Introduction

The nation was distraught by the 9-11 terrorist attacks and expected the Bush Administration to lead the country to conquer its fears and to achieve greatness.

Instead,

- The Administration has brought the U.S. to the brink of war with Iraq, yet the Administration has not produced any compelling evidence linking Iraq to the attacks of 9-11, nor any evidence that Iraq poses a threat to the United States.

- The Administration squandered widespread international sympathy and support for the U.S. after the 9-11 attack. Instead of effectively pursuing the terrorists who masterminded the attacks through law enforcement agencies, the Bush Administration pursued a war against Iraq, alienating some of our closest allies.

- The Administration has assaulted basic civil liberties and has plans to intrude upon the privacy of all Americans.

- The Administration is waging class warfare against the majority of Americans, even as the nation sputters along the edge of a double dip recession. The Administration turned its back on one million people who lost their jobs during the recession, exhausted their unemployment insurance benefits, and remain unemployed. The Administration repealed workplace safety standards, opposed strict protections on pensions, and advocates a plan to privatize Social Security, which would put it at risk in the stock market. Meanwhile, the Administration championed making tax-free the accumulated fortunes of the super wealthy and cutting taxes on dividends, which disproportionately benefits the wealthy and will have negligible stimulus effect on the economy.

- The Administration has launched a systematic campaign to wipe out decades of progress in protecting the environment, endangering our air, water, land, and health.

- The Administration, using fear to advance these policies, has weakened the State of the Union.

Let us recall the words of a great President, who told the nation, “there is nothing to fear but fear itself.”
Today, Progressives in Congress offer an alternative that will create peace and prosperity for all Americans:

- Progressives believe that a war with Iraq is unjustified and the U.S. should halt the war preparations. Instead, the U.S. should strongly support the UN inspectors in Iraq.

- Progressives believe that the national economy is in serious trouble and needs a genuine stimulus. The stimulus must be large, it must jump-start the economy immediately, it must create new jobs, it must be fair; it must put money in the pockets of the majority of Americans, and it should target neglected areas of society, such as housing, schools, and water systems.

- Progressives believe all Americans deserve a guarantee of high quality, affordable, health care. With the failure of the private market to deliver health care to 41 million Americans and affordable pharmaceuticals to senior citizens, Medicare should be improved and expanded to give high quality health care to every American and a prescription drug benefit to seniors.

- Progressives believe that jobs should pay living wages, that people be more easily able to form unions and bargain collectively with their employers and that the federal government should guarantee Social Security with the “full faith and credit of the United States.”

- Progressives in Congress believe that Americans should be assured of strong civil rights and liberties, including reproductive choice.

America, gather up your courage. We can make America a better place. The future can be better than the past. There is an alternative to the Bush Administration.
The alternative State of the Union, 2003

1. ON AMERICA IN THE WORLD
The Administration squandered widespread international sympathy and support for the U.S. after the 9-11 attacks. Instead of effectively pursuing the terrorists who masterminded those attacks, the Bush Administration has preyed upon the fears of Americans to bring the U.S. to the brink of war with Iraq. Yet the Administration has not produced any compelling evidence linking Iraq to the attacks of 9-11, nor any evidence that Iraq poses a threat to the United States. Meantime, the Administration labeled certain countries an “axis of evil” and announced a new foreign policy of “preemptive war” and nuclear first strike. The Administration broke off talks with North Korea, abrogated the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, refused to sign other weapons control treaties, and committed the U.S. to deploy a “missile defense” system, in spite of the fact that it has not been proved to work. Administration sources have spoken about plans to occupy Iraq and control that nation’s oil resources. Is it any wonder that the Bush Administration has alienated the U.S from some of our closest allies? The Administration has undermined America’s moral standing and has made the world a more dangerous place.

Progressives in Congress believe that a war with Iraq is unjustified. The U.S. should stop the war preparations and instead be the world’s strongest supporter of the UN inspectors in Iraq. The U.S. should have pursued the criminal masterminds of the 9-11 attacks through international police networks. The U.S. should honor its commitments to North Korea at the same time we demand that the North Koreans honor theirs. The U.S. should reverse its withdrawal from the ABM treaty, and should sign other weapons control treaties. Progressives believe that America’s real strength is its moral standing, which is undermined when the Administration violates international commitments, plots “regime change” of the governments of other countries, and wages “preemptive war.”

| America’s moral standing | The Administration has undermined America’s moral standing, violated international law, and aggravated a potentially dangerous situation in North Korea. The Administration squandered international support and sympathy for the U.S. after the 9-11 attacks and alienated the U.S. from some of its closest allies. | Progressives believe that America’s real strength in the world is its moral authority. But we know that America’s moral standing is undermined when the Administration violates international commitments, plots “regime change” of the governments of other countries, and wages “preemptive war.” |
| Preemptive | The Administration has come up | Progressives know that |
war doctrine

with a new doctrine, known as “preemptive war,” that puts the countries of the world on notice that they may be invaded by US forces at any time, for any reason the Administration deems appropriate. Further, the Administration announced that the U.S. would use nuclear weapons, even against an adversary that did not possess nuclear weapons of its own.

“preemptive war” and “nuclear first strike” doctrines are dangerous for our security. These policies goad countries to prepare for potential US attacks with nuclear weapons of their own, as North Korea has recently demonstrated. Preemptive war and Nuclear first strike policies are also illegal. They were made illegal by treaties the US has committed to. Furthermore, “Preemptive war” and nuclear first strike are shameful and un-American.

Treaties

The Administration turned the U.S. into the first country to unilaterally withdraw from a nuclear weapons control (ABM) treaty.

Progressives believe that weapons treaties serve our security. The Administration should have known that by unilaterally abrogating a nuclear arms control treaty, it would tempt other countries to do the same, as obviously happened in North Korea.

Iraq

The Administration has claimed that Iraq poses a threat to the U.S. and has ignored the potential of war against Iraq to endanger stability in the region and put our allies at risk.

Progressives in Congress believe that war in Iraq is unjustified. The U.S. should allow UN inspectors to complete their inspections and dismantle any existing Iraqi weapons capacity.

9-11

The Administration has squandered international support for the U.S. following the attacks by repeatedly using discredited reports of a connection between Iraq and the 9-11 leaders to justify war against Iraq.

Progressives believe that the Administration has misdirected America’s efforts: a war in Iraq distracts America from finding the specific individuals who plotted the 9-11 attacks.

Energy

The Administration has used the military as a security force for the oil industry, expanding garrisons in the Persian Gulf and Central Asia,

Progressives believe that America must become independent of fossil fuels in general, and foreign oil in particular. Big Oil has
where most of the world’s oil reserves are located. At the same time, the Administration delayed intervening in energy price-gouging by Enron and other companies, and has dismantled regulations and programs that would move the U.S. away from its dependence on oil.

**Defense**

The Administration’s large increases in defense spending mask the fact that it is weakening the nation’s defenses: it is buying weapons without testing them, it is ordering weapons that are more expensive to buy and operate on a per copy basis than the weapons they are supposed to replace (so the size of forces shrinks); and it is committing the country to defense costs that cannot possibly be met. The U.S. now spends more on defense than the combined spending of the next 20 nations, yet the Administration is preparing two supplemental budget requests totaling $50 billion to cover costs in the Afghanistan and Iraq military campaigns, according to news sources. Yet, the Administration cannot even audit the Department of Defense’s books.

corrupted our foreign policy, poisoned our environment, and dominated our government – especially the White House. Progressives believe that our national security would be served by concerted effort toward energy independence: wind and solar for electricity, and hydrogen for automobiles.

Progressives believe that America’s military must be reconceived to combat modern threats, as exemplified by the low-technology terrorists who perpetrated 9-11. The U.S. should cut defense spending on cold war weapons systems that are not suited to today’s threats. Tax dollars should not be spent on weapons that have not been proven to work, such as the national missile defense system. Lastly, Progressives believe that the Administration’s inability to audit the Pentagon’s books and account for inventory undermines the defense preparedness of the military.

2. **ON THE ECONOMIC SECURITY OF THE AMERICAN MAJORITY.**

*The Administration is waging class warfare against the majority of Americans, even as the nation sputters along the edge of a double dip recession. The Administration turned its back on one million people who lost their jobs during the recession, exhausted their unemployment insurance benefits, and remain unemployed. The Administration repealed workplace safety standards, opposed strict protections on pensions, and advocates a plan*
to privatize Social Security, which would put it at risk in the stock market. Meanwhile, the Administration championed making tax-free the accumulated fortunes of the super wealthy and cutting taxes on dividends, which disproportionately benefits the wealthy and will have negligible stimulus effect on the economy. The Bush Administration has given Americans more reasons to fear for their jobs, their income and their ability to meet essential needs such as health care and education.

In contrast, Progressives in Congress stand for a full employment economy, in which all Americans who want to work are able to find work. Every American should also enjoy guaranteed, affordable, high quality health care. The federal government should also recommit itself to guaranteed retirement and disability income, and abandon privatization of publicly financed programs. Progressives in Congress also recognize that the economy is in serious trouble right now. There is significant danger that the economy will fall into a double dip recession. The economy needs a genuine stimulus. The stimulus must be large, it must jump-start the economy immediately, it must create new jobs, it must be fair; it must put money in the pockets of the majority of Americans, and it should target neglected areas of society.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jobs</th>
<th>The Administration has turned a deaf ear to the rise of long-term unemployment, the collapse of wages and the evaporation of job security during this recession. Meanwhile, the nation’s infrastructure of water systems, bridges, ports, schools and libraries is crumbling.</th>
<th>Progressives believe that the U.S. must commit itself to a full employment economy, with government creating jobs to insure that every person willing and able to work can find work.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Health care affordability</td>
<td>The Administration has turned a blind eye to the fact that health care is unaffordable for the average person, including 41 million Americans. The Administration is destroying Medicare, by letting it “wither on the vine.” At the same time, the health care industry is extremely profitable and contributes mightily to the Republican Party.</td>
<td>Progressives believe that every American has a right to guaranteed, affordable, high quality health care. The health industry has failed to deliver, so the government must: Medicare must be improved, not abandoned, to include prescription drug coverage and to insure the highest quality health care for all eligible people, and expanded to guarantee health care and mental health parity for all Americans, and prescription drugs for the elderly.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Security</td>
<td>The President is trying to</td>
<td>Progressives know it’s necessary</td>
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privatize Social Security. This would cut benefits and eliminate the only federally guaranteed retirement and disability income most Americans can count on.

to preserve the Social Security guarantee, which can only be done by backing benefits with the “full faith and credit of the United States.” The private stock market cannot do that.

Economic stimulus

The Administration delayed acknowledging the need for a stimulus for a year after the start of the recession. Most recently, it has pretended that cutting taxes on dividends, which disproportionately benefits the wealthy, will have stimulus effect on the economy, though almost all economists disagree.

Progressives in Congress support a large fiscal stimulus, consisting of a large rebate on payroll taxes paid in 2002, expansion of the unemployment compensation eligibility criteria and benefit, federal reimbursement of certain state costs, and job-creating infrastructure projects.

Taxes

The Administration began a transfer of wealth from the majority of Americans to the wealthiest families in the country. The top one percent of the wealthiest households would receive half of the benefits under the President’s dividend tax cut plan. The top one percent reap most of the benefits of the previous year’s tax cuts, which included the repeal of the estate tax.

Progressives in Congress believe that a fair tax system reflects the ability of its citizens to pay. Progressives also believe that a democratic society cannot survive for long if its tax policies reflect a bias for the wealthiest and most privileged. A fair society requires millionaires and corporations, who benefit the most from society and our legal system, to pay their fair share of taxes and not get special treatment or loopholes.

Unemployment

The Administration turned its back on one million people whose unemployment insurance benefits ran out during this recession. Now the Administration is fabricating something they call “personal reemployment accounts.”

Progressives in Congress believe that the existing unemployment insurance programs should be expanded and extended, including increasing the average weekly benefit to the federal poverty level. The Progressive’s plan would give unemployment benefits to the one million Americans abandoned by the Administration, at the estimated 250,000 more individuals who
Corporate crime and misconduct

Enron, Arthur Andersen, World Com and many other corporations were exposed for their criminal conduct in 2002. The Administration portrayed the wrongdoing as a case of a few bad apples, and federal prosecution has been limited to only certain individuals. Corporations are themselves rarely prosecuted for serious crimes such as financial fraud.

Education, and other public needs met at the local level

The Administration has failed to meet its education funding responsibilities. It has abandoned state governments, whose budget pressures put in danger many basic programs Americans depend upon, such as health care for the disabled, children, the very old and poor.

Environment

The Administration reversed or tried to reverse public health measures such as the asthma-abating New Source Review power plant emission rules and regulations on arsenic levels in drinking water, revealing its preference for corporate interests.

Globalization

The Administration is pushing to spread the model of NAFTA throughout the hemisphere, to restrict the availability of

will join them every month.

Progressives believe that corporations that repeatedly break the law or otherwise significantly violate the public trust should be placed under court-supervised probation until the company ceases operating in areas where it has shown repeated criminal conduct. In cases where such reform is not possible or the damage is greater than the company’s ability to repay the victims, the corporation should have its charter revoked.

Progressives believe that the federal government must reimburse the states immediately for the cost of teacher salaries and school repair and increase Medicaid spending. Furthermore, vouchers are harmful to the public education system, as they siphon public funds to private schools. Instead, the federal government should undertake a large effort to build more classrooms as part of an infrastructure improvement initiative.

Progressives in Congress believe that Americans deserve clean air and clean water. Progressives support tighter emissions standards on smokestacks, and higher fuel economy standards.

Progressives believe that international trade can be conducted fairly. Fair trade would: protect wages in the U.S.,
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<th>Topic</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Progressives' View</th>
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<tr>
<td>Immigration</td>
<td>The Administration has singled out certain immigrants, especially immigrants from Muslim countries for harassment. None of the deportees have been linked to the attacks of 9-11. Moreover, the Administration has neglected its promise to fix flaws in the nation’s immigration policies. It continues to fail to make the distinction between individuals who come to America in search of the American dream and those bent on destroying that dream. Furthermore, the Administration has militarized the southern border.</td>
<td>Progressives believe that national security is undermined when the U.S. rounds up and deports Muslim immigrants: the U.S. breaks up families and creates grievances. Furthermore, Progressives believe that a reasonable immigration policy would reflect the enormous contributions immigrants make to America: economically and culturally. Immigration policy should help families stay together.</td>
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<td>Welfare reform</td>
<td>In the midst of an economic recession, rising unemployment, increasing welfare caseloads and state fiscal crises, the Administration fails to respond to low-income and poor families. While 19 states have already cut social services because of lack of funding, the Administration’s plan freezes funding for the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families Act (TANF) program and mandates expensive new rules.</td>
<td>Progressives believe that the government must respond to families in poverty, who are most vulnerable in a recession. Reauthorization of TANF programs should include a funding increase, opportunities for recipients to earn a degree or receive job training, a guarantee of quality child care and restoration of benefits for legal immigrants.</td>
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<td>Housing</td>
<td>The Administration has ignored the crisis in affordable housing: there are 200,000 homeless children in America. Thousands of rental units are being converted</td>
<td>Progressives believe that affordable housing is a right. Progressives in Congress are pushing for increases to federal programs, such as Section 8, Hope...</td>
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3. ON RIGHTS, LIBERTIES AND PRIVACY

The Administration has stoked fears to justify their assault on the civil rights and liberties of all Americans. The Administration and the Attorney General have taken a series of constitutionally dubious actions that place the Executive branch in the role of legislator, prosecutor, judge, and jury. The Administration pushed for the unpatriotic “USA Patriot Act,” which rolled back civil liberties, and moved unilaterally to implement a host of additional measures hostile to the Constitution and Bill of Rights. The administration has sought to pack the courts with extremist judges hostile to racial equality and reproductive freedom.

Progressives in Congress know that new and dangerous powers are being seized by law enforcement authorities. These incursions into the privacy and liberties of Americans undermine basic American principles and undercut national security.

**Expanded FBI Domestic Spying Powers**

The Administration has released new FBI Guidelines on General Crimes, Racketeering Enterprise and Terrorism Enterprise Investigations that sweep away protections that have been in place since the 1970s. The new Guidelines allow the government to spy on domestic groups even when there is no suspicion of wrongdoing. They also authorize investigations to continue longer with intrusive techniques and less oversight, even when they produce no evidence of a crime. This initiative legitimizes fishing for individual sale, which will add to the problem of homelessness. Federal programs aimed at creating affordable housing have been underfunded.

Progressives in Congress believe that privacy and civil liberties are vital to ensure that Americans are able exercise their freedoms. The U.S. should halt work on a domestic spy agency.
expeditions and allows the FBI to wrongfully spy on the activities of civil rights organizations. New rules to wiretap religious organizations, including places of worship, further alienated the American Muslim community, a crucial ally in our efforts to battle terrorism.

**Total Information Awareness**

John Poindexter, former National Security Advisor to President Reagan who was indicted on five counts involving charges of conspiracy to obstruct justice, obstruction of justice, and making false statements to Congress, leads an office in the Pentagon to collect medical records, credit card records, financial records, and other personal information on Americans to track potential terrorist activity. It brings “Big Brother” to life.

**The Unpatriotic USA Patriot Act**

This Act was one of the biggest blows to civil liberties and civil rights enacted in a generation. It permits secret black bag searches, where law enforcement can search an individual’s home and indefinitely delay notifying him; permits immigrants to be retroactively deported for donating money to groups they did not know were terrorists; permits unilateral and indefinite administrative detention of non-citizens based solely on the authority of the Attorney General; vastly expands the authority of the CIA to eavesdrop and wiretap persons in

Progressives believe that the TIA program constitutes the most serious and comprehensive assault on privacy ever considered by the United States government. It should be totally abandoned.

Progressives will work to repeal the sections of the Patriot Act that are a direct assault on basic American civil liberties.
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<th><strong>Military Tribunals</strong></th>
<th>The Administration announced the creation of secret military courts that could be used to try immigrants who are lawfully in our nation.</th>
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<td><strong>Illegal Detention</strong></td>
<td>Since September 11, the Administration has detained more than one thousand immigrants for unknown and unspecified reasons and without time limit.</td>
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<td>Progressives will press for the use of civilian courts where constitutional protections and the right to appeal will not be trampled.</td>
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<td><strong>Secret Proceedings</strong></td>
<td>The Administration is prosecuting individuals in proceedings that are closed to the public – more akin to the legal process one sees in a dictatorship than the world’s most open and free democracy.</td>
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<td>Progressives support the constitutional protection of habeas corpus and will not tolerate illegal detentions.</td>
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<td><strong>Detention of US citizen Jose Padilla</strong></td>
<td>The Administration arrested Jose Padilla, a 31-year-old U.S. citizen, as a terrorist suspect for allegedly plotting a “dirty bomb” attack on the United States. The Attorney General turned Padilla over to the Defense Department, which enabled the Administration to detain him indefinitely without a trial, in violation of his constitutional rights.</td>
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<td>Progressives believe that the strength of this country is our legal system, which presumes citizens innocent until proved guilty, and provides defendants with legal counsel, a vigorous defense, and a speedy trial. We will press the Administration to follow through on these basic procedural protections for all citizens.</td>
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<td><strong>Round-up and Deportation of Muslim immigrants</strong></td>
<td>The Administration has singled out immigrants from Muslim countries for harassment.</td>
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<td>Progressives oppose the dragnet against Muslim immigrants. We note that none of the deportees have any links to the terrorist attacks of 9-11.</td>
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<td><strong>Racial Profiling</strong></td>
<td>Since September 11th, the Administration has practiced the ugly politics of racial and ethnic</td>
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<td>Progressives oppose racial and ethnic profiling as not only immoral but also as</td>
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<td>Civil rights</td>
<td>The Administration has taken away the freedoms of many Americans and is stacking the federal courts with ideologues who threaten long-standing civil rights.</td>
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<td>Rights in the workplace</td>
<td>All Americans should have the right to form unions and bargain collectively with their employer. Furthermore, Progressives in Congress believe that you carry with you your rights and liberties wherever you go in America, especially in the workplace; therefore, “mandatory arbitration” clauses should be illegal in employment contracts.</td>
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<td>Affirmative Action</td>
<td>The Administration has continued to show their support for the politics of racial division through the nomination of federal judges such as Charles Pickering and by urging the nation’s highest court to overturn the University of Michigan’s efforts to promote racial equality and diversity in higher education.</td>
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<td>Reproductive rights</td>
<td>The Administration and Republican-led Congress has an extremist agenda to roll back reproductive rights and ultimately overturn <em>Roe versus Wade</em></td>
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<td>Progressives in Congress fully support <em>Roe versus Wade</em> and support a woman’s constitutional right to choose. Progressives also believe in eliminating the global</td>
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Voting Rights
The President was elected with less than 25% of the eligible vote. Too many Americans are not voting – some minorities have been wrongfully denied the right to vote, as was the case in Florida and elsewhere in 2000. Only 50% of age-eligible individuals (which includes registered and unregistered individuals) voted in 2000. Meanwhile, special interests dominate elections with their money. Even after Congress banned soft money, wealthy special interests will still play far to dominant a role in our elections so long as private financing through large contributions is the only option.

Progressives believe that democratic government depends upon the participation of its citizens for its legitimacy, so we want to establish Election Day as a national holiday, keep voting booths open for 24 hours, and permit instant voter registration. On the campaign finance, Progressives believe that candidates should not have to win a “wealth primary” to be elected to office, and that reducing the political power of big contributors enhances the political clout of ordinary working Americans. The solution is a system, like the Clean Money, Clean Elections approach adopted by 4 states for their state elections, that gives candidates an option to forego private funding without having to “unilaterally disarm.” This would include reduced rates and limitations on broadcast advertisement financing, and voluntary acceptance of public resource incentives for self-imposed limitations on campaign fundraising and spending.

Ex-Offender and Criminal Justice reform
The Administration has failed to address sentencing inequities and the barriers facing ex-offenders returning to the community, including denial of right to vote, bars to public housing, TANF, job training and employment in many career tracks

Progressives believe that equality and equity before the bar of justice fundamental to our notions of democracy and that all society benefits when ex-offenders have constructive alternatives when returning to the communities and circumstances which led to their incarceration.

Government transparency
The Administration is limiting government transparency. The

Progressives in Congress believe that democracy is best served by
Department of Homeland Security is exempt from federal law requiring agencies to meet standards of openness, accountability and strike a balance of viewpoints on advisory committees. Disclosures made by corporations to the Homeland Security Department will not be accessible under the Freedom of Information Act.

an active and informed citizenry. Progressives believe that the Freedom of Information Act and whistleblower protections must be strengthened.