



DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Rahm Emanuel, Chairman
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ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE DEMOCRATIC HOUSE

In the first six months of this year, Democrats have produced a strong record of bringing a new direction to Washington and accomplishing the people's business. Democrats have passed a strong bipartisan agenda with measures that regularly pass with dozens of Republican votes. Democrats have raised the minimum wage and increased funding for veterans health care. House Democrats have also passed strong ethics and lobbying reform, fighting the high costs of gasoline, making college more affordable, and protecting the Homeland.

CLEANING HOUSE: PASSING TOUGH ETHICS AND LOBBYING REFORM

Democrats Pass Strong New Ethics Rules and Earmark Reform With Nearly Unanimous Support.

As its first act, the new Democratic majority passed an extensive ethics rules overhaul during their first days in Congress. The new rules package banned gifts and meals from lobbyists, as well as tightened restrictions on travel paid for by outside groups. The new rules also reforms the earmark process, including defining what an earmark is, requiring members to certify that neither they nor their spouses will benefit from an earmark, and most importantly, bringing sunshine to the process by making public the written requests of members for earmarks included in a bill. [H. Res. 6; Vote #6, Vote #7, Vote #8; 1/4/07, 1/5/07]

Democrats Unanimously Pass Legislation to Bar Pensions for Corrupt Congressmen. In January, the House passed the Pension Forfeiture Act, a bill that will strip the congressional pensions of members convicted of felonies related to their official duties. [H.R. 476, Vote #49, 1/23/07]

Democratic House Kept Its Promise To Break The Link Between Lobbyists And Legislators with 186 Republicans in Support. In May, the Democratic House passed the Honest Leadership and Open Government Act of 2007. This bill clamps down on the "revolving door" by requiring members and staff to recuse themselves from pertinent legislation when negotiating future employment, requires more thorough and more frequent disclosure of lobbying activities, requires disclosure of campaign contributions "bundled" by lobbyists, and increases the penalties for bad actors. Additionally, the bill requires registered lobbyists to disclose when they request earmarks from members of Congress and their staffs. [H.R. 2316, Vote #423, 5/24/07]

BALANCING THE BUDGET AND STIMULATING THE ECONOMY

Democrats Pass a Responsible Blueprint to Balance the Budget, Tough Pay as You Go Rules. In January, Democrats passed, with the support of 49 Republicans, tough new rules to ensure that new spending and tax cuts be offset by cuts elsewhere in the budget. Then in May Democrats passed a budget that would finally implement the fiscal discipline absent during six years of Bush and Republican rule. [H. Res. 6, Vote #9, 1/5/07; S Con. Res 21, Vote #377, 5/17/07; CQ House Action, 5/16/07]

Democratic Congress Passes the First Minimum Wage Increase in a Decade. The Democratic Congress passed the first increase in the minimum wage in ten years. The legislation increases the federal

minimum wage by \$2.10 an hour over two years — from its current level of \$5.15 an hour to \$7.25 an hour. [H.R. 2206, Vote #424, 5/24/07; CQ House Action Report, 5/24/07]

- **Over 80 Republicans Voted to Raise the Minimum Wage.** During original House passage, Eighty-two Republicans voted for the Democratic bill to raise the minimum wage from \$5.15 an hour to \$7.25 an hour. Every Democrat in the House voted for this bill. The Republican motion to recommit was opposed by fifty-four Republicans and had the support of no Democrats. [H. R. 2, Vote #18, 1/9/07; H. R. 1, Vote #17, 1/9/07]

Democratic Congress Passes Tax Relief for Small Businesses. The Democratic Congress passed a small business tax relief package that included several important measures. The legislation extends the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) through August of 2011. The WOTC supports businesses who hire economically disadvantaged workers such as disabled veterans. It helps small business owners make capital investments, by extending Section 179 Small Business Expensing, which will let small business owners buy and write off more equipment each year for use in their trade or business. And it contains “S-corp” provisions to ensure small businesses keep the tax benefits of being a small business, even as they grow and expand. [H.R. 2206, Vote #424, 5/24/07; Senate Finance Committee, finance.senate.gov]

Democrats Invest in an Innovation Agenda Without Opposition. On May 21, 2007 the House passed the 21st Century Competitiveness Act of 2007. This legislation provides for investing in math and science teachers and incentives for young scientists and engineers. It would also increase authorized funding for the National Science Foundation and the National Institute for Standards and Technology, in order to drive the research needed to create a more innovative and vibrant economy and make America the most competitive nation in the global marketplace. [H.R. 2272, Voice Vote, 5/21/07; CQ House Action Report, 5/21/07]

Democrats Pass Legislation to Combat Price Gouging and Price Fixing with Dozens of Republican Votes. On May 22, the House passed a bill to crackdown on OPEC in order to fight the unfair price fixing practices of oil producing nations. It would subject the oil cartel to the Sherman Antitrust Act, in order to fight the unfair price fixing practices of oil producing countries. This bill passed with 125 Republican votes. On May 23, the House passed legislation to crackdown on price gouging by giving the Federal Trade Commission the explicit authority to investigate and punish those who artificially inflate the price of energy. It would set civil and criminal penalties for price gouging and permit states to bring lawsuits against retailers for price gouging. This bill passed with 56 Republican votes. [H.R. 2264 Vote #398, 5/22/07; H.R. 1252, Vote #404, 5/23/07]

HONORING OUR TROOPS AND OUR VETERANS

Democrats Pass Increased Pay Raise for Troops With 195 Republican Votes. In the Fiscal Year 2008 Defense bill, Democrats passed a 3.5 % pay raise for our troops, a raise half a percent larger than in the President’s budget, despite the President’s opposition to the larger pay raise. [H.R. 1585, Vote #373, 5/17/07; CQ House Action Report, 5/15/07; Statement of Administration Policy, 5/16/07]

The Democratic Congress Voted to Increase Funding for Veterans by \$6.7 Billion for FY08 Budget With 185 Republican Votes. In May, Congressional Democrats stood together behind a budget that will provide \$43.1 billion in FY 2008 for discretionary veterans’ programs. House Democrats then passed a Veterans funding bill that would increase funding for the veterans benefits by \$6.7 billion, \$3.6 billion above the President’s inadequate request. The Democrats’ budget also rejected the administration’s attempts to increase fees and co-payments in veterans’ health programs. [S Con. Res 21, Vote #377, 5/17/07; CQ House Action, 5/16/07; Office of the Speaker, 5/23/07; H.R. 2642, Vote #498, 6/15/07; House Appropriations Committee, appropriations.house.gov]

The Democratic Caucus Increases Funding for Veterans Health Care by \$3.6 Billion With 57 Republican Votes. In January, the Democratic Majority voted for the Fiscal Year 2007 Joint Funding Resolution, which provided \$32.3 billion in FY 2007 for veterans' health care—\$3.6 billion (13%) more than the FY 2006 level. After the shortfalls left by the previous Congress, the increases will provide services to at least 325,000 more patients and will help meet rising health care costs. [H. J. Res 20, Vote #72, 1/31/07; CQ House Action Report, 1/29/07; Passed 286-140, D: 229-2; R: 57-138]

The Democratic Congress approves \$1.8 Billion in Emergency Funding for Veterans. In May, the Democratic Congress voted for an emergency supplemental funding package that included \$1.8 billion for veterans' programs, including \$1.3 billion for veterans' health programs and \$444 million for Veterans' Affairs administration. [H.R 2206, Vote #424, 5/24/07; CQ House Action Report, 5/24/07]

PROTECTING THE HOMELAND AND OUR COMMUNITIES

Democrats Pass 9/11 Commission Recommendations With 68 Republican Votes. In January, the Democratic Congress passed the Implementing the 9/11 Commission Recommendations Act of 2007, legislation that would implement recommendations of the Sept. 11 commission, including requiring homeland security grants to be provided primarily on the basis of risk while ensuring minimum amounts for each state. It would create a new grant program to support the development of interoperable communications and require all cargo bound for the United States to be scanned for radiation and density before being placed on a ship in a foreign port. The bill would also authorize new sanctions on foreign individuals or entities that engage in the improper transport or sales of nuclear weapons materials. [H.R. 1, Vote #15, 1/9/07; Passed 299-128: R 68-128; D 231-0; CQ Floor Votes]

Democrats Invest in Local Police With 157 Republican Votes. In May, Democrats passed the COPS Improvements Act of 2007, a bill that demonstrates our commitment to putting 50,000 new cops police officers on the beat by authorizing \$6.9 billion between fiscal 2008 and 2013 for the Community Oriented Policing Services program. The COPS Improvements Act will also provide funding for “terrorism cops” as well as add a number of new policing activities, such as those designed to reduce the distribution and abuse of illegal drugs, for which the program could award grants. [H.R. 1700, Vote #348, 5/15/07; Passed 381-34; D: 224- 0; R 157- 34]

Democrats Pass Homeland Security Bills With 45 Republican Votes. In May, the House passed important Homeland Security legislation authorizing \$39.9 billion in funding for the next Department of Homeland Security budget. Unlike Republicans, who didn't even pass a Homeland Security Bill in the House last year, Democrats worked hard to pass a strong policy bill that designated \$300 million for state grants aimed at preventing terrorists or other individuals from fraudulently obtaining and using state-issued identification cards, as well as developing more secure documents for issuance by the states. Democrats also passed a Homeland Security funding bill that increased funding for local first responders, port security, and areas of high terrorist threats. [H.R. 1684, Vote #318, 5/9/07; CQ Floor Votes; Passed 296-126; D: 223-2; R 73-124; H.R. 2368, Vote #491, 6/15/07; Passed: 268-150; D: 223-2; R: 45-148]

FUNDING CRITICAL MEDICAL RESEARCH; MAKING HEALTH CARE AFFORDABLE

Democrats Create Hope for Medical Advancement with Stem Cells, Sending Research Bill to the White House. On June 7th, the House passed the Stem Cell Enhancement Act, a bill that increased the number of embryonic stem cell lines eligible for federally funded research. House passage of the Senate bill cleared this importation legislation for President Bush's signature. The bill largely reverses the restrictions placed on such research in 2001 by President Bush and the former Republican Majority. By

taking action on this issue, Congressional Democrats lived up to promises they made to the American public upon taking the Majority in the 2006 elections; their action is supported by 72% of the American public and offers hope to millions of Americans who are affected by debilitating or life-threatening diseases that could be cured through the research that this bill makes possible. Thirty-seven Republicans voted for this bill, but the President vetoed this important bill. [S. 5, Vote #443, 6/7/07; [New York Times](#), 6/7/07]

House Democrats Pass Legislation Giving Medicare the Authority to Directly Negotiate with Pharmaceutical Companies Within days of taking control of Congress, the Majority passed the Medicare Prescription Drug Price Negotiation Act of 2007. The bill amends Medicare law to allow the Secretary of Health and Human Services to negotiate drug prices directly with manufacturers and wholesalers, rather than relying upon the individual insurance companies. Though the bill passed the House in January, it has been delayed by Republicans in the Senate, who have refused to move on this issue, stalling it by failing to vote for cloture. [H.R. 4, Vote #23, 1/12/07; [Boston Globe](#), 1/13/07]

Health Coverage for Children Gets a Boost From Democrats in Congress. In June, Congress provided a safety net to eleven states that were facing a shortfall in their State Children's Health Insurance Programs (SCHIP). The safety-net measure provides a net increase of \$650 million for the SCHIP program. The funding was requested by eleven Governors—both Republicans and Democrats and will make it possible for the states to avoid cutting the health insurance coverage for hundreds of thousands of children. [H.R. 2206, Vote #424, 5/24/07; CQ House Action Report, 5/24/07; House Appropriations Committee, [appropriations.house.gov](#)]

Democratic Budget Prioritizes Expanding Health Care for Children. The Democratic budget made health care for children a priority. The budget would allow for \$50 billion in funding for Congress to pass legislation to expand children's health through the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). [S. Con. Res 21, Vote #377, 5/17/07; CQ House Action, 5/16/07]

INVESTING IN EDUCATION FOR OUR CHILDREN

Democrats Passed Bill to Cut Student Loan Rates With 124 Republican Votes. In January, Democrats passed the College Student Relief Act of 2007, which would cut interest rates in half over a five year period for undergraduates with subsidized student loans, beginning July 1, 2007. Additional cuts would become effective on July 1 each year for the next four years. It would reduce the "special allowance payment" made to lenders, lower the amount the government pays to lenders for defaulted loans, increase the one-time origination fee paid by lenders to the government on all loans, cut the fee paid to guaranty agencies which collect on loans and enlarge the annual fee paid by lenders on consolidation loans. [H.R. 5, Vote #32, 1/17/07; CQ Floor Votes; Passed 356-71: R 124-71; D 232-0]

Democrats Passed Head Start Bill with High Standards with 142 Republican Votes. In May, Democrats passed the Improving Head Start Act of 2007, which would require at least 50 percent of Head Start teachers to have a bachelor's degree by 2013. It would provide for a new system to review applications to identify which programs provide high quality comprehensive early childhood programs. The bill would allow Head Start programs to increase income eligibility to 130 percent of poverty, if the programs demonstrate a community need. [HR 1429, Vote #285, 5/2/07; CQ Floor Votes]

Democrats Pass Increase in College Grants With 57 Republican Votes. Democrats passed the uncompleted funding bills left over from the do-nothing Republican Congress, including a Pell Grant funding increase of \$615.4 million to increase the maximum Pell grant by \$260 to \$4,310. This increase – the first in 4 years – will help over 5.3 million students pay rising college expenses. [H J Res 20, Vote #72, 1/31/07; Passed 286-140, D: 229-2; R: 57-138]