

January 19, 2007

As I traveled throughout San Joaquin and the 11th District during the campaign, I heard from many members of our community. Some expressed deep concern at the multitude of ethical scandals in Congress, and some were frustrated by what they saw as an inability of elected representatives to work together to address important issues.

Many people felt let down, disheartened and ready for change.

That is one of the reasons I ran for Congress. I stood up to say enough is enough.

For our troops, we need a new direction in Iraq.

I am proud to report that in just the first few weeks, the 110th Congress has been able to address many concerns I heard during the campaign. From day one, we have worked together to deliver on an agenda that offers a new direction for our country.

This is not a partisan agenda; it is an American agenda, with much bipartisan support.

The first order of business was the adoption of new ethics rules – the most sweeping since the post-Watergate era. This is a first step in ending the pay-to-play link between lobbyists and legislation, by banning gifts and travel from lobbyists, and ending the abuses connected to privately-funded congressional travel.

During the campaign, I heard many times from people who said they simply wanted to be able to believe their representative, knowing that their member of Congress was looking out for their constituents, not special interests. I feel the same way and we acted on it.

We restored tough pay-as-you-go budget rules to stop passing on trillions in debt to our children and grandchildren -- and voted to end the abuse of special interest pet projects.

Having passed rules to restore fiscal responsibility, ethical standards and civility in the House, we moved to focus on meeting the everyday needs of all Americans.

We are making America safer and passed a bill that implements the unfulfilled recommendations of the bipartisan 9/11 Commission.

We voted to increase the minimum wage from \$5.15 to \$7.25 an hour over the next two years, bringing the federal minimum wage closer in line with California's, making our businesses more competitive nationwide.

By passing a revision of the Medicare prescription drug bill, we saved money for millions of seniors by allowing Medicare to negotiate with drug companies for lower drug prices. And importantly, we gave millions with debilitating diseases a brighter future by expanding federal funding for life-saving embryonic stem cell research.

We have also worked to make college more affordable for over 5 million students and families by cutting in half the interest rate on subsidized student loans for undergraduates.

And we set America on the path to energy independence by passing a bill that repeals \$14 billion in corporate welfare for profit-rich oil companies and invests those funds in clean, renewable energy sources.

As someone who has spent over 20 years working in new energy technology, I am especially proud of that last accomplishment. We must diversify our energy sources and end our dependence on foreign oil, which puts our economy and our national security at risk.

And by investing in new energy technologies, we will also create an entire spectrum of good paying jobs here in San Joaquin County and throughout the United States. In fact, some estimate that this effort will produce nearly one million jobs in the next three years, generating close to \$30 billion in new wages.

Last week, I also launched an Energy and Climate working group for all newly elected members, Democrats and Republicans, to discuss ways to promote our energy independence. Many of my colleagues have good ideas about how to wean the U.S. off of foreign oil and encourage the use of sustainable energy. We need to have an open and frank conversation about how to do it.

While it has been a whirlwind of activity, it is only the beginning. I am excited about the work that lies ahead and I promise I will continue to work everyday to serve the people of California's 11th District.

If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact me via email at McNerneyinfo@mail.house.gov

You can also call my office in Washington, D.C., at 202-225-1647 or send a fax at 202-225-4060. My office in Pleasanton can be reached at 925-737-0727 and the fax is 925-737-0734. In the coming weeks, we will also open an office in Stockton.