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# Will Hobbs

*Democrat for U.S. Congress  
District 1*

## Congress with a Will

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### Positions

#### Iraq and the Middle East

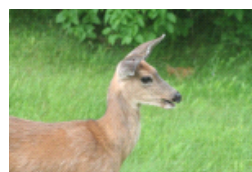
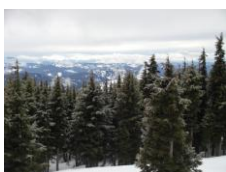
I support the rapid withdrawal of American troops from Iraq, to be replaced in the near term by an international UN-based peacekeeping force, with US troops being only a small part of that force. This transition should be completed by the end of 2009 or sooner. The Iraqi government has little incentive to take over its own security and reconstruction responsibilities, or to find a solution to its civil war, as long as we are there fulfilling those roles. Polls conducted in Iraq clearly indicate that our presence is fueling the insurgency. Our presence has a destabilizing effect on the whole Middle East, and is a prime recruiting tool for radical extremists who contribute to the instability and who would do us harm. Withdrawal would allow us to rebuild our military to the state of readiness that existed prior to our invasion of Iraq. Relations with other Middle Eastern countries, such as Iran, would be greatly improved through more diplomatic means, rather than relying on threats of invasion. Our aim should be toward stable relations among the nations of the Middle East, which is best achieved through diplomacy. We must also take care of our veterans, fund the VA adequately and address both the psychological and physical damage done to our service men and women. We must put a limit to "stop loss" redeployment. I support restoring the GI bill to the level of post-service support that existed in prior decades.

#### Health Care

In the near term, I favor immediate expansion of SCHIP and Medicaid for low-income families and individuals. I favor tax incentives for small businesses and individuals to purchase health insurance, combined with pooling the demand for insurance to produce lower rates comparable to those enjoyed by large employers. As an alternative to private insurance, individuals should have the option to buy into an expanded version of Medicare, with its low administrative overhead. We should broaden the focus of health plans to include prevention. We must also reduce prescription drug prices, especially for seniors and low income citizens, by taking advantage of Medicare's purchasing power to negotiate lower prices. In the long run I favor a single-payer, not-for-profit universal health care plan similar to Medicare or Canada's health plan. The cost would be shared. Ultimately, we can improve U.S. competitiveness in the world by lifting the burden of health plan costs from our businesses.

#### Immigration

Both our farm and service economies rely on seasonal labor. Much of this demand is currently filled by immigrants, both documented and undocumented. Many of these individuals are here because of poor economies back home. We must create a reasonable path for undocumented workers to achieve legal working status, and institute a guest worker program that doesn't prompt workers to avoid legal channels. We should require employers to make reasonable efforts to verify the legal status of its employees. We must also work with our Latin American neighbors to help them improve their educational systems and promote innovation and economic growth. We should assess the impact of our agricultural subsidies on the profitability of their agricultural sector, and revisit NAFTA if changes must be made. Solving these problems will help raise the standard of living in those countries and reduce the incentive of workers to cross our borders illegally.



## **Budget**

The government is currently running a significant deficit, in large part due to the Iraq occupation and reconstruction effort, and partly because of tax cuts given to the extremely wealthy-- those who benefit the most from our economic system. We must rebalance the tax burden, so it doesn't weigh unfairly on low and middle class workers, and rescind the tax breaks for the top economic class. Ending the Iraq chapter as quickly as possible, and shifting the security and reconstruction burden to Iraqis who are now accumulating significant revenues from their oil sales will allow us to move quickly toward a balanced budget without reducing social and other essential services. Rising energy prices have resulted in record profits for Big Oil. A windfall profits tax should be levied to fund research and deployment of clean, renewable energy sources. Companies who relocate their headquarters to offshore tax havens should not be given US Government contracts.

## **Trade**

We live in a global economy. Some protective tariffs are appropriate where unfair pricing and product dumping exists. Unfair labor practices are rampant in many offshore manufacturing sites. Many such countries also have lax environmental laws that reduce the cost of production at the expense of workers' health and the health of the planet. Our trade agreements should include standards for workers' rights and environmental responsibility, which would go far in eliminating sweat shops and irreparable environmental damage. Such agreements must also guard against theft of intellectual property (patents, copyrights) which denies innovators their due. Economically, making our trading partners abide by similar standards we demand of our own businesses will help level the playing field without being overly protectionist.

## **Education**

A quality education is essential to a democratic society. "No Child Left Behind" has been under-funded and stresses rote memorization over independent thinking. I support standards for children and teachers, but not ones that sacrifice the originality and innovation that have made our country great. I support increased federal funding to ensure a quality education from pre-school through college in Oregon, reduction in interest on student loans, and an increase in the tax deductions allowed for educational expenses. I support an increase in the availability of Pell grants.

## **Energy**

It is critical for the U.S. to be free from dependence on foreign oil, and to adopt clean renewable fuels, while addressing global climate change. Our security, economy and environment depend on clean energy self-sufficiency. Therefore, I support government funding of research into environmentally friendly alternatives, improved fuel efficiency standards, and tax incentives for conservation and use of alternative energy sources. Oregon can lead in wind, solar, geothermal and wave-generated energy research and generation.

## **Economy**

Our economy has taken a number of hits recently, due in large part to an under-regulated loan industry. This must be corrected quickly. We must also find ways of forestalling home foreclosures brought on by these irresponsible loan practices. Energy prices are driving all costs up, and I believe that finding alternative sources to compete with oil will ultimately result in stable prices. I support Federal grants to universities for research in alternative energy, semiconductors, superconductors, bio-technology and conservation, which will foster high-paying jobs. We should extend mass transit such as light rail and high speed rail to make commuting more affordable and spur employment. We must also invest in our infrastructure, such as providing broadband Internet access for all, and increasing our maintenance of roads, bridges, schools, hospitals and airports.

## **The Constitution**

The Constitution has been under attack in the past seven years. Rights have been eroded and the balance of power among the three branches of government has been skewed toward extraordinary Executive power. We must restore the balance and return rights to the people. Signing statements and Executive Orders which amount to exercising a line item veto and legislating from the Oval Office must be challenged. The Patriot Act, the FISA acts and the Military Commissions Act, which have eroded our right to privacy, free speech, habeas corpus, and many others, must be challenged. Affronts to the Congress such as refusing a Congressional subpoena and refusing to prosecute a valid contempt of Congress citation must be challenged. Retroactive immunity for violations of the wiretapping laws must not be granted. Investigation into "cherry-picked" intelligence to support invasion of Iraq must continue. Investigation of the outing of covert CIA agent Valerie Plame must resume. Violations of the law and the Constitution by the Executive Branch cannot be tolerated in the name of "security," the "war on terror" or "Executive Privilege." Those who trade their freedoms for security sacrifice both.