



UNITED STATES SENATOR ★ SERVING THE CITIZENS OF IDAHO

LARRY CRAIG

NEWS RELEASE

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Dan Whiting (202) 224-8078
Sid Smith (208) 342-7985

CRAIG REACTION TO BUSH'S STATE OF THE UNION SPEECH

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Idaho Senator Larry Craig issued the following written statement following the President's 2008 State of the Union speech:

"Today the President echoed the theme of his campaign eight years ago – trusting and empowering Americans. The President trusts Americans and wants to empower them to make responsible choices in healthcare, Social Security, how to spend the money they earn, the schools their children attend, and more. Americans are educated, creative, and capable – they can best make the decisions that most directly affect them.

"I question whether handing out cash for Americans to spend is the best way to stimulate our economy. While our economy is not in a recession yet, we do need to consider how best to turn it around. While the tax rebates are clearly rooted in our trust in Americans and our desire to empower them, other stimuli are better positioned to help our economy. That is why I am a sponsor of legislation introduced today to stimulate the housing market – incentivizing first-time homebuyers through a tax credit to purchase homes already in the inventory. It worked in the 1970s, and we should revive it.

"Veterans deserve our support for defending freedom here at home and worldwide. The Dole-Shalala Commission exposed the problems of our disability compensation system and the differences between the DoD and VA. In the Veterans Affairs Committee, we held hearings on their report, and I stand behind the efforts of the President to implement them. Our veterans deserve that.

"Our healthcare system is one of the world's best, and it remains so absent a single-payer, universal system. I agree with the President in many of his reforms – in fact, they are similar to a bill I am cosponsoring in the Senate.

"While there are many aspects of the President's speech I agree with, Congressionally-directed spending is important for small states like Idaho. It helps provide clean drinking water and safe sewers, research for our universities, community development projects, education for our children, and much, much more. In fact, without Congress' assistance, Idaho would not be able to host the 2009 International Special Olympics Winter Games.

"The key to earmarks is transparency, which is why I publish all of the earmarks I have successfully secured on my website. Americans deserve to know what projects are supported and why."

ATTENTION RADIO NEWS ROOMS: Audio of additional remarks from Senator Craig will be available at <http://craig.senate.gov/clips> late this evening.