

1/11/2007 My New Year's Resolution

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By Congressman Jerry Moran

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The New Year and the start of the 110th Congress were marked by the passing and national mourning of our 38th President, Gerald Ford. As the new Congress assembles in our nation's capital, it would do well to remember the example set by President Ford, who helped restore our faith in the American system of government following Watergate. Ford once said, "We might question the other side's ideas, but never its motives or its patriotism." Kansans have grown weary of the partisan bickering and gridlock that has taken over Washington, D.C., in past years. They are ready for a change - for Republicans and Democrats to restore civility, respect differences and work together to find answers to today's problems. Though time will tell whether attitudes will change this year, my commitment remains unchanged from day one - to see that good things happen for Kansans.

All of us are concerned with the situation in Iraq. With more than 125,000 U.S. service members deployed at the start of 2007, this will be an important year as Congress seeks to advise the President on U.S. policy in Iraq. My goal is to find a strategy for success so our troops can come home. The sacrifices of our military men and women must never be forgotten, and I will continue to work to ensure veterans receive the benefits they have earned.

2007 will be a significant year for Kansas agriculture as Congress writes the new farm bill, examines our nation's energy policy and considers disaster assistance for farmers and ranchers. After meeting with agriculture producers across the nation last year, I have learned that most farmers and ranchers want the same thing - to provide their sons and daughters an opportunity to return to the family farm. I will fight for a farm bill that encourages rural development and improves the economic circumstances of Kansas producers. As a nation, we must reduce our reliance on foreign oil. By increasing use of fuels made by Kansas crops, we enhance the vitality of farmers and rural communities, in addition to helping our environment and making the country more energy independent. Disaster assistance for weather-related losses also remains a priority as agriculture producers continue to feel the effects of years of drought.

Rather than more bills and new laws, we need to fix those already on the books. I will work to improve No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and the Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit. Our Kansas schools are struggling to meet the flawed standards and unrealistic demands of NCLB and I will reintroduce legislation that offers practical changes for the program. I will continue to advocate for reforms to the Prescription Drug Benefit, including allowing the government to negotiate with drug companies for lower-priced medications and protecting community pharmacists who have been adversely affected. Other aspects of health care deserve attention and we must find ways to reduce the costs of health care for our families and small businesses.

I look forward to working on your behalf in Congress to see that good things happen for Kansans.