liberties and balance of powers. It is now up to Congress to restore the balance between protecting our national security and safeguarding our civil liberties."

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