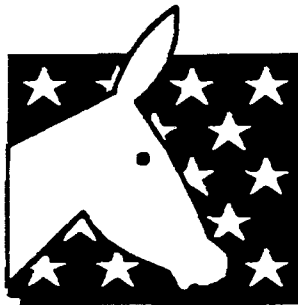


From the Office of the Democratic Leader  
Voice 225-0100 Fax 225-7414  
ATTENTION: PRESS SECRETARY



## TODAY'S MESSAGE

**House  
Democratic  
Leadership**  

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**Communications**

*Rep. Richard Durbin,  
Rep. Kweisi Mfume  
Vice Chairs*

**Wednesday, February 22**

### REPUBLICAN CONTRACT FAILS TO ADDRESS NATION'S CORE CHALLENGE

\* Today marks the midpoint for the Republicans' 100-day contract and while they have achieved majorities on individual pieces of the contract -- with both Democratic support and after previous Democratic action -- the Republican contract fails to address our nation's core challenge: raising our standard of living.

Income has not increased as a result of the contract. Not a single job has been created. Opportunity has not been expanded. No family is more secure as result of the progress of the Republican contract. The quality of life has not been improved for working, middle class Americans. The bottom line: the contract has had no meaningful impact on the lives of average Americans.

### CONTRACT MISSING JOBS, HEALTH CARE AND EDUCATION

\* The contract also falls short by what it fails to include: there are no initiatives in education, only Republican calls for cutting student loans. There is no mention of reforming health care, no proposals for cutting costs or insurance reform. And no where in the contract do the Republicans address the creation of good-paying, quality jobs.

### DEMOCRATS ARE FIGHTING FOR THE PRIORITIES OF MIDDLE CLASS AMERICANS

\* Over the course of the last 50 days, Democrats have pushed and prodded Republicans to address the concerns of middle class Americans over the interests of the wealthy:

-- to protect social security and medicare and be honest with the American people about what cuts will have to be made to balance the budget;

-- to enact real reform that bans accepting gifts from special interests;

-- to fight for an increase in the minimum wage that makes work pay more than welfare;

-- to responsibly downsize government without recklessly impacting important programs that effect the lives of average Americans.