Thank you all for coming here to historic Hudson to show your support and your friendship. And thank you for giving me the opportunity today to share with you my vision for rebuilding America's greatness and renewing our hope and trust in government.

Hudson is a special and important place for me because it is not only my home, but it is also the home of one of the greatest son's of Hudson – Judge Roger J Miner, who sits on the Second Circuit Court of Appeals. I clerked for Judge Miner as a young lawyer. As a man of great legal scholarship and wise jurisprudence, he taught me the importance of

honesty, integrity and advocacy. I hope to honor him here today.

I am also here to honor my family. I want to thank my husband, Jonathan, and my absolutely wonderful son, Theodore – I appreciate them so much for their love and support.

I also want to thank my mother and father. My mother is very much part of the heart and soul of this region – she is an avid hunter and loves the outdoors – she has taught me to love this land and respect our resources – she is a great shot with a rifle and a bow – and is the constant provider of both turkey for

Thanksgiving and venison stew all winter long. And I appreciate my father, who has always encouraged me to be the best I can be – from always cheering me on in sports, to being there when I gave my first stump speech – he has always supported me in everything I do.

My family has been an integral part of this region for over five generations. My grandfathers worked in our local manufacturing plants. Today, my cousins work as teachers, police officers, state and county workers, prosecutors, counselors and business owners, including the first (and only) Irish Mexican Restaurant in the area.

It is from my family that I learned the importance of serving the public good and standing up for what you believe in. My grandmother worked as a secretary in the State legislature. She saw that women did not have a voice in government, so she decided to do something about it. She founded the area's first women's democratic club, which eventually became one of the most important and influential political institutions in Albany.

When I was a girl, my grandmother took me and all of my cousins with her to campaign for local candidates, stuff envelopes and pass out flyers. At

the time, I didn't really understand what it was all about – I just thought it was fun. But now that I am a mother, I understand why she brought us with her: She wanted to teach us that when we care about something deeply, we must stand up and fight for it. I honor her spirit every day of this campaign. I hope that I too will teach my son this lesson in the months and years ahead.

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I am here today to announce my candidacy for the United States House of Representatives for the 20th Congressional District. I am here to launch my campaign to bring accountable government and

honest leadership back to Washington. Our system of government – our democracy – is built on a foundation of trust. Today, that foundation is cracked. I am running this campaign to earn your trust and to help repair that foundation.

I've spent a lot of time over this last year talking with my neighbors from across our district –from Hudson, to Lake Placid in the north, to Millbrook in the south, to the farms of Washington County in the east and to the edge of Cooperstown in the west.

I have met with many families throughout the district, and I admire their strength of character and

conviction. What I have heard from them, though, is that they are deeply dissatisfied and distressed about the direction that our country is headed and with the leaders who are taking us there.

Take for example our neighbor Jimmy, who owns a coffee shop on Warren Street, right here in Hudson. His business is doing very well, but he still cannot yet afford health insurance for his employees or for himself. The only option for Jimmy and his other employees is to pay as they go and hope to stay healthy. So far they have been lucky, but luck is no solution to our nation's health care problem.

I also met Cynthia, a retired letter carrier in Mechanicville, who is concerned about how her elderly mother-in-law will pay her heating bills this winter. The costs are already out of her budget, and she does not qualify for home heating assistance programs because our current Administration cut federal assistance for home heating this year despite the rise in oil and gas prices. Working families like Cynthia's should not be forced to make a choice between heating and eating. Our nation needs a solution to its energy crisis now!

I also met Paul from Washington County, a lifelong Republican who is fed up with the irresponsible

spending, hidden handouts, and no-bid contracts that are streaming out of Washington. He wants a representative who will bring accountability and fiscal responsibility back to Washington.

Yet time after time, on issue after issue, too many in Washington, including the incumbent, have failed us. Instead of drawing upon our shared values and moving towards real solutions, insiders in Washington are too busy working for special interests to spend time working for us.

When my family and I sit down at the kitchen table, the issues that concern us are the same issues that

concern all of our communities. We all worry about job security and what kind of opportunities our children will have. We all worry about the growing costs of gas and heating oil, health care, and property taxes. We all worry about keeping Social Security solvent and our pensions reliable. And we worry about our young men and women in Iraq and what we can do to help them.

I want to be your Congresswoman because I know that I can help our nation solve these problems and realize its true promise. We must rise above petty politics and do what is right.

If you send me to Washington, I will work every day to honor the trust you have placed in me. My first commitment is to you, and I will not be afraid to do what's right and what's best for this district.

Some may call me a different kind of Democrat. But, I'm not interested in Democratic solutions or Republican solutions, but just solutions, period. I will be accountable to you, and no one else.

Let me start today by telling you my guiding principles and priorities: first, to build America's greatness; second, to reward the hard work you do

everyday; and third, to ensure that our leaders are ethical and accountable to you.

Building America's Greatness means I believe in the value of industry and agriculture and that our economic power is essential to our country's strength. I reject the idea that outsourcing American jobs is inevitable. I reject the idea that America can maintain our economic leadership by being the brains while foreign countries build our ideas or grow our food for us. How can our minds be the best in the world when our hands have forgotten how to do the work?

Here I offer a clear contrast to the incumbent's record:

Unlike our incumbent, I would not have voted to pass trade agreements without insisting first that foreign countries meet labor, environmental and health standards because they provide only for the shutting down of American production lines. I believe in free trade and that our workers are the most competitive in the world. But what chance do our industries and farmers have when our politicians tilt the playing fields against them by not insisting that foreign competitors play by the rules?

I believe that to build America's Greatness we need to grab the biggest market opportunity of the next 100 years. We are at the start of a new energy era and every product that uses an energy source will be revolutionized.

The question we must ask is:

Will America produce the next generation of aircraft, cars, computing equipment, and space vehicles – or will we have to buy them from foreign countries? I believe that this should be our national priority, second only to our national security.

Here, our congressman voted for an energy bill that did not even address this issue, and instead filters our tax dollars to big oil. He missed the opportunity to lower gas and oil prices for people like Cynthia's elderly mother-in-law as well as our local farmers, by letting price fixing and price gouging go unchecked. He missed the opportunity to assure our national security by ridding us of our dependence on Middle Eastern oil. And, he also missed the opportunity to preserve the beautiful lakes and mountains of this region for our families and future generations.

I believe that this district is ready to lead the charge toward a new energy industry focused on energy

independence and conservation technologies – with our history of hydropower, fuel cell technologies, bio fuels, and our research and manufacturing base. If we plan carefully and start now, this region can truly become a national model for innovation.

We must return to one of our fundamental values – America rewards those who work hard. Here, the current Congressman and this Administration have shown the wrong priorities. They took our social security money that we paid in throughout our whole working lives, and gave it away as a tax gift to millionaires. This is not rewarding work. Instead, we should be strengthening social security and

pensions, and should be giving real tax cuts to our working families – those who have earned it.

We need to bring back fiscal discipline to Washington, and stop mortgaging America's future to the Chinese government. Why? Because now that this Administration has wasted our federal surpluses, they are taking more from us here at home: by increasing our property tax bills. These are clear differences where my principles stand apart from the incumbent's record.

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To reward work, we need to make sure our families and businesses have access to quality affordable

health care. Listening to drug company lobbyists does nothing to lower healthcare costs for families or growing businesses like Jimmy's.

We need a real solution on prescription drugs – not the drug company give-away that our current Congressman voted for. Our seniors cannot afford or even navigate the current scheme. We must begin by controlling costs, encouraging competition, giving the government the right to buy in bulk and negotiate the lowest prices. We must get the drug companies and their compliant congressmen out of the process.

And, we must reward work by educating our children to become the workforce of tomorrow. This means looking at No Child Left Behind, fixing the problems that are not working and funding the right solutions. Our public schools and colleges are the front line of America's ability to compete – strengthening our education system is essential to our economic security. Here, the incumbent and I differ – his recent vote to cut student loan programs is simply the wrong priority. Does he not realize that for many working families in our district, college tuition costs more than their wages can cover?

Building America's Greatness and rewarding work are core American values. They are based in America's strength and its history of never being afraid to lead.

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This failure of political leadership has never been more plain than with the war in Iraq. We have seen this administration and our congressman use the war for political gain to drive a wedge between Americans. What we need are solutions and consensus.

Our men and women fighting in Iraq have done a tremendous service by putting their lives on the line to protect our country and bring democracy to another. Our troops have made enormous strides in paving the way for the Iraqi people to participate in a democracy for the first time.

What we need now is real leadership so that we can finish the job in Iraq and do it right. In order to accomplish this goal, we must demonstrate our intentions in Iraq to stabilize the region and leave Iraq with a hope for a new democracy. I believe that there are solutions and that we must start by agreeing (1) that there will be no permanent bases in Iraq; (2)

that there will be no U.S. claim on Iraqi oil; and (3) there will be a renewed call for international support to train security forces so that US forces may be redeployed as soon as possible.

Above all, we must rise above this Administration's divisive political tactics because we cannot forget that real lives are at stake and that the decisions we make as a country in the next year will both affect Iraq and the United States for decades to come.

The war in Iraq is only one part of what we must do to win the war on terror. We must also improve security at our borders, increase the strength of our

Special Forces and intelligence personnel, and implement the recommendations of the 9/11 commission. Each of these steps is essential to our Homeland Security – keeping America safe is our highest priority.

We must also address the growing threats from other nations and radical fundamentalists who seek to do us harm. To do this we need to enforce binding treaties and lead our allies to keep nuclear weapons out of the hands of our enemies. Through our policies and leadership, we must inspire the next generation to see America as a friend and the beacon of light and hope it has always been. This is the only way for the

world to reject extremism in their own societies and allow future generations to grow up without the fear of terror.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, we must ensure that the men and women who serve in the American military receive our unequivocal and enduring support. Sadly, our current Congressman has short-changed these very men and women who risk their lives to protect American values - our veterans. He has voted against millions of dollars for veterans' health care and benefits, debt assistance for returning members of the National Guard and Reserve forces, and against additional job training

assistance for veterans who are returning from conflicts overseas.

If we are to accomplish any of the goals I have outlined today, we need to be resolute in maintaining an open, honest and ethical government that is of the people, by the people and for the people.

I will never profit from my congressional office and I will never use it to live a luxury lifestyle. I will never take gifts from special interests and I will never take trips with them. And, I will call for an Independent Bi-Partisan Ethics Council to investigate allegations of Congressional corruption.

And I will do more than just close down the bad behavior. I promise a level of local representation that will ensure accountability where it counts: to you – regardless of party or position. I will hold open meetings throughout the district in a different community every month.

You won't have to go skiing to talk to me, and if I do go skiing, it will be just a few miles from here at Hunter or Wyndham or Willard Mountain, where I learned to ski as a young girl.

I know my call for reform is important because I know this is how we were all raised – ethics and honesty are very much part of our upstate character – we know it when we see it – and what we have now is simply not right.

As this race begins, I look forward to the opportunity for positive change. My principles are clear, and are clearly different from those of the incumbent. I look forward to debating issues and ideas, and I will avoid partisan bickering and personal attacks on family. I know that we are all just sick of that kind of politics and I won't participate in it. From me, you will get a

substantive debate and real policy ideas – and a discussion of the issues that matter to you.

But before our work begins, I want to thank you for all of your efforts. Without you, I would not be able to take on this important challenge. And come November 2006 after we have run our campaign for accountable government and honest leadership, I will make all of you – my friends, and family, and neighbors – proud to elect me to serve the 20th Congressional District in the House of Representatives of the United States of America.

Thank you.