



OBAMA'08
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BARACK OBAMA: SUPPORTING AMERICANS LIVING OVERSEAS

Americans abroad are uniquely aware of the impact that our government's policies have on the rest of the world and recognize that it's time for America to be seen as a global leader once more. Facing terrorism, climate change, global AIDS, or the spread of weapons of mass destruction, America cannot meet these challenges on its own, and the world cannot defeat them without America. As president, Obama will restore America's moral leadership in the world and the understanding that the world shares a common security and a common humanity. Obama understands the special concerns and issues of Americans living abroad and will seek to address these as president.

Strengthen Economic Security for Americans Abroad: Barack Obama believes that the U.S. government should pay close attention to how American citizens are treated in the private sector while they live and work abroad. Our government must work to ensure that overseas Americans have every chance to compete on a level playing field, and he will work with Americans abroad to identify and understand problems they may face as a result of U.S. government policies.

Responding to Social Security Concerns: As president, Obama will make sure that the Social Security Administration guidelines on receiving Social Security benefits abroad are made more accessible to overseas Americans. He will ensure that the U.S. State Department works with U.S. embassies and U.S. consulates, which are usually the point of contact for Social Security beneficiaries living abroad, to ensure that embassy officials are properly trained on Social Security issues..

Citizenship Transmission: Each year, several thousand children of Americans living abroad are denied U.S. citizenship, and some are born "stateless," without any nationality or citizenship. Barack Obama is committed to addressing these effects on travel abroad, immigration of family members, and citizenship in a manner that protects American interests. In an Obama administration, the U.S. State Department will work to ensure that U.S. regulations on reporting the birth of a child born to an American parent abroad are more widely communicated to Americans living abroad. Obama will also work to ensure U.S. embassies and consulates streamline the citizenship claim process for American children born abroad.

Voting Procedures: Obama supports vigorous efforts to ensure that American citizens abroad have the ability to exercise their voting rights. He supports efforts like "VoteFromAbroad.org" that seek to make the overseas voting process more transparent and accessible for Americans abroad. Obama supports the Overseas Vote Act, the Overseas Voting Practical Amendments Act of 2007, and full funding to implement the Help America Vote Act.

Census of Americans Abroad: The U.S. Census currently does not count American citizens living outside the U.S. Obama supports efforts to find an efficient and accurate procedure to count Americans living abroad in the U.S. Census.

Concerns of Americans Living Abroad: Obama believes it is important to understand the role of Americans abroad in determining U.S. policy. Obama will work with members of the Americans abroad community and the U.S. embassies to determine how the U.S. government can be responsive to the concerns of overseas Americans. As a U.S. Senator, Obama has taken seriously the concerns of all Illinoisans, whether they are currently in Illinois or not. As president, Obama will work to establish a direct dialogue with Americans abroad.

Other Governmental Services and Benefits: Americans living abroad have little access to basic information about U.S. government services and affairs. Barack Obama believes that U.S. embassies and consulates, which are the main U.S. government contact points for Americans abroad, should develop and implement concrete plans on how to communicate basic information to Americans living abroad. Additionally, Obama supports efforts to ensure that U.S. State Department staff members have proper training to assist Americans abroad in determining their various rights and responsibilities as American citizens. He welcomes a continued dialogue between the White House, the State Department, and citizens abroad in an Obama administration.

LEADING ON DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES

Strategy for Ending the War and Achieving Success in Iraq: In 2002, as Washington lined up for war, Barack Obama had the judgment and courage to oppose it. Our heroic American troops have found the right tactics to contain violence, but we still have the wrong strategy. Reducing our troop presence in Iraq will apply real pressure on the Iraqi government to make necessary political accommodations, while enabling us to address other challenges, like Afghanistan. Immediately upon taking office, Obama will give his military commanders a new mission in Iraq: ending the war. The redeployment of our troops will be responsible and phased, directed by commanders on the ground and done in consultation with the Iraqi government. A residual force will remain in Iraq and in the region to conduct targeted counter-terrorism missions and to protect American diplomatic and civilian personnel. If Iraqis take significant steps toward creating nonsectarian security forces, then American forces will help train those forces. Obama will not build permanent bases in Iraq. During our redeployment, Obama will launch aggressive initiatives to press for reconciliation within Iraq, to achieve a new regional compact on stability in the Middle East, and to address Iraq's humanitarian crisis.

Reestablish U.S. Moral Leadership: Obama will restore America's standing, reputation, and authority in the world by respecting civil liberties, ending torture, restoring habeas corpus and the rule of law, making the U.S. electoral processes fair and transparent, and fighting corruption at home.

Prepare the Military to Meet 21st Century Threats: Barack Obama will not hesitate to use military force to take out terrorists who pose a direct threat to America. This requires a broader set of capabilities, as outlined in the Army and Marine Corps's new counterinsurgency manual. Obama will ensure that our military becomes more stealthy, agile, and lethal in its ability to capture or kill terrorists. He will recruit, train, and equip our armed forces to better target terrorists and to help foreign militaries to do the same. This will include a program to bolster our military's ability to speak different languages, understand different cultures, and coordinate complex missions with our civilian agencies.

Strengthen Homeland Security: As president, Barack Obama will make our homeland more secure. He will implement the 9/11 Commission recommendations and ensure that the nation is prepared to prevent and respond to catastrophe. An Obama administration will provide the nation's first responders with the equipment, training, and support they need; invest in the resources necessary to improve our emergency preparedness and planning; allocate our homeland security dollars according to risk; increase the security of our transit systems, rail lines, and ports; and secure our chemical and nuclear plants, and other critical infrastructure. In addition, Obama will expand the military and ensure that they are prepared to meet 21st century threats.

REBUILDING OUR ALLIANCES

End the Use of Torture and Extraordinary Rendition: Military and intelligence experts agree that torture is not an effective means of interrogation, and our using it threatens American troops serving abroad. From both a moral standpoint and a practical standpoint, torture is wrong. Barack Obama will end the use of torture without exception. He also will eliminate the practice of extraordinary rendition, where we outsource our torture to other countries.

Close the Guantanamo Bay Detention Center: Guantanamo has become a recruiting tool for our enemies. The legal framework behind Guantanamo has failed completely, resulting in only one conviction. President Bush's own Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates, wants to close it. Former Secretary of State Colin Powell wants to close it. The first step to reclaiming America's standing in the world has to be closing this facility. As president, Barack Obama will close the detention facility at Guantanamo. He will reject the Military Commissions Act, which allowed the U.S. to circumvent the Geneva Convention in the handling of detainees. He will develop a fair and thorough process based on the Uniform Code of Military Justice to distinguish between those prisoners who should be prosecuted for their crimes, those who can't be prosecuted but who can be held in a manner consistent with the laws of war, and those who should be released or transferred to their home countries.

Restore Habeas Corpus: The right of habeas corpus allows prisoners to ask a court to determine whether they are being lawfully imprisoned. Recently, this right has been denied to those deemed enemy combatants. Barack Obama strongly supports bipartisan efforts to restore habeas rights. He firmly believes that those who pose a danger to this country should be swiftly tried and brought to justice, but those who do not should have sufficient due process to ensure that we are not wrongfully denying them their liberty.

Strengthen the North Atlantic Treaty Organization: For nearly 50 years, NATO was oriented to fighting the Cold War. NATO needs to continue its evolution to meet the emerging threats of the 21st century, including terrorism and weapons proliferation. Barack Obama will close the gap between NATO's expanding missions and its lagging capabilities. He will rally members to contribute more troops, increase NATO's ability to deploy forces rapidly over long distances and sustain high intensity operations for extended periods of time. He will work to streamline decision-making processes and give commanders in the field more flexibility. And he will urge member states to invest more in reconstruction and stabilization.

Build Framework for East Asian Cooperation: In Asia, the emergence of an economically vibrant, more politically-engaged China offers new opportunities for prosperity and cooperation. Barack Obama will forge a new and lasting framework for collective security in Asia that goes beyond bilateral agreements, occasional summits, and ad-hoc arrangements like the six-party talks. As president, he would work to develop a more effective regional framework with the countries in the region to promote stability and confront transnational threats.

Combat Global Climate Change: Climate change is an unprecedented man-made threat to the environment. As the largest producer of greenhouse gases, America must lead by capping and reducing greenhouse emissions across the economy, and replacing more of our fossil fuels with clean-burning renewables and biofuels. Barack Obama will re-engage with the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) – the main international forum dedicated to addressing the climate problem. He will also create a Global Energy Forum of the world's largest emitters to focus exclusively on global energy and environmental issues.

ECONOMY

Jumpstart the American Economy: Barack Obama is advocating a plan to jumpstart the economy, with two key parts. First, Obama will provide \$1,000 dollar emergency energy rebates, which would be delivered to working families immediately and could be used offset the cost of spiking energy and food prices. Over a five year period, these rebates would be paid for by a tax on the excessive profits of oil companies. Obama also has called for an additional \$50 billion in stimulus, with funding for state and local government services and for fast-tracked infrastructure projects.

Support Job Creation: Barack Obama believes we need to expand federal funding for basic research, expand the deployment of broadband technology, and make the research and development tax credit permanent so that businesses can invest in innovation and create high-paying, secure jobs. And Obama will make long-term investments in education, training, and workforce development so that Americans can leverage our strengths – our ingenuity and entrepreneurialism – to create new high-wage jobs and prosper in a world economy.

Raise the Minimum Wage: Barack Obama believes that people who work full time should not live in poverty. Before the Democrats took back Congress, the minimum wage had not changed in 10 years. Even though the minimum wage will rise to \$7.25 an hour by 2009, the minimum wage's real purchasing power will still be below what it was in 1968. As president, Obama would further raise the minimum wage, index it to inflation and increase the Earned Income Tax Credit to make sure that full-time workers can earn a living wage that allows them to raise their families and pay for basic needs such as food, transportation, and housing – things so many people take for granted.

Fight for Fair Trade: At 7 percent of Gross Domestic Product, our trade deficit has never been higher. Barack Obama will fight for a trade policy that opens up foreign markets to support good American jobs. He will use trade agreements to spread good labor and environmental standards around the world and stand firm against agreements like the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) that fail to live up to those important benchmarks. Obama will also pressure the World Trade Organization to enforce trade agreements and stop countries from continuing unfair government subsidies to foreign exporters and nontariff barriers on U.S. exports. Obama will fight for stronger protections for U.S. intellectual property, and – in the case of China in particular – an end to an artificially devalued currency that puts U.S. companies at a perpetual disadvantage.

Promote Digital Inclusion: Getting broadband Internet access into every home and business in urban and rural America at an affordable rate could give low-income people increased opportunities to start businesses and engage actively in our communities. As president, Barack Obama will reform the Telephone Universal Service Program, direct the FCC to better manage the nation's airwaves, and encourage public-private partnership to get more low-income communities connected.

ENERGY INDEPENDENCE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Implement Cap and Trade Program to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions: Barack Obama supports implementation of an economy-wide cap-and-trade system to reduce carbon emissions by the amount scientists say is necessary: 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050. This market mechanism has worked before and will give all American consumers and businesses the incentives to use their ingenuity to develop economically effective solutions to climate change. Obama's cap-and-trade policy will require all pollution credits to be auctioned. A 100 percent auction ensures that all industries pay for every ton of emissions they release, rather than giving these valuable emission rights away to companies on the basis of their past pollution.

Invest In A Clean Energy Economy and Help Create 5 Million New Green Jobs: Obama will strategically invest \$150 billion over 10 years to accelerate the commercialization of plug-in hybrids, promote development of commercial scale renewable energy, encourage energy efficiency, invest in low emissions coal plants, advance the next generation of biofuels and fuel infrastructure, and begin transition to a new digital electricity grid. The plan will also invest in America's highly-skilled manufacturing workforce and manufacturing centers to ensure that American workers have the skills and tools they need to pioneer the green technologies that will be in high demand throughout the world. All together these investments will help the private sector create 5 million new green jobs, good jobs that cannot be outsourced.

Increase Fuel Economy Standards: Obama will increase fuel economy standards 4 percent per each year while protecting the financial future of domestic automakers. The plan, which will save nearly a half trillion gallons of gasoline and 6 billion metric tons of greenhouse gases, will establish concrete targets for annual fuel efficiency increases while giving industry the flexibility to meet those targets.

Invest in Developing Advanced Vehicles and Put 1 Million Plug-in Electric Vehicles on the Road by 2015: As a U.S. senator, Barack Obama has led efforts to jumpstart federal investment in advanced vehicles, including combined plug-in hybrid/flexible fuel vehicles, which can get over 150 miles per gallon of gas. As president, Obama will continue this leadership by investing in advanced vehicle technology with a specific focus on R&D in advanced battery technology. The increased federal funding will leverage

private sector funds and support our domestic automakers to bring plug-in hybrids and other advanced vehicles to American consumers. Obama will also provide a \$7,000 tax credit for the purchase of advanced technology vehicles as well as conversion tax credits.

Require 10 Percent of Electricity to Come from Renewable Sources by 2012: Barack Obama will establish a 10 percent federal Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) to require that 10 percent of electricity consumed in the U.S. is derived from clean, sustainable energy sources, like solar, wind and geothermal by 2012. Many states are already well on their way to achieving statewide goals and it's time for the federal government to provide leadership for the entire country to support these new industries. This national requirement will spur significant private sector investment in renewable sources of energy and create thousands of new American jobs, especially in rural areas. And Obama will also extend the federal Production Tax Credit (PTC) for 5 years to encourage the production of renewable energy.

Deploy the Cheapest, Cleanest, Fastest Energy Source--Energy Efficiency: The Department of Energy (DOE) projects that demand for electricity will increase by 1.1 percent per year over the next few decades. Cutting this demand growth through efficiency is both possible and economically sound. Barack Obama will set an aggressive energy efficiency goal—to reduce electricity demand 15 percent from DOE's projected levels by 2020. Implementing this program will save consumers a total of \$130 billion, reduce carbon dioxide emissions by more than 5 billion tons through 2030, and create jobs. A portion of this goal would be met by setting annual demand reduction targets that utilities would need to meet. The rest would come from more stringent building and appliance standards.

Paid for by Obama for America