

## Republican "Contract with America" (September 27, 1994)

In the 1994 mid-term elections, the Republican Party won a sweeping victory and gained control of the House of Representatives. Convinced that they had a powerful legislative mandate, the new congressional leader Newt Gingrich tried to enact his party's campaign tract, which was grandly titled the "Contract with America." This document marked the culmination of the anti-government rhetoric first popularized by Ronald Reagan. It mixed anti-government and fiscal conservatism with a sharply conservative cultural agenda that singled out welfare mothers and criminals for legislative activism.

*As Republican Members of the House of Representatives and as citizens seeking to join that body we propose not just to change its policies, but even more important, to restore the bonds of trust between the people and their elected representatives.*

That is why, in this era of official evasion and posturing, we offer instead a detailed agenda for national renewal, a written commitment with no fine print.

This year's election offers the chance, after four decades of one-party control, to bring to the House a new majority that will transform the way Congress works. That historic change would be the end of government that is too big, too intrusive, and too easy with the public's money. It can be the beginning of a Congress that respects the values and shares the faith of the American family.

Like Lincoln, our first Republican president, we intend to act "with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right." To restore accountability to Congress. To end its cycle of scandal and disgrace. To make us all proud again of the way free people govern themselves.

On the first day of the 104th Congress, the new Republican majority will immediately pass the following major reforms, aimed at restoring the faith and trust of the American people in their government:

- **FIRST**, require all laws that apply to the rest of the country also apply equally to the 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.

Thereafter, within the first 100 days of the 104th Congress, we shall bring to the House Floor the following bills, each to be given full and open debate, each to be given a clear and fair vote and each to be immediately available this day for public inspection and scrutiny.

**1. THE FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY ACT:** A balanced budget/tax limitation amendment and a legislative line-item veto to restore fiscal responsibility to an out- of-control Congress, requiring them to live under the same budget constraints as families and businesses.

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

**3. THE 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.

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

**5. THE 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.

**6. THE 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.

**7. THE 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.

**8. THE JOB CREATION AND WAGE ENHANCEMENT ACT:** Small business incentives, capital gains cut and indexation, neutral cost recovery, risk assessment/cost-benefit analysis, strengthening the Regulatory Flexibility Act and unfunded mandate reform to create jobs and raise worker wages.

**9. THE COMMON SENSE LEGAL REFORM ACT:** "Loser pays" laws, reasonable limits on punitive damages and reform of product liability laws to stem the endless tide of litigation.

**10. THE CITIZEN LEGISLATURE ACT:** A first-ever vote on term limits to replace career politicians with citizen legislators.

Further, we will instruct the House Budget Committee to report to the floor and we will work to enact additional budget savings, beyond the budget cuts specifically included in the legislation described above, to ensure that the Federal budget deficit will be less than it would have been without the enactment of these bills.

Respecting the judgment of our fellow citizens as we seek their mandate for reform, we hereby pledge our names to this Contract with America.