



## SENATOR BARACK OBAMA

*“My job is not to represent Washington to you, but to represent you to Washington.”*

**Campaign Theme: *Unity, Hope and Real CHANGE***

### HEALTH CARE

- **Voluntary coverage**— In comparison to required universal coverage outlined in the Edwards and Clinton plans, Obama’s requires coverage for children only, although enrollment is offered to everyone regardless of health status. There is a public/private option for all. Insurance will be portable from job to job. All plans will be at least as generous as the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program and will include preventive, maternity, and mental health care. To insure quality health care for all, a National Health Insurance Exchange will set rules and standards.
- **Affordability**—Income-based sliding scale subsidies will be provided for people and families who need it. Eligibility for Medicaid and SCHIP programs will be expanded and employer plans reimbursed for catastrophic costs incurred above a threshold, provided savings are used to reduce employee premiums.
- **Cost control:**
  - Simplify paperwork and install state-of-the-art information technology systems.
  - Implement proven standards and evaluation methods encouraging teamwork and best practices;
  - Reduce overcharging by insurance companies by encouraging competition;
  - Strengthen prevention and public health measures in schools and workplaces;
  - Allow Americans to buy medicines from other developed countries if drugs are safe and prices lower.
  - Encourage generic drug substitution.
  - Repeal the ban on direct negotiation with drug companies and eliminate excessive subsidies to Medicare Advantage plans.

**Plan paid for by:** Rolling back President Bush’s tax cuts for people earning over \$250,000, increased cost control, and required contributions by businesses.

### IRAQ

- Timetable for withdrawal, starting immediately, with one or two brigades leaving each month. Within 16 months most troops will be gone, leaving some troops until 2013.
- A new constitutional convention in Iraq, with UN playing a central role, that would not adjourn until Iraq’s leaders reach an accord on reconciliation.
- Direct diplomacy with all nations of the region.

### HOMELAND SECURITY

- Increase protection of our chemical plants. Obama and Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) have introduced legislation that would require plant-owners to beef up security.



- Keep our drinking water safe by upgrading monitoring system; introduced legislation to provide \$37.5 million over 5 years for upgrading security of drinking water systems.
- Keep track of spent nuclear fuel through better monitoring of the 103 operating plants that annually produce over 2,000 metric tons of spent fuel. Introduced legislation to require more extensive reporting of radioactive leaks.
- Increase security on rail and transit systems.
- Supports the Patriot Act, but not its extended wiretap provision.

## ECONOMY

- **Taxes and fiscal policy**--Eliminate Bush's tax cut for the wealthy (to pay for health care); provide a tax cut for working families with a new credit of up to \$500 per person, or \$1,000 per working family (eliminating income taxes for 10 million Americans). Will simplify tax filings.
- **Trade policy**-- Amend NAFTA to add labor and environmental standards. Pressure the World Trade Organization to stop nontariff barriers on U.S. exports and foreign unfair subsidies. Retrain workers through flexible education accounts and extend assistance to the service sector.
- **Job creation, technology, innovation and scientific development policies**-- Promote jobs through the development of green technologies (see Energy section). Double the federal funding for basic research and make the research and development tax credit permanent. Expand broadband access to every community and protect internet net-neutrality.
- **Labor policy**—Strengthen union rights to organize and bargain collectively. Raise the minimum wage by indexing it to inflation and increase the earned income tax credit.
- **Credit and mortgage policies**—Protect homeownership and eliminate predatory practices in mortgages, other loans, and credit cards, and reform bankruptcy laws.
  - Create a mortgage tax credit for those who do not itemize deductions.
  - Initiate stiffer penalties and enforcement against fraud.
  - Create a fund to help refinance mortgages (partially paid for by increased penalties on lenders).
  - Set up and publish a borrowers' standardized score (similar to APR) to help borrowers understand the full cost of a loan.
  - Eliminate the shield of mortgage companies in bankruptcy.
  - Create a five-star rating system for credit cards that simplifies and quantifies total costs.
  - Establish a credit card bill of rights that will prohibit predatory practices and eliminate excessive interest charges.
  - Transform bankruptcy laws to ban bonuses for executives of bankrupt companies and require pension investment disclosures.
  - Protect families facing a medical crisis from bankruptcy.
- **Policies to strengthen families and reduce poverty**
  - Double funding for after-school programs and expand the Family Medical Leave Act to cover smaller businesses (25 or more employees) and activities such as elderly care.
  - Provide low-income families with a 50% refundable tax credit to cover child care.
  - Encourage flexible work schedules and provide a \$1.5 billion fund to encourage states to extend paid leave.



## **ENERGY INDEPENDENCE & GLOBAL WARMING**

- Support implementation of a market-based cap-and-trade system to reduce carbon emissions 80% by 2050. Auction proceeds to be used to invest in job training for transition to clean technologies. Co-sponsored bill with John McCain to reduce greenhouse gases.
- Require all transportation fuels in the United States to contain 5% less carbon by 2015 and 10% less carbon by 2020.
- Require 25% of electricity from clean renewable energy sources by 2025. Require 36 billion gallons of renewable fuels to be included in the fuel supply by 2022 and 60 billion by 2030. Encourage low-carbon coal technology, the development of cellulosic ethanol by 2013, and ethanol and biofuel refineries in rural economies.
- Reduce oil consumption by at least 35% (10 million barrels per day) by 2030. Will double fuel economy standards within 18 years and provide tax credits, loan guarantees, and other assistance for domestic automakers to meet the targets.
- Invest \$150 billion over 10 years in clean and renewable energy sources in the U.S.; double research and development funding; invest \$10 billion per year in Clean Technologies Deployment Venture Capital Fund.
- Improve energy efficiency 50% by 2030 through new building efficiency standards and state incentive grants.
- Improve and upgrade the nation's utility grid.
- Work constructively with the UNFCCC and other large greenhouse-gas emitters to address the climate problem.

## **IMMIGRATION**

- Secure borders by increasing personnel and technology.
- Crack down on employers who hire illegal immigrants.
- Allow pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants. They must pay a fine, learn English, not commit crimes, and go to the back of the line for citizenship.
- Streamline FBI background check for becoming a legal resident.
- Promote economic development in Mexico to decrease illegal immigration.

## **EDUCATION**

- Promote early learning programs (Zero to Five Plan). Will provide state grants to move to universal pre-school. Will quadruple Early Head Start funding, increase funding for Head Start, and improve quality.
- Expand affordable, high-quality child care.
- Fund and reform accountability of No Child Left Behind.
- Double federal funding for after-school programs (21<sup>st</sup> century Learning Centers), expand summer programs, support college outreach programs and bilingual education, middle-school intervention strategies.
- Recruit, train and reward teachers through scholarships, voluntary national assessment test, better mentoring, and higher pay. Also will recruit math and science teachers.



- Increase funding for colleges through a new tax credit that ensures the first \$4,000 of tuition is free and covers two-thirds the cost at the average public institution for most Americans. Will streamline the financial aid process.

## **ETHICS AND ELECTORAL REFORM**

- Centralize lobbying information and support an independent watchdog agency to oversee congressional ethics violations.
- Support campaign finance reform and co-sponsored Senator Feingold's public financing system for presidential elections.
- End no-bid contracts above \$25,000, ensure public disclosure through databases and public records of contractor lobbying and tax earmarks for special interests, including the name of any legislator who requests an earmark.
- Make White House regulatory policymaking communications public and all business transparent.
- Will not permit former political appointees to work in the private sector for two years after leaving public office nor lobby the executive branch during the administration's term. Will reinstate professional standards for appointments.
- Sign into law his legislation that establishes harsh penalties for those who have committed voter fraud or misinformation.

## **HUMAN RIGHTS**

**Civil Rights**—Strong Civil Rights record, rated 100% by the NAACP in Dec 2006 ([www.ontheissues.org](http://www.ontheissues.org))

### **Strengthen Civil Rights Enforcement**

- He will put an end to the ideological litmus tests used to fill positions within the Civil Rights Division.

### **Combat Employment Discrimination**

- Overturn the Supreme Court's recent ruling that curtails racial minorities' and women's ability to challenge pay discrimination. Pass the Fair Pay Act to ensure that women receive equal pay for equal work.

### **Expand Hate Crimes Statutes**

- Obama will strengthen federal hate crimes legislation and reinvigorate enforcement at the Department of Justice's Criminal Section.

### **End Racial Profiling**

- Ban racial profiling and provide federal incentives to state and local police departments to prohibit the practice.

### **Reduce Crime Recidivism by Providing Ex-Offender Support**

- Provide job training, substance abuse and mental health counseling to ex-offenders.
- Create a prison-to-work incentive program to improve ex-offender employment and job retention rates.

### **Eliminate Sentencing Disparities**

- Eliminate disparity between sentencing crack and powder-based cocaine is wrong and should be completely eliminated.

### **Expand Use of Drug Courts**

- Give first-time, non-violent offenders a chance to serve their sentence, where appropriate, in the type of drug rehabilitation programs that have proven to work better than a prison term in changing bad behavior.

### **Women's Reproductive Rights**

- Supports a women's right to choose and has received 100 percent ratings for pro-choice organizations.

### **Marriage Equality and LGBTI Rights**

- No information on the website. According to quotes and positions taken from [www.ontheissues.org](http://www.ontheissues.org), he supports strong civil unions and LGBTI rights, but not marriage equality; is strongly opposed to a constitutional amendment banning gay marriage; in favor of full health benefits for the gay community and supports including sexual orientation in anti-discrimination laws. *"Gay marriage is less important than equal gay rights."* (Aug 2007) Rated 89% by the HRC on gay-rights in Dec. 2006.



## FOREIGN POLICY

- **Iran**—Supports diplomacy, economic sanctions; military option is not off the table.
- **North Korea**—Wants direct talks and diplomacy with adversaries such as North Korea.
- **Israel/Palestinian conflict**—Make progress on an agreement for a two-state solution a priority.
- **Expand US presence abroad**—Increase the number of embassies and Foreign Service personnel.
- **Reduce world poverty**—Supports the Millennium Development Goal of cutting extreme poverty around the world in half by 2015, and plans to double our foreign assistance to \$50 billion to achieve that goal.
- **Increase security and stop nuclear proliferation:**
  - Strengthen NATO and relationships with other nations.
  - Bipartisan action to secure nuclear weapons and materials; has co-sponsoring bills to stop the smuggling of weapons of mass destruction and to reduce their stockpiles and proliferation.
  - Strengthen the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.
  - Pursue goal of a nuclear-free world.
- **Bipartisan approach to foreign policy**—Will convene a bipartisan consultative group of leading members of Congress to advise on foreign policy.
- **National security**--Will promote openness and reduce secrecy. Advocates a fixed term for the director of national intelligence to reduce political influence on the agency.

## Gun Control

- Ban the sale or transfer of all forms of semi-automatic weapons and supports increased state restrictions on the purchase and possession of firearms.
- Require manufacturers to provide child-safety locks with firearms.

### Voting Record

- Voted NO on prohibiting lawsuits against gun manufacturers. *Reference: Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act; Bill [S 397](#); vote number [2005-219](#) on Jul 29, 2005*

## Military

### Rebuild our military structure

- Ensure that soldiers and Marines have sufficient training time before they are sent into battle.
- Increase the size of ground forces, adding 65,000 soldiers to the Army and 27,000 Marines.
- Give our troops new equipment, armor, training, and skills like language training. Strengthen our civilian capacity, so that our civilian agencies have the critical skills and equipment they need to integrate their efforts with our military.

### National Guard and Reserves

- Restore the readiness of the National Guard and Reserves. Permit them adequate time to train and rest between deployments, and provide the National Guard with the equipment they need for foreign and domestic emergencies. Give the Guard a seat at the table by making the Chief of the National Guard a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff



## Veterans

### **Help for Veterans after Combat**

- Reverse the 2003 ban on enrolling modest-income veterans, which has denied care to a million veterans. All veterans will be in the VA.
- VA will be a leader of national health care reform so that veterans get the best care possible. Improve care for poly-trauma vision impairment, prosthetics, spinal cord injury, aging, and women's health.
- Expand proven programs and launch innovative services to prevent veterans from falling into homelessness.
- Fight Veterans Employment Discrimination

### **Help for Veterans just returning from duty**

- Establish military and VA coordination to provide a seamless transition from active duty to civilian life.
- Fully fund the VA so it has all the resources it needs to serve the veterans who need it, when they need it. Establish a world-class VA Planning Division to avoid future budget shortfalls.
- Hire additional claims workers, and improve training and accountability so that VA benefit decisions are rated fairly and consistently. He also will transform the paper benefit claims process to an electronic one to reduce errors and improve timeliness.

### **Improved Mental Health Treatment**

- Improve mental health treatment for troops and veterans suffering from combat-related psychological injuries.
- Improve mental health care at every stage of military service. Recruit more health professionals, improve screening, offer more support to families and make PTSD benefits claims fairer.
- Establish standards of care for Traumatic Brain Injury, the signature injury of the Iraq war.
- Expand and strengthen Vet Centers to provide more counseling for vets and their families.

### **Voting Record**

- As a member of the U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, passed legislation to improve care and slash red tape for wounded warriors.

For more information visit [www.barackobama.com](http://www.barackobama.com) or [www.ontheissues.org](http://www.ontheissues.org)

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