

The Hill Blog: Reflections on State of the Union Address

The Hill's Congress Blog posted Gus's thoughts on the President's seventh and final State of the Union Address.

Gus pointed out some of the important issues brought up last night by the President, like the economic stimulus package agreed to last week with House Congressional leaders.

In his speech, the President made several pronouncements, such as improving benefits for veterans and military personnel and their families, and changes in the tax code to make health care more accessible.

A substantial part of the President's speech focused on the need for Congress to stimulate the economy over the short-term by passing the negotiated stimulus package, while at the same time ensuring long-term economic health through the permanence of existing tax relief. I believe Congress should go a step further and include a permanent repeal of the AMT and death tax in this laundry list of issues to address in 2008.

On Tuesday, the House overwhelming passed, and Gus supported, the economic stimulus package (H.R. 5140) that will now go to the Senate, where it is expected to hit a slowdown in momentum on its way to the President's desk.

Passed under the suspension of the rules (limited debate), the \$146 billion stimulus package would give rebates of \$600 and \$1,200 to more than 117 million taxpayers and spur business investment and job creation. The Senate may add billions more in funding for the unemployed and senior citizens.

Illegal Immigration and CAT Fund

In the post, Gus also pointed out some of the issues he thought the President should have more thoroughly addressed in his speech, namely illegal immigration reform and a commitment toward developing a national catastrophe fund.

The President's speech would have been better had he readjusted his position on illegal immigration. In my opinion, his proposal still focuses too heavily on rewarding illegal behavior and does not place enough of an emphasis on bolstering our nation's borders and holding illegal immigrants to the same letter of the law as any other American.

Additionally, the President could have used last night's speech as an opportunity to push for a national catastrophe fund to help ease the cost and burdens of homeownership in disaster prone regions, particularly in a state like Florida where

2007 home foreclosure rates are up 275 percent, the