Statement by U.S. Senator Chuck Grassley regarding the State of the Union Address by the President, Tuesday, January 25, 2011

The top priorities have to be job creation and fiscal discipline, and there ought to be broad-based political support for those goals. It seems like the President has come to this realization after last November's election. The new seating arrangement for tonight's State of the Union address is symbolic, but it can't do as much as the tone set by the President in his remarks and, even more so, the follow through after the speech.

I had constituent meetings in 24 Iowa counties last week and heard employers say they need long-term tax certainty and tax reforms to enhance competitiveness and enable job creation. They need relief from costly mandates and regulations that undo any benefit they're supposed to get from the federal government, especially in rural America. The President's goal to look at contradictory or unneeded regulations is welcome, and I intend to give him some common sense ideas from Iowa to get started. Washington also should foster innovation and the resulting economic opportunities with initiatives such as patent reform.

American manufacturers, farmers and service industries need new markets for exports. International trade leads to higher paying jobs and new opportunities for workers. It's time for the administration to match its rhetoric with reality by getting the United States off the sidelines and finalizing valuable trade agreements that have been pending for years. The rest of the world is moving forward without us, at the expense of America's workforce. For example, Caterpillar is waiting to export more bulldozers made in Illinois to Colombia under a free-trade agreement signed in 2006 but never implemented. If U.S. companies can't get access to foreign markets, companies in other countries will. The President's stated goal of doubling exports will be hard to achieve on the margins, without trade agreements. I want to work with him to achieve those agreements, if he's willing to back his words with action.

A positive outcome of the 2010 election must be fiscal restraint. That needs to include spending freezes, spending reductions, and beefed up efforts to stop fraud, waste and abuse of tax dollars. The renewed effort to pass a Balanced Budget Amendment to the Constitution is very good news for taxpayers and good government. It should be accompanied by line-item veto authority for the President. Both measures would result in greater accountability in Washington.

Senator Grassley will serve as Ranking Member of the Judiciary Committee in the new Congress. He has been either Ranking Member or Chairman of the Finance Committee for the last ten years and will continue to serve as a senior member of the Finance Committee. Grassley also is a senior member of the Senate Budget and Agriculture committees.

Harkin Statement on President Obama's Second State of the Union Address

WASHINGTON, D.C. – January 25, 2011 - Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA) today issued the following statement in response to President Obama's second State of the Union address. Harkin chairs the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee, as well as the Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations Subcommittee.

"Last year, I listened as the President laid out in real terms the state of our economy and the tough road ahead. He spoke of the need for job creation to restore our economy. In the past year, Congress and the White House worked together to make our economy work again for hardworking Americans.

"We brought health care costs under control with the new health reform law, which I was proud to help craft. We also took action on a long-overdue effort to make college more affordable. And Congress passed and the President signed into law a new financial reform effort to help stabilize our economy, make future bailouts less likely and protect families on Main Street from abusive financial practices.

"In the upcoming year, Congress will continue the effort to create jobs, restore the economy and reduce our deficit. Tonight, President Obama laid out a number of steps on which Congress and the President can work together to achieve that goal.

"As Chairman of the Senate HELP Committee, I was encouraged by the President's strong focus on education reform as an engine for economic growth. Teachers across the country work hard every day to educate our children. It's past time for Congress to do its job and fix the No Child Left Behind Act and I look forward to leading this bipartisan effort. Advancing education reform through a new Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) will help ensure that all students can attend high-quality schools that equip them with the skills and knowledge to succeed in college, careers and the global economy.

"The recently passed health reform law, something I have long believed was a starter home from which to continue to build, put health decisions back in patient's hands – not the insurance companies. That important bill provided new protections to consumers by ending discrimination against those with pre-existing conditions, allowing parents to keep their kids on their insurance until age 26 and investing in prevention efforts to keep Americans healthy. I

was pleased to hear the President defend these important protections and suggest we build on them as we move forward.

"The health reform bill was also a deficit reduction bill, saving the federal government over $1 trillion over the next 20 years. Just two weeks ago, the Congressional Budget Office estimated that the House Republicans' repeal effort will drive up the deficit by nearly a quarter trillion dollars over ten years. Health reform was the first of many efforts Democrats will take to reduce our deficit and rein in spending. We will continue these efforts in this Congress. There is room for significant but smart cuts in both domestic spending and defense programs. And we also have to have a real conversation on fair taxation, which includes making sure higher income Americans and corporations pay their fair share.

"Budget cutting rhetoric is one thing, but reality is much more difficult. That is why it is so important that our deficit reduction efforts be done in a smart way. These cuts should not impede our recovery or be borne disproportionately by working Americans. And they should still allow us to invest in our future.

"The economy is slowly getting back on track. With bipartisan cooperation, Congress and the Obama Administration can accelerate that recovery."

Braley Reaction to State of the Union

Washington, D.C. – January 25, 2011 - Congressman Bruce Braley (IA-01) released the following statement tonight on President Obama's State of the Union address to a Joint Session of Congress:

"In tonight's speech, President Obama presented an ambitious vision for our country's future – it's a vision that I've been fighting for since I came to Congress.

"I fully support an innovation agenda for America. In Iowa, we are already leading the way in new energies like biofuels – with help from legislation like the New Era Act, which I introduced and passed into law, Eastern Iowa Community College and Hawkeye Community College are training the next generation of biofuels technicians right now.

"And I commend the President for recognizing the state of Iowa when he talked about expanding high-speed Internet to rural communities. It's great to hear that this is high on his priority list, because it certainly is on mine.

"But even as we work to create the jobs of tomorrow, we cannot forget about jobs *today* – and the people who depend on having jobs today. American manufacturing is hurting – I've seen it in companies like Wilbert Plastic Service in Winthrop which has been open since the 1960's. They employed over a hundred people. And they had to close down last year. This is unacceptable to me – and I won't stop working until we can bring about a resurgence of American manufacturing. Because if we want families to make it in Iowa – or anywhere in America – we need to make things in America once again.

"I look forward to working with the President, and my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to create jobs, to cut the deficit in a responsible way, to simplify government, to take care of our veterans and military families – and to give hard-working Americans in all of our districts a chance to succeed."

###

Statement from Governor Pat Quinn on President Obama's State of the Union Address

CHICAGO – January 25, 2011. Governor Pat Quinn today released the following statement in response to President Barack Obama's State of the Union speech:

"We in Illinois applaud President Obama's vision for American innovation, education, fiscal responsibility and bipartisanship. As our country recovers from the worst recession in decades, we must be visionaries, with our sights set on the global economy.

"In Illinois, we are investing in the infrastructure, new industries, and education that will continue to make our state competitive – for the jobs of today and tomorrow. From building high-speed rail to attracting foreign investment from China, from helping online-innovator Groupon grow to working with Ford to build the new fuel-efficient Explorer, Illinois stands poised to take advantage of the jobs of tomorrow and the next technological revolutions.

"We commend the President on his vision, and look forward to working together as a nation to keep American innovation at the forefront of the global economy."

###