

## Castle Reaction to President's State of the Union Address -- January 23, 2007

Washington D.C. -- Delaware Congressman Mike Castle released the following statement tonight in response to the President's State of the Union address.

"Tonight's State of the Union address comes at one of the most challenging times in our nation's history, both in terms of the turmoil in Iraq and the very real challenges we face here at home. The top issue on my mind, and the minds of many Americans, is the future of Iraq and what our mission there means for our brave men and women in the military who are separated from their families. Stability in Iraq is critical to our security, but I do not believe that a shift or surge in U.S. troops without an accompanying diplomatic strategy, as recommended by the Iraq Study Group, will be effective.

"I was pleased to hear President Bush address some of the domestic issues which are a top priority for me, especially reigning in wasteful spending and education. His unwavering commitment to building on the success of No Child Left Behind is to be commended. This law is challenging students and helping them succeed and through the upcoming reauthorization, we must build on the basic tenet of the law that all children can learn, by focusing on closing the teacher achievement gap, encouraging additional flexibility and strengthening public schools. Delaware has always led the nation in education reform and tonight we really shone by having Duncan Smith, principal of Frankford Elementary School, as First Lady Laura Bush's guest. I visited that school with Deputy Secretary of Education Ray Simon to mark the fourth anniversary of No Child Left Behind last year and I am glad that the President is as impressed as I was with how well this school is doing, especially under Duncan's leadership.

"With regards to energy and healthcare, I welcome the discussion he has begun in both areas, but I would approach the issues differently. I believe we must go further when it comes to regulating greenhouse gas emissions to reduce climate change by also including carbon dioxide. I look forward to hearing more about the President's plan tomorrow in Delaware.

"Additionally, there is no question that the number of uninsured Americans has truly reached historic levels and is a real problem. I believe the President has begun a very important the debate about how to best increase coverage to individuals without insurance through his proposals of standard deduction and Medicaid waivers. The devil is always in the details and I question if the tax code is the right vehicle for expanding insurance options, but I am dedicated to finding solutions to this issue.

"This country is at a turning point. We must rededicate ourselves to bipartisanship and passing real laws that improve the lives of the American people. Divided government may just be the key to making this happen."

###