**WASHINGTON (27 January)** – U.S. Rep. Gus M. Bilirakis (R-Fla.), representing Florida's 9th Congressional District, this evening released the following statement on President Barack Obama's first State of the Union Address:

"Tonight President Obama outlined a welcomed, although small step toward fiscal responsibility. Unfortunately, I fear that freezing 1/6 of the federal budget after a year of enormous spending increases which have already set us on a course to double the size of the $12 trillion national debt is little more than a political ploy.

"Instead of pushing an agenda that burdens the nation with new taxes and crushing deficits, I believe that the best way to encourage job creation is to allow families and small businesses to keep more of what they earn so they can innovate, grow, and create jobs to turn our economy around.

"As Congress begins anew in 2010, I am hopeful that Speaker Pelosi and the Democrats will work to incorporate Republican ideas and put forth proposals that reduce spending and cut taxes to match the President's lofty rhetoric."