

Sen. Mike Johanns, R-Neb.

What he liked: "I like his overall message of 'Now let's work together and bipartisanship.' . . . The proof is going to be in what happens tomorrow, and that will be the key." Wants to see the details, but the idea of helping small businesses "has piqued my interest." . . . "Certainly, the things he talked about in terms of investing in biofuels and nuclear power and more drilling. I just think that's where we have to be headed."

What he didn't like: The president's embracing of cap and trade via the House bill. "On one hand, he's trying to help small business, on the other hand, cap and trade will really punish, not only homeowners and anybody who uses electricity will pay higher costs for it, but it punishes small businesses and farmers and ranchers and just people who are out there trying to provide jobs." Also didn't like Obama blaming the deficit on the former administration. "That tone is very, very concerning. It's like he's not off the campaign trail, and we need him to govern. We need him to be the president."

Sen. Ben Nelson, D-Neb.

What he liked: "I think the president was very strong in his comments about the economy and what needs to be done. He made it very clear that spending is an issue and that if Congress gets out of control with spending he'll veto legislation." Supports emphasis on employment and jobs and small businesses. Also supports bipartisanship. "He reached out and said if you have ideas on health care, bring them, and we'll look and see if there are other good ideas. That kind of reaching out to Republicans and Democrats alike is extremely important for the future of this country. . . . I hope tonight is the beginning of that change."

What he didn't like: "It's a very difficult challenge ahead, and things are not going to turn around overnight. But I hope this is the beginning of the turnaround, to continue to reduce unemployment numbers, begin to find jobs, and to help small businesses establish those jobs."

Rep. Lee Terry, R-Neb.

What he liked: "I liked that he recognized that the primary issue is the economy, small businesses, creating jobs. I appreciated his stance on a budget freeze, getting control of congressional spending and earmark reform. But while I want to support him and will support him on all those measures, I want to make sure that it's more than just words."

What he didn't like: "The scolding. I felt that there were two disappointments. One is that all the issues were caused by the last eight years and are somebody else's fault. I want a leader that just stands up and looks forward. Secondly, I think he took some unnecessary shots at Republicans. At a time when he's right that we need to pull together and work together, I didn't think that his hand was earnestly reaching out to us."

Rep. Jeff Fortenberry, R-Neb.

What he liked: "As the president said, we don't quit, Americans don't quit. And I appreciate his drawing upon the finest traditions of our nation."

What he didn't like: "However, the president must lead and take the concrete steps necessary to get the government's fiscal house in order."

Rep. Adrian Smith, R-Neb.

What he liked: "I welcomed the president's call for a spending freeze." But Smith had doubts about the president's fiscal record and said Congress and the administration must do more. "We should immediately pass strict budget caps limiting federal spending."

What he didn't like: "We cannot address runaway federal spending while advancing a multitrillion-dollar government takeover of health care, another multibillion-dollar stimulus plan and a cap-and-trade energy tax."

Rep. Steve King, R-Iowa

What he liked: "I like eliminating all capital gains taxes on small businesses. That was the best part of the whole speech, and it was one of the few specific policy statements that he made."

What he didn't like: "The idea of going back to his health care plan and trying to run that again, when he knows it was killed in Massachusetts. I really got a sad moment when he started to talk about earmark reform after he made his campaign pledges and then went ahead and signed bills with thousands of earmarks in it. You really don't come back to the Congress at the end of that year and say 'We're really going to mean it next time.'"

