



BARACK OBAMA: TELLING PEOPLE WHAT THEY NEED TO HEAR, NOT JUST WHAT THEY WANT TO HEAR

Obama Opposed the War in Iraq from the Start even when the War Was Popular: Despite strong public backing for the war in Iraq, Barack Obama opposed it from the beginning. In 2002, as the conventional thinking in Washington lined up for war, Obama had the judgment and courage to speak out against it. He said the war would lead to “an occupation of undetermined length, with undetermined costs and undetermined consequences.”

Obama Went to Detroit to Tell Automakers that They Needed to Raise Fuel Efficiency Standards: In May 2007, Barack Obama told automakers at the Detroit Economic Club that it was time for them to raise CAFE Standards and decrease our nation’s dependence on foreign oil. Obama said, “Here in Detroit, I want to focus on a few proposals that would drastically reduce our oil dependence and our carbon emissions by focusing on two of their major causes – the cars we drive and the fuels we use. By 2020, these proposals would save us 2.5 million barrels of oil per day – the equivalent of ending all oil imports from the Middle East and removing 50 million cars’ worth of pollution off the road...Automakers still refuse to make the transition to fuel-efficient production because they say it’s too expensive at a time when they’re losing profits and struggling under the weight of massive health care costs. This time, they’re actually right. The auto industry’s refusal to act for so long has left it mired in a predicament for which there is no easy way out. But expensive is no longer an excuse for inaction. The auto industry is on a path that is unacceptable and unsustainable – for their business, for their workers, and for America.”

Obama Went to New York to Call for More Transparency and a “Reappraisal” of Wall Street Values: Delivering a tough message at the NASDAQ MarketSite in New York in September 2007, Obama criticized Wall Street investors for letting the “what’s good for me is good enough” mentality guide their business practices while working men and women continue to struggle to pay for health care, education tuition and taxes. Obama said, “These anti-market, anti-business practices are wasteful, unproductive, and antithetical to the very spirit of capitalism. They benefit the undeserving few at the expense of hardworking Americans and entrepreneurs who play by the rules. In fact, the danger with this mentality isn’t just that it offends our morals, it’s that it endangers our markets. Markets can’t thrive without the trust of investors and the public. At a most basic level, capital markets work by steering capital to the place where it is most productive. Without transparency, that cannot happen... We all suffer when we do not ensure that markets are transparent, open and honest.”

Obama Went to Miami to Call for Change in American Policy toward Cuba: In September 2007, Obama told a Little Havana audience that, after years of an unchanged policy towards Cuba, it was past

time that we lift the onerous restrictions on family travel to Cuba and the limitations on cash remittances to the island.

Obama Stood up to Washington Special Interests by Passing a Law Requiring Lobbyists to Disclose Their Bundling Activity: Despite the disapproval of many colleagues on both sides of the aisle, Obama supported legislation to require lobbyists to disclose the candidates, leadership PACs, or political parties for whom they collect or arrange contributions, and the aggregate amount of the contributions collected or arranged.

Obama Went to Africa “Armed with Tough Love”: On a congressional trip to Africa in August 2006, Obama openly criticized the South African, Sudanese and Kenyan governments for the corruption and human rights abuses in their countries. In South Africa, Obama criticized the Health Minister for her country’s promotion of home remedies to combat AIDS, and called on the South African government to speak out against the human rights abuses in Robert Mugabe’s Zimbabwe. Obama also criticized the Sudanese government for failing to prevent and stop the genocide in Darfur. In a nationally televised speech at the University of Nairobi, Obama criticized the Kenyan government for violating freedom of the press, lectured its citizens on the folly of tribalism and slammed government corruption.

Obama Spoke Honestly About the Iraq War in Front of the VFW: In an August 2007 speech before the National Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Convention in Kansas City, Barack Obama had the political courage to state his opposition to the Iraq war. The Capital Times writes that “We give high marks to Illinois Sen. Barack Obama for having the political courage to stand before the Veterans of Foreign Wars convention in Kansas City. While other speakers tended to skirt the blunt realities of the Iraq war - which remains popular with many VFW members - the Democratic presidential candidate told the crowd, ‘All of our top military commanders recognize that there is no military solution in Iraq. And no matter how brilliantly and bravely our troops and their commanders perform, they cannot and should not bear the responsibility of resolving grievances at the heart of Iraq's civil war.’ The ability to speak the truth to an unsympathetic audience should be the first characteristic we look for in a president.”

Obama Told Evangelical Leaders Abstinence-Only Education Not Enough to Fight AIDS: In December 2006, Barack Obama went to “the political equivalent of the lion's den” when he told a conservative Christian audience in Southern California that he “‘respectfully but unequivocally’ disagrees with those who oppose condom distribution to fight the AIDS pandemic.” Obama drew a standing ovation from the 2,072 pastors and others who came from 39 states and 18 nations.

OBAMA HAS BEEN CANDID ABOUT THE BIG PROBLEMS WE FACE

Obama “Is Making a Habit of Telling People Things They Don’t Necessarily Want to Hear.” The USA Today reported, “Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama is making a habit of telling people things they don't necessarily want to hear on subjects ranging from fuel standards and fatherhood to homophobia and teacher pay.” [USA Today, 7/10/07]

Obama’s “Most Powerful Message Is One of Tough Love.” Teddy Davis said, “I think throughout his career, you've seen that his most powerful message is one of tough love. He did in that 2004 Democratic National Convention speech. And he did it again in Selma, Alabama.” [ABC News, 3/5/07]