

Ethics reforms give America back its Congress

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Over the past 12 years, Congress' willingness to operate with two sets of ethical standards, theirs and the rest of America's, resulted in the American people losing faith in our elected officials.

In recent financial and moral scandals affecting Congress, irresponsible leaders put holding onto political power above the needs of our country. As a result, only about 25 percent of Americans believe Congress is working in the interests of the people.

I am proud to be part of the leadership team that was responsible for passing one of the most comprehensive ethics reform packages in our nation's history. It was the first step in restoring confidence in our government and building credibility with the American people. With a new set of rules that restore integrity, civility, and fiscal responsibility to Congress, we can begin to rebuild trust with the people.

The results already are evident. In the first 100 legislative hours, the Democratic-led Congress pushed an ambitious agenda to deliver on our campaign promises; implementing the bipartisan recommendations of the 9/11 commission; making government live within its means by mandating fiscal controls so we don't spend money we don't have; making our economy fairer by raising the minimum wage; cutting interest rates on student loans to help our kids achieve their American dream; requiring Medicare to negotiate lower prescription drug costs so seniors do not have to choose between having dinner or taking their medications; funding embryonic stem-cell research that has the potential to end the suffering of millions of Americans; and making America independent of foreign oil.

As I promised, I am committed to working in a bipartisan spirit on the problems facing the Treasure Coast; cleaning up our environment, lowering the cost of homeowners insurance, providing affordable housing for our teachers, nurses and first-responders and making sure we are secure at home. To be successful, I need your support. I can be reached at the accompanying phone numbers and Web address. Together we can build better communities and provide everyone the ability to live their American Dream.

Mahoney represents Florida's 16th Congressional District.