

# *An Update from Washington*

## **Presidential Address to a Joint Session of Congress**

Last Tuesday night, President Obama delivered a strong and honest speech to Congress and the American people. Though I won't always agree with the President on policy, I do believe he is sincere, thoughtful, and willing to listen to all ideas in order to get America through this economic crisis.

I was particularly impressed with his commitment to restoring the fiscal health of our nation by reinstating statutory pay-as-you-go budget rules and reducing the deficit by half within his first term. We cannot continue down the same reckless path of increased debt and unbalanced budgets that only mortgage our children's future.

When I met with President Obama several weeks ago at the White House, he assured me and my Blue Dog colleagues that he shared our concerns about the fiscal stability of our country. He delivered a similar message last Tuesday to both Congress and the American people. I look forward to working with him on restoring the fiscal health of our country.

## **No Pay Raise for Congress**

When I voted in favor of H.R. 1105, the FY 2009 Omnibus Appropriations Act, I supported a bill that does more than simply fund government agencies and important projects for Alabama. It also eliminated the annual pay raise that Members of Congress receive. The first bill I co-sponsored as a Congressman was H.R. 156, which sought to block the pay raise for fiscal year 2010. I am pleased that Congressional leadership agreed and included language in H.R. 1105 that prevents the automatic pay raise.

In my opinion, it is absolutely unconscionable that Members of Congress would receive a \$4,700 raise at a time when Americans are losing their jobs and suffering in a recession. It is one small - but important - step towards restoring the American people's confidence in its government

## **First Floor Speech**

Upon returning from my Congressional Delegation visit to Iraq and Afghanistan, I delivered my first floor speech as a Member of Congress. I spoke briefly about my observations in the Middle East and thanked our troops for their outstanding service. You can view the video on my website homepage at [www.bright.house.gov](http://www.bright.house.gov). Iraq and Afghanistan have been in the news recently because President Obama announced his plans for future American military action in both

countries. As a Member of the Armed Services Committee, I will be reviewing and examining these proposals in the coming weeks and months.

### **New Montgomery Office Opens**

My district office in Montgomery moved to a new location last week, transitioning from Eastern Blvd. to downtown. The new office is located at 22 Monroe St. and is open from 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. As many of you know, downtown revitalization was one of my proudest accomplishments as Mayor of Montgomery, and moving my district office to downtown continues the great progress we've made in the area. I encourage my constituents in or near Montgomery to stop by if there is anything we can do to help you.

As always, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call our offices in Montgomery at (334) 277-9113 or Dothan at (334) 794-9680. We are also online at [www.bright.house.gov](http://www.bright.house.gov) to assist you in any way we can. You can also visit my website to sign up for my e-newsletter. It is my great pleasure to serve you and the entire Second District of Alabama.