

Gingrich urges GOP to return to priorities to keep control

Restructuring government should be high on list, former speaker says

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Continuing the bipartisan stream of potential 2008 presidential candidates to South Carolina, former Republican House Speaker Newt Gingrich told a Furman University audience that the "Republican Revolution" culminated a 30-year "wave of change."

Gingrich was the architect of 1994's "Contract With America," an assortment of conservative Republican issues the GOP used to regain control of the House and make him the first speaker from his party in 40 years.

But, he said, the movement's creative energy had been spent by August 1997 when Democratic allegations of misconduct undermined his leadership, the Republican Senate gave up on the House's more radical agenda and "we had used up all the great Ronald Reagan ideas."

Republican control of Congress is in jeopardy in 2006, Gingrich told reporters before addressing an overflow crowd at Younts Conference Center under the sponsorship of the Richard W. Riley Institute. He spoke, and later took questions, on "Revisiting the Republican Revolu-

tion: 10 Years of Republican Rule."

"This is the biggest intersection we've been at since the election of Reagan in 1980. Clearly, we have to have substantial change if we're going to remain the governing majority," Gingrich said.



Such change must entail returning to a balanced federal budget, a more effective effort in the global war on terror, transformation of the health-care system "because you can't balance the budget without it and you can't defend the country against avian flu without transforming health," he said.

Beyond that, how Amer-

ica governs itself must be transformed.

"It takes a recognition by Republicans that the structures of government we've inherited from the left simply don't work anymore, that they're a combination of an 1880s Civil Service Act and a 1935 manual typewriter bureaucracy," Gingrich said.

As for his future intentions, Gingrich offered no hint.

"I don't know," he said when asked if he would seek the Republican presidential nomination in 2008.

But he's doing all the preliminary things that potential candidates do three years out.

"I'm going around the country outlining a whole series of big changes," Gingrich said.