



BARACK OBAMA: SUPPORTING AMERICAN FAMILIES IN THE CHANGING ECONOMY

...at the dawn of the 21st century we also have a collective responsibility to recommit ourselves to the dream; to strengthen that safety net, put the rungs back on that ladder to the middle-class, and give every family the chance that so many of our parents and grandparents had. This responsibility is one that's been missing from Washington for far too long – a responsibility I intend to take very seriously as President.

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BARACK OBAMA'S EFFORTS TO STRENGTHEN FAMILIES

Over the last few decades, fundamental changes in the way we work and live have trapped too many American families between an economy that's gone global and a government that's gone AWOL. Too many rungs have been removed from the ladder to middle-class security, and the safety net that's supposed to break any falls from that ladder has grown badly frayed. Many families have faced increased anxiety when it comes to paying the bills or finding ways to send their children to college, while others have tumbled into poverty, watching jobs disappear, fathers leave the home, and the chances for their children's success slip further and further away.

Providing these families with the same chances that previous generations have had is a daunting challenge, but it is certainly one we can meet. Barack Obama will bring the much needed leadership and vision to Washington to finally restore the promise of the American Dream to all American families.

SUPPORTING FAMILIES AT HOME

I. Promoting Responsible Fatherhood

Since 1960, the number of American children without fathers in their lives has quadrupled, from 6 million to more than 24 million. Children without fathers in their lives are five times more likely to live in poverty and commit crime, nine times more likely to drop out of school, and 20 times more likely to end up in prison. Barack Obama has re-introduced the Responsible Fatherhood and Healthy Families Act to remove some of the government penalties on married families, crack down on men avoiding child support payments and ensure that payments go to families instead of state bureaucracies, fund support services for fathers and their families, including domestic violence prevention efforts. As President, he will sign this bill into law and continue to implement innovative measures to strengthen families.

II. Supporting Parents with Young Children.

The pioneering Nurse-Family Partnership provides home visits by trained registered nurses to low-income expectant mothers and their families. The trained nurses use proven methods to help improve the mental and physical health of the family by providing counseling on substance abuse, creating and achieving personal goals, and effective methods of nurturing children. Proven benefits of these types of programs include improved women's prenatal health, a reduction in childhood injuries, fewer unintended subsequent pregnancies, increased father involvement and women's employment, reduced use of welfare and food stamps, and increased children's school readiness. Researchers at the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis concluded that these programs produced an average of five dollars in savings for every dollar invested and produced more than \$28,000 in net savings for every high-risk family enrolled in the program.

Barack Obama will increase federal funding through the SCHIP program to expand access to the Nurse-Family Partnership to the all low-income first time mothers, estimated to be about 570,000 first-time mothers each year.

SUPPORTING PARENTS' SUCCESS IN THE WORKFORCE

III. Expanding Transitional Jobs and Bridge Programs

Transitional jobs are a promising way to help chronically unemployed people break into the workplace. This approach places participants into temporary, subsidized wage-paying jobs. It also offers mentoring and social services designed to address the work-blocking problems like personal and family conflicts. Obama supports providing funding for both transitional jobs programs as well as bridge programs that partner the federal government with employers and community-based organizations to identify job opportunities, develop customized training programs, and place low-income employees in better jobs.

IV. Creating Career Pathways for Workers to Move up the Ladder

Barack Obama believes that all workers who want a job should not only be able to gain meaningful employment, but also be able to move up the career ladder to further support their families and serve as role models for their children. Obama has introduced legislation to help strengthen career ladders by first identifying regions and industries where career pathways are not fully developed and then establishing public-private partnerships to lift up low-wage workers. Obama supports using the successful organized labor model of providing workers with additional skills and opportunities, and looks forward to working with organized labor to build more opportunities for low-income workers to reach economic security.

IV. Expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit

In both the Illinois State Senate and the U.S. Senate, Obama has championed efforts to expand the EITC, which is one of the most successful anti-poverty programs to date. As president, Obama will reward work by increasing the number of working parents eligible for EITC benefits, increasing the benefit available to parents who support their children through child support payments, and reducing the EITC marriage penalty which hurts low-income families. Under the Obama plan, full-time workers making minimum wage would get an EITC benefit up to \$555, more than three times greater than the \$175 benefit they get today. If the workers are responsibly supporting their children on child support, the Obama plan would give those workers a benefit of \$1,110.