

# Contract with America

## 10 Year Anniversary

*Celebrating a decade of Republican Leadership in Congress*

**Monday, September 27, 2004** marks the 10-Year Anniversary of the signing of the Contract with America in Washington, DC on the Capitol steps by candidates for the U.S. House of Representatives in the 1994 election.

The election results were stunning. Nearly nine million more voters turned out for the Republicans over the last off-year election and one million fewer voters turned out for the Democrats - a ten million vote swing that resulted in the Republican Party picking up 54 seats in the House and winning the majority for the first time in 40 years. Newt Gingrich was elected Speaker of the House - the first Republican Speaker since Joseph W. Martin, Jr. of Massachusetts who served until 1955.

The GOP went on to win the next three elections in both the U.S. House and the U.S. Senate marking a decade of Republican leadership in Congress.

## THE HISTORIC RESULTS

All ten items in the Contract with America were brought to a vote in the U.S. House in the first 100 days as promised by the Contract. Nine of the ten items passed the House. The sole exception was Term Limits which received a plurality but required a two-thirds majority as a Constitutional Amendment.

- Committee Chairmen were term-limited.
- The Office of Speaker was term-limited.
- The Legislative staff was cut including in the Speaker's office. Also reduced were committee sizes. Many unnecessary perks were eliminated.
- The Congress was forced to live under the same laws as the rest of the nation - OSHA, disabilities, and workplace laws.
- A big six accounting firm audited the U.S. House's finances.
- The Budget was balanced for the first time in a generation.
- The line-item veto passed and was signed into law.
- Eventually after a Presidential veto, taxes were cut for the first time in 17 years. Included were a cut in the capital gains tax, a \$500 per child tax credit and new tax credits for tuition to college and voc-tech schools. The capital gains tax was actually scored as a revenue increase marking a significant shift in tax policy debates.
- Military spending increased for the first time in over 10 years including funding for a national missile defense.

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## THE FIRST 100 DAYS

The Contract with America was not a platform, but an agreement between the voter and the Republican candidates for the U.S. House. It did not simply put forth a set of beliefs, but instead, a list of action items. It did not mention the Democrats or President Clinton. It simply stated that if the American people elected the Republicans to a majority in the U.S. House, they would vote to pass the agenda items contained in the Contract.

On September 27, 1994, all but 2 or 3 Republican candidates signed the Contract and the American people, by voting to give the GOP control of the House, signed the agreement as well. After the Republicans gained control of the House the Contract served as a management document over the first 100 days. The Contract promised, and the Republican-led House delivered, by voting on each of the following items within 100 days after the 104th Congress was sworn in:

### 8 TENETS

**FIRST**, require that all laws applying to the rest of the country also apply equally to Congress;

**SECOND**, select a major, independent auditing firm to conduct a comprehensive audit of Congress for waste, fraud or abuse;

**THIRD**, cut the number of House committees, and cut committee staff by one-third;

**FOURTH**, limit the terms of all committee chairs;

**FIFTH**, ban the casting of proxy votes in committee;

**SIXTH**, require committee meetings to be open to the public;

**SEVENTH**, require a three-fifths majority vote to pass a tax increase;

**EIGHTH**, guarantee an honest accounting of our Federal Budget by implementing zero base-line budgeting.

### TEN BILLS

**FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY ACT** - A balanced budget/tax limitation amendment (H.J.Res. 1) and a legislative line-item veto (H.R. 2) to restore fiscal responsibility to an out-of-control Congress.

**TAKING BACK OUR STREETS ACT** - An anti-crime package including stronger truth-in-sentencing (H.R. 667), "good faith" exclusionary rule exemptions (H.R. 666), effective death penalty provisions (H.R. 729), and cuts in social spending for this summer's "crime" bill to fund prison construction and additional law enforcement (H.R. 728) to keep people secure in their neighborhoods and kids safe in their schools.

**PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY ACT** - Discourage illegitimacy and teen pregnancy by prohibiting welfare to minor mothers and denying increased AFDC for additional children while on welfare, cut spending for welfare programs, and enact a tough two-years-and-out provision with work requirements to promote individual responsibility. (H.R. 4)

**FAMILY REINFORCEMENT ACT** - Child support enforcement (H.R. 4), tax incentives for adoption (H.R. 1215), strengthening rights of parents in their children's education (H.R. 1215), stronger child pornography laws, and an elderly dependent care tax credit to reinforce the central role of families in American society.

**AMERICAN DREAM RESTORATION ACT** - A \$500 per child tax credit, begin repeal of the marriage tax penalty, and creation of American Dream Savings Accounts to provide middle class tax relief. (H.R. 1215)

**NATIONAL SECURITY RESTORATION ACT** - No U.S. troops under U.N. command and restoration of the essential parts of our national security funding to strengthen our national defense and maintain our credibility around the world. (H.R. 7)

**SENIOR CITIZENS FAIRNESS ACT** - Raise the Social Security earnings limit, which currently forces seniors out of the work force, repeal the 1993 tax hikes on Social Security benefits and provide tax incentives for private long-term care insurance to let Older Americans keep more of what they have earned over the years. (H.R. 1215)

**JOB CREATION AND WAGE ENHANCEMENT ACT** Small business incentives, capital gains cuts and indexation, neutral cost recovery, risk assessment/cost-benefit analysis (H.R. 9), strengthening the Regulatory Flexibility Act (H.R. 450) and unfunded mandate reform (H.R. 5) to create jobs and raise worker wages.

**COMMON SENSE LEGAL REFORM ACT** - "Loser pays" laws (H.R. 988, H.R. 1058), reasonable limits on punitive damages and reform of product liability laws (H.R. 956) to stem the endless tide of litigation.

**CITIZEN LEGISLATURE ACT** - A first-ever vote on term limits to replace career politicians with citizen legislators. (H.J.Res. 73)

### ELECTION HISTORY

It has been 76 years since the Republicans as a governing-majority party ran for re-election in the U.S. House, the U.S. Senate and the White House simultaneously. The year was 1928. Calvin Coolidge was the Republican incumbent President. Herbert Hoover was nominated on the first ballot at the Republican convention in Kansas City. Republicans controlled both the U.S. House (by 41 seats) and the U.S. Senate (by 1 seat).

The 1928 election results for the GOP were very good. The Republican Party picked up 32 seats in the House and 8 seats in the Senate.

Published by Gingrich Communications Inc.  
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