



*Thoughts From . . .*

## **CAPITOL HILL**

By Congressman Rodney Alexander



February 7, 2006

## **State of the Union**

Earlier this month, President Bush delivered his State of the Union address and informed America of the critical decisions that Congress faces in the months ahead.

I agree with President Bush that our nation is facing "choices that determine both the future and the character of our country." Right now, regardless of what some pundits may say in the media, we, the United States, are winning the War on Terror. On this issue, it is imperative that all Americans continue to support our brave men and women serving in the Armed Services. If you had asked me 10 years ago if free, democratic elections would be held in both Afghanistan and Iraq, I would have answered no.

But our brave men and women serving in the Armed Services have brought democratic elections to the Middle East. The seeds of democracy that were planted in Afghanistan and Iraq must still be nurtured. This is evident with every attack by the insurgents. I will continue to work to make sure that our Armed Services are supplied with all of the tools, equipment and weapons to finish the job.

### **Addiction to oil**

What resonated with me most was President Bush's commitment to reducing America's addiction to oil. I agree with him wholeheartedly. I also believe that one way to decrease this addiction to oil is to find alternative sources of energy. To find other sources of energy, one doesn't have to look beyond Louisiana's state lines. My congressional district--the 5th District-- is one of the largest commodity row crop producing districts in the nation. Fifth District farmers grow everything: cotton, corn, sugar, timber, rice, soybeans, etc.

Science and technology show us that ethanol can be developed and processed inside the 5th Congressional District. Ethanol would, quite possibly, replace many of the petroleum products that are currently used to power our vehicles. Since I was elected to Congress in 2002, I've held numerous meetings in both the district and Washington to hopefully find federal funding to construct an ethanol plant in Louisiana. Louisiana farmers need this type of economic outlet and American motorists need relief from the high costs at the gas pump. In his speech, President Bush announced that he would like to see an increase in the research for "cutting edge" methods of producing ethanol. I agree with him and would like to see that type of research conducted in the Bayou State.

## Health care woes

As for other matters, health care concerns must be addressed. Health care is dear to my heart. As a state legislator for 15 years, I served as chairman of the Health and Welfare Committee. I realize that government--on its own--can't solve our nation's current health care woes. President Bush's plan to strengthen health savings accounts and make health insurance portable are two steps forward in an industry that has remained four steps behind. Also, passing litigation reform will help keep doctors in business, keep health care costs down and enable physicians to once again practice medicine--not "defensive" medicine.

I know that America faces some tough and critical decisions in the months ahead. I'm ready to roll up my sleeves and help address these concerns. However, I need your help.

If you know of any suggestions that will help make the 5th District, Louisiana and America better, please drop me a line.

Visit my Web site at [www.house.gov/alexander](http://www.house.gov/alexander) or write me at 316 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. I promise to represent your concerns and values on Capitol Hill.

**U.S. Rep. Rodney Alexander, R-Quitman, represents the 5th Congressional District and serves on the appropriations committee. He can be reached at the Monroe District Office (318-322-3500), the Alexandria District Office (318-445-0818) or Washington, D.C. (202-225-8490.)**

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