Table of Contents

Renewing America's Promise

Preamble

I. Renewing the American Dream

Introduction
Jumpstart the Economy and Provide Middle Class Americans Immediate Relief
Empowering Families for a New Era

- Affordable, Quality Health Care Coverage for All Americans
- Retirement
- Good Jobs with Good Pay
- Work and Family
- Poverty
- Opportunity for Women

Investing in American Competitiveness

- New American Energy
- A World Class Education for Every Child
  - *Pre-school*
  - *K-12*
- Higher Education
- Science, Technology and Innovation
- Invest in Manufacturing and Our Manufacturing Communities
- Creating New Jobs by Rebuilding American Infrastructure
- A Connected America
- Support Small Business and Entrepreneurship
- Real Leadership for Rural America

Economic Stewardship

- Restoring Fairness to our Tax Code
- Housing
- Reforming Financial Regulation
- Consumer Protection
- Savings
- Smart, Strong, and Fair Trade Policies
- Fiscal Responsibility

II. Renewing American Leadership

Introduction
Ending the war in Iraq
Defeating Al Qaeda and Combating Terrorism

- Win in Afghanistan
- Seek a new partnership with Pakistan
- Combat terrorism
- Secure the homeland
- Pursue intelligence reform

Preventing the Spread and Use of Weapons of Mass Destruction

- A World without Nuclear Weapon
- Secure Nuclear Weapons and the Materials to Make Them
- End the Production of Fissile Material
- End Cold War Nuclear Postures
- Prevent Iran from Acquiring Nuclear Weapons
- De-Nuclearize North Korea
- Biological and Chemical Weapons
- Stronger Cyber-Security

Revitalizing the military, keeping faith with veterans

- Expand the armed forces
- Recruit and retain
- Rebuild the Military for 21st-Century Tasks
- Develop Civilian Capacity to Promote Global Stability and Improve Emergency Response
- Do Right by Our Veterans
- Lift Burdens on Our Troops and Their Families
- Restore the Readiness of the Guard and Reserve
- Allow All Americans to Serve
- Reform Contracting Practices and Make Contractors Accountable

Working for Our Common Security

- Strengthen Transatlantic Relations
- Lead in Asia
- Stand with Allies and Pursue Diplomacy in the Middle East
- Recommit to an Alliance of the Americas
- Support Africa's Democratic Development
- Deepen Ties With Emerging Powers
- Revitalize Global Institutions

Advancing Democracy, Development and Respect for Human Rights

- Build Democratic Institutions
- Invest in our Common Humanity
- Global Health
- Human Trafficking

Protecting our Security and Saving our Planet
- Establish Energy Security
- Lead to Combat Climate Change

Seizing the Opportunity

III. Renewing the American Community

Service
Immigration
Hurricane Katrina
Preventing and Responding to Future Catastrophes
Stewardship of Our Planet and Natural Resources
Partnership with States
Metropolitan and Urban Policy
Firearms
Faith
The Arts
Americans with Disabilities
Children and Families
Fatherhood
Seniors
Choice
Criminal Justice
A More Perfect Union

IV. Renewing American Democracy

Open, Accountable and Ethical Government
Reclaiming Our Constitution and Our Liberties
Voting Rights
Partnerships with States
Invest in Social Innovation and Ideas that Work
District of Columbia
Tribal Sovereignty
Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the Northern Mariana Islands and the U.S. Virgin Islands

Preamble

We come together at a defining moment in the history of our nation. America is the country that led the 20th Century, built a thriving middle class, defeated fascism and communism, and provided bountiful opportunity to many. We Democrats have a special commitment to this promise of America. We believe that each American, whatever their background or station in life, should have the chance to get a good education, to work at a good job with good wages, to raise and provide for a family, to live in safe surroundings, and to retire with dignity and security. We believe that quality and affordable health care is a basic right. We believe that each succeeding generation should have the opportunity, through hard work, service and sacrifice, to enjoy a brighter future than the last.

But today, we are at a crossroads. As we meet, we are in the sixth year of a two-front war. Our economy is struggling. Our planet is in peril.

A great nation now demands that its leaders abandon the politics of partisan division and find creative solutions to promote the common good. A people that prizes candor, accountability and fairness insists that a government for the people must level with them and champion the interests of all American families. A land of historic resourcefulness has lost its patience with elected officials who have failed to lead.

It is time for a change. We can do better.

And so, Democrats –through the most open platform process in history –are reaching out today to Republicans and Independents who hunger for a new direction and a reason to hope. Today, at a defining moment in our history, the Democratic Party resolves to renew America's promise.

Over the past seven years, our nation's leaders have failed us. Sometimes they invited calamity, rushing us into an ill-considered war in Iraq. But other times, when calamity arrived in the form of hurricanes or financial storms, they sat back, doing too little too late, and too poorly. The list of failures of this Administration is historic.

The American Dream is at risk. Incomes are down and foreclosures are up. Millions of our fellow citizens have no health insurance while families working longer hours are pressed for time to care for their children and aging parents. Gas and home heating costs are squeezing seniors and working families alike. We are less secure and less respected in the world. After September 11, we could have built the foundation for a new American century, but instead we instigated an unnecessary war in Iraq before finishing a necessary war in Afghanistan. Careless policies, inept stewardship and the broken politics of this Administration, have taken their toll on our economy, our security and our reputation.

But even worse than the conditions we find ourselves in are the false promises that brought us here. The Republican leadership said they would keep us safe, but they

overextended our military and failed to respond to new challenges. They said they would be compassionate conservatives, but they failed to rescue our citizens from the roof-tops of New Orleans, neglected our veterans, and denied health insurance to children. They promised fiscal responsibility but instead gave tax cuts to the wealthy few and squandered almost a trillion dollars in Iraq. They promised reform but allowed the oil companies to write our energy agenda and the credit card companies to write the bankruptcy rules.

These are not just policy failures. They are failures of a broken politics –a politics that rewards self-interest over the common interest and the short-term over the long-term, that puts our government at the service of the powerful. A politics that creates a state-of-the-art system for doling out favors and shuts out the voice of the American people.

So, we come together not only to replace this President and his party –and not only to offer policies that will undo the damage they have wrought. Today, we pledge a return to core moral principles like stewardship, service to others, personal responsibility, shared sacrifice and a fair shot for all –values that emanate from the integrity and optimism of our Founders and generations of Americans since. Today, we Democrats offer leaders - from the White House to the State House – worthy of this country's trust.

We will start by renewing the American Dream for a new era -- with the same new hope and new ideas that propelled Franklin Delano Roosevelt towards the New Deal and John F. Kennedy to the New Frontier. We will provide immediate relief to working people who have lost their jobs, families who have lost their homes, and people who have lost their way. We will invest in America again –in world-class public education, in our infrastructure, and in green technology –so that our economy can generate the good, high-paying jobs of the future. We will end the outrage of unaffordable, unavailable health care, protect Social Security and help Americans save for retirement. We will return the American economy to the values that made it great—fairness and opportunity for all – and we will harness American ingenuity to free this nation from the tyranny of oil.

The Democratic Party believes that there is no more important priority than renewing American leadership on the world stage. This will require diplomatic skill as capable as our military might. Instead of refusing to confront our most pressing threats, we will use all elements of American power to keep us safe, prosperous and free. Instead of alienating our nation from the world, we will enable America –once again –to lead.

For decades, Americans have been told to act for ourselves, by ourselves, on our own. Democrats reject this recipe for division and failure. We commit to renewing our American community by recognizing that solutions to our greatest challenges can only be rooted in common ground and the strength of our civic life. The American people do not want government to solve all our problems; we know that personal responsibility, character, imagination, diligence, hard work and faith ultimately determine individual achievement. But we also know that at every turning point in our nation's history, we have demonstrated our love of country by uniting to overcome our challenges—whether

ending slavery, fighting two world war for the cause of freedom or sending a man to the moon. Today, America must unite again –to help our most vulnerable residents get back on their feet and to restore the vitality of both urban centers and family farms –because the success of each depends on the success of the other. And America must challenge us again –to serve our country and to meet our responsibilities –whether in our families or local governments; our civic organizations or places of worship. We must act in the knowledge that each of us has a stake in our neighbors' dreams and struggles, as well as our own, and recognize the dignity in each of us.

Americans have been promised change before. And too often we have been disappointed. We believe we must change not just our policies, but our politics as well. We cannot expect to keep doing the same things and expect to get different results. That is why today we come together not only to prevent a third Bush term. Today, we pledge to renew American democracy by promoting the use of new technologies to make it easier for Americans to participate in their government. We will shine a light on government spending and Washington lobbying –so that every American is empowered to be a watchdog and a whistle blower. We may not always agree, but we will work together with the respect and good will needed to move this country forward. There can be no Republican or Democratic ideas, only policies that are smart and right and fair and good for America –and those that aren't. We will form a government as decent, candid, purposeful and compassionate as the American people themselves.

This is the essence of what it means to be a patriot: not only to declare our love of this nation, but to show it –by our deeds, our priorities and the commitments we keep.

If we choose to change, just imagine what we can do. What makes America great has never been its perfection, but the belief that it can be made better. And that people who love this country can change it.

We have a choice to make. We can choose to stay the current failed course. Or we can choose a path that builds upon the best of who and what we are, that reflects our highest values. We can have more of the last eight years, or we can rise together and create a new kind of government. The time for change has come, and America must seize it.

I. Renewing the American Dream

For months the state of our economy has dominated the headlines–and the news has not been good. The sub-prime lending debacle has sent the housing market into a tailspin, and many Americans have lost their homes. By early August, the economy had shed 463,000 jobs over seven straight months of job loss. Health, gas and food prices are rising dramatically.

But the problem goes deeper than the current crisis. Families have seen their incomes go down even as they have been working longer hours and as productivity has grown. At the same time, health costs have risen while companies have shed health insurance coverage

and pensions. Worse yet, too many Americans have lost confidence in the fundamental American promise that our children will have a better life than we do.

We are living through an age of fundamental economic transformation. Technology has changed the way we live and the way the world does business. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the advance of capitalism have vanquished old challenges to America's global leadership, but new challenges have emerged. Today, jobs and industries can move to any country with an Internet connection and willing workers.

Leadership on these issues has been sorely lacking these past eight years. In the 1990s, under Bill Clinton's leadership, employment and incomes grew and we built up a budget surplus. However, our current President pursued misguided policies, missed opportunities, and maintained a rigid, ideological adherence to discredited ideas. Our surplus is now a deficit, and almost a decade into this century, we still have no coherent national strategy to compete in a global economy. The price tag for these failures is being passed on to our families.

From the mother working two jobs to pay the bills and the couple struggling to care for young children and aging parents, to the tens of millions of Americans without health insurance and the workers who have seen their jobs shipped overseas, too many Americans have been invisible to our current President and his party for too long. The people who do the work in America have never been invisible to the Democratic Party. It is time to make the American Dream real for them again.

We need a government that stands up for the hopes, values, and interests of working people, and gives everyone willing to work hard the chance to make the most of their God-given potential.

In platform hearings around the country, Americans reaffirmed our belief that this great nation can compete–and succeed–in the 21st century but only if we take a new approach. One that is both innovative and faithful to the basic economic principles that made this country great. We Democrats want–and we hereby pledge–a government led by Barack Obama that looks out for families in the new economy with health care, retirement security, and help, especially in bad times. Investment back in our country–in energy, education, infrastructure, science. A ladder of opportunity for all. Democrats see these as the pillars of a more competitive and fair economy that will allow all Americans to take advantage of the opportunities of our new era.

Jumpstart the Economy and Provide Middle Class Americans Immediate Relief

We will provide an immediate energy rebate to American families struggling with the record price of gasoline and the skyrocketing cost of other necessities. We will devote $50 billion to jumpstarting the economy, helping economic growth, and preventing another 1 million jobs from being lost. This will include assistance to states and localities to prevent them from having to cut their vital services like education, health care and infrastructure. We will quickly implement the housing bill recently passed by Congress and ensure that states and localities that have been hard-hit by the housing crisis can

avoid cuts in vital services. We support investments in infrastructure to replenish the highway trust fund; invest in road and bridge maintenance and fund new, fast-tracked projects to repair schools. We believe that it is essential to take immediate steps to stem the loss of manufacturing jobs. Taking these immediate measures will provide good jobs and will help the economy today–but generating truly shared prosperity is only possible if we also address our most significant long run challenges like the rising cost of health care, energy, and education.

Empowering Families for a New Era

Many Americans once worked 40 hours a week for 40 years for a single employer who provided pay to support a family, health insurance and a pension. Today, Americans change jobs more frequently than ever and compete against workers around the world for pay and benefits.

The face of America's families is also changing, and so are the challenges they confront. Today, in the majority of families, all parents work. Millions of working Americans are also members of a new "sandwich generation," playing dual roles as working parents and working children, responsible not only for their kids but for their aging mothers and fathers. They are working longer hours than ever, while at the same time having to meet a new and growing set of caregiving responsibilities.

Our government's policies–many designed in the New Deal era–have not caught up with the new economy and the changing nature of people's lives. Democrats believe that it is time for our policies and our expectations to catch up. From health care to pensions, from unemployment insurance to paid leave, we need to modernize our policies in order to provide working Americans the tools they need to meet new realities and challenges.

Affordable, Quality Health Care Coverage for All Americans

If one thing came through in the platform hearings, it was that Democrats are united around a commitment to provide every American access to affordable, comprehensive health care. In meeting after meeting, people expressed moral outrage with a health care crisis that leaves millions of Americans–including nine million children–without health insurance and millions more struggling to pay rising costs for poor quality care. Half of all personal bankruptcies in America are caused by medical bills. We spend more on health care than any other country, but we're ranked 47th in life expectancy and 43rd in child mortality. Our nation faces epidemics of obesity and chronic diseases as well as new threats like pandemic flu and bioterrorism. Yet despite all of this, less than four cents of every health care dollar is spent on prevention and public health.

The American people understand that good health is the foundation of individual achievement and economic prosperity. Ensuring quality, affordable health care for every single American is essential to children's educations, workers' productivity and businesses' competitiveness. We believe that covering all is not just a moral imperative, but is necessary to making our health system workable and affordable. Doing so would end cost-shifting from the uninsured, promote prevention and wellness, stop insurance discrimination, help eliminate health care disparities, and achieve savings through

competition, choice, innovation and higher quality care. While there are different approaches within the Democratic Party about how best to achieve the commitment of universal coverage, we stand united to achieve this fundamental objective through the legislative process.

> "I worked for a manufacturer for over 15 years. My wages stayed the same for six years as I found myself paying more and more for health care. Co-pays went up, deductibles went up. In late 2006, the company sent my production job to Mexico and china and I was laid off. I could not afford COBRA premiums. I am two years away from Medicare and unemployed and on the "faith based" healthcare system—I meaning I just pray I don't get sick. Oh yeah, and I'm a cancer survivor and I haven't done the yearly checkup in three years." –Dorene in Veneta, Oregon

We therefore oppose those who advocate policies that would thrust millions of Americans out of their current private employer-based coverage without providing them access to an affordable, comprehensive alternative, thereby subjecting them to the kind of insurance discrimination that leads to excessive premiums or coverage denials for older and sicker Americans. We reject those who have steadfastly opposed insurance coverage expansions for millions of our nation's children while they have protected over-payments to insurers over and allowed underpayments to our nation's doctors. Our vision of a strengthened and improved health care system for all Americans stands in stark contrast to the Republican Party's and includes:

Covering all Americans and Providing Real Choices of Affordable Health Insurance Options. Families and individuals should have the option of keeping the coverage they have or choosing from a wide array of health insurance plans, including many private health insurance options and a public plan. Coverage should be made affordable for all Americans with direct financial assistance through tax credits and other means.

Shared Responsibility. Health care should be a shared responsibility between employers, workers, insurers, providers and government. All Americans should have coverage they can afford; employers should have incentives to provide coverage to their workers; insurers and providers should ensure high quality affordable care; and the government should ensure that health insurance is affordable and provides meaningful coverage. As affordable coverage is made available, individuals should purchase health insurance and take steps to lead healthy lives.

An End to Insurance Discrimination. Health insurance plans should accept all applicants and be prohibited from charging different prices based on pre-existing conditions. They should compete on the cost of providing health care and the quality of that care, not their ability to avoid or over-charge people who are or may get sick. Premiums collected by insurers should be primarily dedicated to care, not profits.

> "I am self-employed and have always managed to have health insurance, but am about to lose my coverage, and can't find any company in Arizona that will insure anyone with type I diabetes. It's not that I can't afford health insurance, or that I have huge medical bills—it's simply that I have a disease that they decide makes me uninsurable. It's a terrible situation to be in, and I'm still much better off than most." - *Listening to America* participant Lucia, Tucson, AZ

Portable Insurance. No one should have to worry about losing health coverage if they change or lose jobs.

Meaningful Benefits. Families should have health insurance coverage similar to what Members of Congress enjoy. They should not be forced to bear the burden of skyrocketing premiums, unaffordable deductibles or benefit limits that leave them at financial risk when they become sick. We will finally achieve long-overdue mental health and addiction treatment parity.

An Emphasis on Prevention and Wellness. Chronic diseases account for 70 percent of the nation's overall health care spending. We need to promote healthy lifestyles and disease prevention and management in places of employment and in school. All Americans should be empowered to promote wellness and have access to preventive services to impede the development of costly chronic conditions, such as childhood obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and hypertension. Chronic-care and behavioral health management should be assured for all Americans who require care coordination, including those with mental health and substance use disorders. We should promote additional tobacco and substance abuse prevention.

A Modernized System That Lowers Cost and Improves the Quality of Care. As Americans struggle with increasing health care costs, we believe a strengthened, uniquely American system should provide the highest quality, most cost-effective care. This should be advanced by aggressive efforts to cut costs and eliminate waste from our health system, which will save the typical family up to $2,500 per year. These efforts include driving adoption of state-of-the-art health information technology systems, privacy-protected electronic medical records, reimbursement incentives and an independent organization that reviews drugs, devices, and procedures to ensure that people get the right care at the right time. By working with the medical community to improve quality, these reforms will have the added benefit of reducing the prevalence of lawsuits related to medical errors. We should increase competition in the insurance and drug markets; remove some of the cost burden of catastrophic illness from employers and their employees; and lower drug costs by allowing Medicare to negotiate for lower prices, allowing importation of safe medicines from other developed countries, creating a generic pathway for biologic drugs, and increasing use of generics in public programs.

A Strong Health Care Workforce. Through training and reimbursement incentives, there must be a commitment to sufficient and well-qualified primary care physicians and nurses as well as direct care workers.

Commitment to the Elimination of Disparities in Health Care. We must end health care disparities among minorities, American Indians, women, and the low-income through better research and better funded community-based health centers. We will make our health care system culturally sensitive and accessible to those who speak different languages. We will speed up and improve reimbursements by the Indian Health Service.

Public Health and Research. Health and wellness is a shared responsibility among

individuals and families, school systems, employers, the medical and public health workforce and government at all levels. We will ensure that Americans can benefit from healthy environments that allow them to pursue healthy choices. Additionally, as childhood obesity rates have more than doubled in the last 30 years, we will work to ensure healthy environments in our schools.

We must fight HIV/AIDS in our country and around the world. We support increased funding into research, care and prevention of HIV/AIDS, and support providing Medicaid coverage to more low-income HIV-positive Americans.

Health care reform must also ensure adequate incentives for innovation to ensure that Americans have access to evidence-based and cost-effective health care. Research should be based on science, not ideology. We need to invest in biomedical research and stem cell research, so that we are at the leading edge of prevention and treatment. This includes adequate funding for research into diseases such as cancer, heart disease, Alzheimer's disease, diabetes, autism and other common and rare diseases and disorders. We will increase funding to the National Institutes of Health, the National Science Foundation and the National Cancer Institutes.

A Strong Partnership with States, Local Governments, Tribes, and Territories. Recognizing that considerable progress in health care delivery has been pioneered by state and local governments, necessary nation-wide reform should build on successful state models of care.

A Strong Safety-Net. Achieving our health goals requires strengthening the safety-net programs, safety-net providers, and public health infrastructure to fill in gaps and ensure public safety in times of disease outbreak or disaster.

Empowerment and Support of Older Americans and People with Disabilities. Seniors and people with disabilities should have access to quality affordable long-term care services, and those services should be readily available at home and in the community. Americans should not be forced to choose between getting care and living independent and productive lives.

Reproductive Health Care
We oppose the current Administration's consistent attempts to undermine a woman's ability to make her own life choices and obtain reproductive health care, including birth control. We will end health insurance discrimination against contraception and provide compassionate care to rape victims. We will never put ideology above women's health.

Fiscal Responsibility. As we improve and strengthen our health care system, we must do so in a fiscally responsible way that ensures that we get value for the dollars that are invested.

Retirement and Social Security
We will make it a priority to secure for hardworking families the part of the American

Dream that includes a secure and healthy retirement. Individuals, employers, and government must all play a role. We will adopt measures to preserve and protect existing public and private pension plans. In the 21st century, Americans also need better ways to save for retirement. We will automatically enroll every worker in a workplace pension plan that can be carried from job to job and we will match savings for working families who need the help. We will make sure that CEOs can't dump workers' pensions with one hand while they line their own pockets with the other. At platform hearings, Americans made it clear they feel that's an outrage, and it's time we had leaders who treat it as an outrage. We will ensure all employees who have company pensions receive annual disclosures about their pension fund's investments, including full details about which projects have been invested in, the performance of those investments and appropriate details about probable future investments strategies. We also will reform corporate bankruptcy laws so that workers' retirements are a priority for funding and workers are not left with worthless IOU's after years of service. Finally, we will eliminate all income taxes for seniors making less than $50,000 per year. Lower and middle income seniors already have to worry about high health care and energy costs; they should not have to worry about tax burdens as well.

We reject the notion of the presumptive Republican nominee that Social Security is a disgrace; we believe that it is indispensable. We will fulfill our obligation to strengthen Social Security and to make sure that it provides guaranteed benefits Americans can count on, now and in future generations. We will not privatize it. We will safeguard from discrimination those who choose to work past the age of 65.

Good Jobs with Good Pay

In the platform hearings, Americans expressed dismay that people who are willing to study and work cannot get a job that pays enough to live on in the current economy. Democrats are committed to an economic policy that produces good jobs with good pay and benefits. That is why we support the right to organize. We know that when unions are allowed to do their job of making sure that workers get their fair share, they pull people out of poverty and create a stronger middle class. We will strengthen the ability of workers to organize unions and fight to pass the Employee Free Choice Act**.** We will restore pro-worker voices to the National Labor Relations Board and the National Mediation Board and we support overturning the NLRB's and NMB's many harmful decisions that undermine the collective bargaining rights of millions of workers. We will ensure that federal employees, including public safety officers who put their lives on the line every day have the right to bargain collectively, and we will fix the broken bargaining process at the Federal Aviation Administration. We will fight to ban the permanent replacement of striking workers, so that workers can stand up for themselves without worrying about losing their livelihoods. We will continue to vigorously oppose "Right-to-Work" Laws and "paycheck protection" efforts whenever they are proposed. Suspending labor protections during national emergencies compounds the devastation from the emergency. We opposed suspension of Davis-Bacon following Hurricane Katrina, and we support broad application of Davis-Bacon worker protections to all federal projects. We will stop the abuse of privatization of government jobs. We will end the exploitative practice of employers wrongly misclassifying workers as independent

contractors.

The Bush Administration Department of Labor has failed in its obligation to stand up and protect American workers. Our Department of Labor will restore and expand overtime rights for millions of Americans, and will actively enforce wage and hour laws. Our Occupational Safety and Health Administration will adopt and enforce comprehensive safety standards; the Bush Administration is the only administration that has never voluntarily issued a significant final standard for workplace safety. Right now, far too many workers-especially those in the construction and mining industries-risk their lives every day just by going to work.

> "My husband and I are just squeaking by. We both have good jobs. We make decent money, not great. But we never expected this to happen. Our pays just don't make it, and we're the middle class. Politicians keep talking, but I just don't think they know how it feels if you're choosing between gas and groceries. I watch the news at night, and there's often tips on TV on how to save. Conserve gas. Don't eat out. Don't buy coffees or lattes. I already don't do these things. This election matters a lot to me. I really try and make sure I make the right decision this year. I am a registered Independent, and I am supporting Senator Obama. We simply cannot go another year with Republican leadership. I don't see how anything the Republicans are doing right now is helping the middle class at all." -Marcie Wozniak, Pittsburgh area, PA

In America, if someone is willing to work, he or she should be able to make ends meet and have the opportunity to prosper. To that end, we will raise the minimum wage and index it to inflation, and increase the Earned Income Tax Credit so that workers can support themselves and their families. We will modernize the unemployment insurance program to close gaps and extend benefits to the workers who now fall outside it.

Work and Family

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. It's time we stop just talking about family values, and start pursuing policies that truly value families. Families are increasingly responsible for caring for children and aging relatives, and its time for the government to meet them halfway. We will expand the Family and Medical Leave Act to reach millions more workers than are currently covered, and will enable workers to take leave to care for an elderly parent, address domestic violence and sexual assault, or attend a parent-teacher conference. Today 78 percent of the workers who are eligible for leave cannot take it because it's unpaid, so we will work with states and make leave paid. We will also ensure that every American worker is able earn up to seven paid sick days to care for themselves or an ill family member. And we will encourage employers to provide flexible work arrangements—with the federal government leading by example. We will expand the childcare tax credit, provide every child access to quality, affordable early childhood education, and double funding for after-school and summer learning opportunities for children. We will provide assistance to those who need long-term care and to the working men and women of this country who do the heroic job of providing care for their aging relatives. All Americans who are working hard and taking responsibility deserve the chance to do right by their loved ones. That's the America we believe in.

Poverty

When Bobby Kennedy saw the shacks and poverty along the Mississippi Delta, he asked, "How can a country like this allow it?" Forty years later, we're still asking that question. The most American answer we can give is: "We won't allow it." One in eight Americans live in poverty today. Most of these people work but still can't pay the bills. Nearly 13 million of the poor are children. We can't allow this kind of suffering and hopelessness to exist in our country. It's not who we are.

Working together, we can cut poverty in half within ten years. We will provide all our children a world-class education, from early childhood through college. We will develop innovative transitional job programs that place unemployed people into temporary jobs and train them for permanent ones. To help workers share in our country's productivity, we'll expand the Earned Income Tax Credit, and raise the minimum wage and index it to inflation. The majority of adults in poverty are women and to combat poverty we must work for fair pay, support for mothers, and policies that promote responsible fatherhood. We'll start letting our unions do what they do best again—organize and lift up our workers. We'll make sure that every American has affordable health care that stays with you no matter what happens. We will assist American Indian communities, since 10 of the 20 poorest counties in the U.S. are on Indian lands. We'll bring businesses back to our inner-cities, increase the supply of affordable housing, and establish "promise neighborhoods" that provide comprehensive services in areas of concentrated poverty. These will be based on proven models, such as the Harlem Children's Zone in New York City, which seeks to engage all residents with tangible goals such as attendance at parenting schools, retention of meaningful employment, college for every participating student, and strong physical and mental health outcomes for children.

Opportunity for Women

We, the Democratic Party, are the party that has produced more women Governors, Senators, and Members of Congress than any other. We have produced first woman Secretary of State, the first woman Speaker of the House of Representatives, and, in 2008, Hillary Rodham Clinton, the first woman in American history to win presidential primaries in our nation. We believe that our daughters should have the same opportunities as our sons; our party is proud that we have put 18 million cracks in the highest glass ceiling. We know that when America extends its promise to women, the result is increased opportunity for families, communities, and aspiring people everywhere.

When women still earn 76 cents for every dollar that a man earns, it doesn't just hurt women; it hurts families and children. We will pass the "Lilly Ledbetter" Act, which will make it easier to combat pay discrimination; we will pass the Fair Pay Act; and we will modernize the Equal Pay Act. We will invest in women-owned small businesses and remove the capital gains tax on start-up small businesses. We will support women in math and science, combat sex-discrimination and increase American competitiveness by retaining the best workers in those fields, regardless of gender. We recognize that women still carry the majority of childrearing responsibilities so we have created a

comprehensive work and family agenda. We recognize that women are the majority of adults who make the minimum wage, and are particularly hard-hit by recession and poverty. We will protect Social Security, expand programs to combat poverty and improve education so that parents and children can lift themselves out of poverty. We will work to combat violence against women.

We believe that standing up for our country means standing up against sexism and all intolerance. Demeaning portrayals of women cheapen our debates, dampen the dreams of our daughters, and deny us the contributions of too many. Responsibility lies with us all.

Investing in American Competitiveness

At a critical moment of transition like this one, Americans understand that, more than anything else, success will depend on the dynamism, determination, and innovation of the American people. But success also depends on national leadership that can move this country forward with confidence and a common purpose. In platform hearings, Americans called on their government to "invest back" in them and their country. That's what Lincoln did when he pushed for a transcontinental railroad, incorporated our National Academy of Sciences, passed the Homestead Act and created the land grant colleges. That's what Franklin Delano Roosevelt did in forging the social safety net, creating the Tennessee Valley Authority, electrifying rural American and investing in an Arsenal of Democracy. That's the kind of leadership we intend to provide.

New American Energy

In the local platform hearings, Americans talked about the importance of energy to the economy, to national security and to the health of our planet. Speaking loud and clear, they said that America needs a new bold and sustainable energy policy to meet the challenges of our time. In the past, America has been stirred to action when faced with new threats to our national security, or new competitive conditions that undercut our economic leadership. The energy threat we face today may be less immediate than threats from dictators, but it is as real and as dangerous. The dangers are eclipsed only by the opportunities that would come with change. We know that the jobs of the 21st century will be created in developing new energy solutions. The question is whether these jobs will be created in America, or abroad. We should use government procurement policies to incentivize domestic production of clean and renewable energy. Already, we've seen countries like Germany, Spain and Brazil reap the benefits of economic growth from clean energy. But we are decades behind in confronting this challenge.

For the sake of our security–and for every American family that is paying the price at the pump–we will break our addiction to foreign oil. In platform hearings around the country, Americans called for a Manhattan or Apollo Project level commitment to achieve energy independence. We hear that call and we Democrats commit to fasttrack investment of billions of dollars over the next ten years to establish a green energy sector that will create up to five million jobs. Good jobs, like those in Pennsylvania where workers manufacture wind turbines, the ones in the factory in Nevada producing components for solar energy generation plants, or the jobs that will be created when plug-in hybrids start rolling off the assembly line in Michigan. This transition to a clean-

energy industry will also benefit low-income communities: we'll create an energy-focused youth job program to give disadvantaged youth job skills for this emerging industry.

It will not be easy, but neither was getting to the moon. We know we can't drill our way to energy independence and so we must summon all of our ingenuity and legendary hard work and we must invest in research, development, and deployment of forms of new energy–solar, wind, as well as technologies to store energy through advanced batteries and clean up our coal plants. And we will call on businesses, government, and the American people to make America 50 percent more energy efficient by 2030, because we know that the most energy efficient economy will also gain the competitive edge for new manufacturing and jobs that stay here at home. We will help pay for all of it by dedicating a portion of the revenues generated by an economy wide cap and trade program- a step that will also dramatically reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and jumpstart billions in private capital investment in a new energy economy.

We'll double fuel efficiency standards and we'll help manufacturers–particularly in the auto industry–convert to build the cars and trucks of the future and other green innovations. And we will help workers learn the skills they need to compete in the green economy. We are committed to getting at least 25% of our electricity from renewable sources by 2025. Building on the innovative efforts of the private sector, states, cities, and tribes across the country, we will create new federal-local partnerships to scale the success and deployment of new energy solutions, install a smarter grid, build more efficient buildings, and use the power of federal and military purchasing programs to jumpstart promising new markets and technologies. We'll invest in advanced biofuels like cellulosic ethanol which will provide American-grown fuel and help free us from the tyranny of oil. We will use innovative measures to dramatically improve the energy efficiency of buildings.

To lower the price of gasoline, we will crack down on speculators who are driving up prices beyond the natural market rate. We will direct the Federal Trade Commission and Department of Justice to vigorously investigate and prosecute market manipulation in oil futures. And we will help those who are hit hardest by high energy prices by increasing funding for low-income heating assistance programs and providing energy assistance to help middle-class families make ends meet in this time of inflated energy prices.

This plan will safeguard our economy, our country, and the future of our planet. This plan will create good jobs that pay well and can't be outsourced. With these policies, we will protect our country from the national security threats created by reliance on foreign oil and global insecurity due to climate change. And this is how we'll solve the problem of four dollar a gallon gas—with a comprehensive plan and investment in clean energy.

A World Class Education for Every Child

In the 21st century, where the most valuable skill is knowledge, countries that out-educate us today will out-compete us tomorrow. In the platform hearings, Americans made it clear that it is morally and economically unacceptable that our high-schoolers

continue to score lower on math and science tests than most other students in the world and continue to drop-out at higher rates than their peers in other industrialized nations. We cannot accept the persistent achievement gap between minority and white students or the harmful disparities that exist between different schools within a state or even a district. Americans know we can and should do better.

The Democratic Party clearly believes that graduation from a quality public school and the opportunity to succeed in college must be the birthright of every child–not the privilege of the few. We must prepare all our students with the 21st century skills they need to succeed by progressing to a new era of mutual responsibility in education. We must set high standards for our children, but we must also hold ourselves accountable–our schools, our teachers, our parents, business leaders, our community and our elected leaders. And we must come together, form partnerships, and commit to providing the resources and reforms necessary to help every child reach their full potential.

Pre-school

We will make quality, affordable early childhood care and education available to every American child from the day he or she is born. Our Children's First Agenda, including increases in Head Start and Early Head Start and investments in high-quality Pre-K, will improve quality and provide learning and support to families with children ages zero to five. Our Presidential Early Learning Council will coordinate these efforts.

K-12

We must ensure that every student has a high-quality teacher and an effective principal. That starts with recruiting a new generation of teachers and principals by making this pledge–if you commit your life to teaching, America will commit to paying for your college education. We'll provide better preparation, mentoring and career ladders. Where there are teachers who are still struggling and underperforming we should provide them with individual help and support. And if they're still underperforming after that, we should find a quick and fair way—consistent with due process—to put another teacher in that classroom.

To reward our teachers, we will follow the lead of school districts and educators that have pioneered innovative ways to increase teacher pay that are developed with teachers, not imposed on them. We will make an unprecedented national investment to provide teachers with better pay and better support to improve their skills, and their students' learning. We'll reward effective teachers who teach in underserved areas, take on added responsibilities like mentoring new teachers, or consistently excel in the classroom.

We will fix the failures and broken promises of No Child Left Behind–while holding to the goal

"Data and the tools to comprehend and disseminate… information are critical to our work in the field. Outside of attacking the issue of expectations, nothing has advanced my work in Prince George's County faster than the use of data, the power of data and its widespread understanding, and the fact that ALL have access to this data…When all possess and understand the same important information, we are building real agency in *all* our youth and families." -Dr. John Deasy, the Superintendent of schools in Prince George's County, Maryland

of providing every child access to a world-class education, raising standards and ensuring accountability for closing the achievement gap. We will end the practice of labeling a school and its students as failures and then throwing our hands up and walking away from them without having provided the resources and supports these students need. But this alone is not an education policy. It's just a starting point. We will work with our nation's governors and educators to create and use assessments that will improve student learning and success in school districts all across America by including the kinds of critical thinking, communication, and problem-solving skills that our children will need. We will address the dropout crisis by investing in intervention strategies in middle schools and high schools and we will invest in after-school programs, summer school, and youth jobs.

We will promote innovation within our public schools–because research shows that resources alone will not create the schools that we need to help our children succeed. We need to adapt curricula and the school calendar to the needs of the 21st century; reform the schools of education that produce most of our teachers; promote public charter schools that are accountable; and streamline the certification process for those with valuable skills who want to shift careers and teach.

We will also meet our commitment to special education and to students who are English Language Learners. We support full funding of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. We also support transitional bilingual education and will help Limited English Proficient students get ahead by supporting and funding English Language Learner classes. We support teaching students second languages, as well as contributing through education to the revitalization of American Indian languages.

We know that there is no program and no policy that can substitute for parents who are involved in their children's education from day one–who make sure their children are in school on time, helps them with their homework, and attends those parent-teacher conferences; who are willing to turn off the TV once in awhile, put away the video games, and read to their children. Responsibility for our children's education has to start at home. We have to set high standards for them, and spend time with them, and love them. We have to hold ourselves accountable.

Higher Education

We believe that our universities, community colleges, and other institutions of higher learning must foster among their graduates the skills needed to enhance economic competitiveness. We will work with institutions of higher learning to produce highly skilled graduates in science, technology, engineering, and math disciplines who will become innovative workers prepared for the 21st century economy.

At community colleges and training programs across the country, we will invest in short-term accelerated training and technical certifications for the unemployed and under-employed to speed their transition into careers in high-demand occupations and emerging industries. We will reward successful community colleges with grants so they can

continue their good work. We support education delivery that makes it possible for non-traditional students to receive support and encouragement to obtain a college education, including Internet, distance education, and night and weekend programs. We need to fully fund joint labor-management apprenticeship programs and reinvigorate our industrial crafts programs to train the next generation of skilled American craft workers

We will make college affordable for all Americans by creating a new American Opportunity Tax Credit to ensure that the first $4,000 of a college education is completely free for most Americans. In exchange for the credit, students will be expected to perform community service. We will continue to support programs, especially the Pell Grant program, that open the doors of college opportunity to low-income Americans. We will enable families to apply for financial aid simply by checking a box on their tax form.

Our institutions of higher education are also the economic engines of today and tomorrow. We will partner with them to translate new ideas into innovative products, processes and services.

Science, Technology and Innovation

America has long led the world in innovation. But this Administration's hostility to science has taken a toll. At a time when technology helps shape our future, we devote a smaller and smaller share of our national resources to research and development.

It is time again to lead. We took a critical step with the America Competes Act and we will start by implementing that act —then we will do more. We will make science, technology, engineering, and math education a national priority. We will double federal funding for basic research, invest in a strong and inspirational vision for space exploration and make the Research and Development Tax Credit permanent. We will invest in the next generation of transformative energy technologies and health IT and we will renew the defense R&D system. We will lift the current Administration's ban on using federal funding for embryonic stem cells–cells that would have otherwise have been discarded and lost forever–for research that could save lives. We will ensure that our patent laws protect legitimate rights while not stifling innovation and creativity. We will end the Bush Administration’s war on science, restore scientific integrity, and return to evidence-based decision-making.

In sum, we will strengthen our system, treat science and technology as crucial investments, and use these forces to ensure a future of economic leadership, health well-being and national security.

Invest in Manufacturing and Our Manufacturing Communities

We will invest in American jobs and finally end the tax breaks that ship jobs overseas. We will create an Advanced Manufacturing Fund to provide for our next generation of innovators and job creators; we will expand the Manufacturing Extension Partnerships and create new job training programs for clean technologies. We will bring together government, private industry, workers, and academia to turn around the manufacturing

sector of the U.S. economy and provide assistance to automakers and parts companies to encourage retooling of facilities in this country to produce advanced technology vehicles and their key components. We will support efforts like the recently proposed Senate Appropriations measure that gives manufacturers access to low-interest loans to help convert factories to build more fuel-efficient vehicles. And we will invest in a clean energy economy to create up to five million new green-collar jobs.

Our manufacturing communities need immediate relief. And we will help states and localities whose budgets are strained in times of need. We will modernize and expand Trade Adjustment Assistance. We will help workers build a safety net, with health care, retirement security, and a way to stay out of crippling debt. We will partner with community colleges and other higher education institutions, so that we're training workers to meet the demands of local industry, including environmentally-friendly technology.

> "I work in the maintenance department at General Electric in Bloomington, Indiana. Our plant is closing in a year and, we hear, going to Mexico. With one year left before I can retire, I could end up losing my pension. I'm two years away from my retirement, but I'm not going to quite make it. They tell me I can go to another factory, but I'd start out at lower pay and at the bottom of the rung. I feel like I'd be throwing everything away I've worked for over the last 24 years. The closest factory is three hours away. I've never really been interested in elections before. And honestly, the first time I ever voted was in the primary of this year. But everything seems more important to me this year. I've decided to get more involved. It's not the time to sit and watch the world go by. I know this year, with the economy, we've got to elect Senator Obama." –David Landrum, Bloomington, Indiana

Creating New Jobs by Rebuilding American Infrastructure

A century ago, Teddy Roosevelt called together leaders from business and government to develop a plan for the next century's infrastructure. It falls to us to do the same. Right now, we are spending less than at any time in recent history and far less than our international competitors on this critical component of our nation's strength. We will start a National Infrastructure Reinvestment Bank that can leverage private investment in infrastructure improvements, and create nearly two million new good jobs. We will undertake projects that maximize our safety and security and ability to compete, which we will fund as we bring the war in Iraq to a responsible close. We will modernize our power grid, which will help conservation and spur the development and distribution of clean energy. We need a national transportation policy, including high-speed rail and light rail. We can invest in our bridges, roads, and public transportation so that people have choices in how they get to work. We will ensure every American has access to highspeed broadband and we will take on special interests in order to unleash the power of the wireless spectrum.

A Connected America

In the 21st century, our world is more intertwined than at any time in human history. This new connectedness presents us with untold opportunities for innovation, but also new challenges. We will protect the Internet's traditional openness to innovation and creativity and ensure that it remains a dynamic platform for free speech, innovation, and creativity. We will implement a national broadband strategy, especially in rural areas, that enables every American household, school, library and hospital to connect to a

world-class communications infrastructure. We will rededicate our nation to ensuring that all Americans have access to broadband and the skills to use it effectively. In an increasingly technology-rich, knowledge-based economy, connectivity is a key part of the solution to many of our most important challenges: job creation, economic growth, energy, health care, and education. We will establish a Chief Technology Officer for the nation, to ensure we use technology to enhance the functioning, transparency, and expertise of government, including establishing a national interoperable public safety communications network to help first responders at the local, state and national level communicate with one another during a crisis.

We will toughen penalties, increase enforcement resources, and spur private sector cooperation with law enforcement to identify and prosecute those who exploit the Internet to try to harm children. We will encourage more educational content on the Web and in our media. We will give parents the tools and information they need to manage (in ways fully consistent with the First Amendment) what their children see on television and the Internet. We will strengthen privacy protections in the digital age and will harness the power of technology to hold government and business accountable for violations of personal privacy.

Support Small Business and Entrepreneurship

Encouraging new industry and creating jobs means giving more support to American entrepreneurs. We will exempt all start-up companies from capital gains taxes and provide them a tax credit for health insurance. We will provide a new tax credit for small businesses that offer quality health insurance to their employees. We will work to remove bureaucratic barriers for small and start-up businesses–for example, by making the patent process more efficient and reliable. Our Small Business Administration will recognize the importance of small business to women, people of color, tribes, and rural America and will work to help nurture entrepreneurship. We will create a national network of public-private business incubators and technical support.

Real Leadership for Rural America

Rural America is home to 60 million Americans. The agricultural sector is critical to the rural economy and to all Americans. We depend on those in agriculture to produce the food, feed, fiber, and fuel that supports our society. Thankfully, American farmers possess an unrivaled capacity to produce an abundance of these high-quality products.

> "I am a farmer that grows corn, wheat, soybeans 100 percent, full time, no till to help protect the resources. I work 7 days a week the year round to pay my bills. We, the American farmer, have the ability, the enthusiasm, the skills, the tools, and the fierce sense of patriotism to win the war on foreign oil and still provide the food and fiber in a safe manner for not only for this country, but for the rest of the world. However, we are threatened by a climate that rings us droughts one year nationwide and then, this year, floods of historic biblical proportion. Because of the high cost of farming, because of the risk and the stress, no longer are the young people of rural America wanting to stay on the farm." –Ray McCormick, Southwestern Indiana

In return, we will provide a strong safety net for family farms, a permanent disaster relief program, expansion of agriculture

research and an emphasis on agricultural trade. We will promote economic development in rural and tribal communities by investing in renewable energy, which will transform the rural economy and create millions of new jobs, by upgrading technological and physical infrastructure, by supporting higher education opportunities and by attracting quality teachers, doctors and nurses through loan forgiveness programs and other incentive programs.

Economic Stewardship

Since the time of our Founders, we have struggled to balance the same forces that confronted Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson–self-interest and community; markets and democracy; the concentration of wealth and power, and the necessity of transparency and opportunity for each and every citizen. Throughout this saga, Americans have pursued their dreams within a free market that has been the engine of America's progress. It's a market that has created a prosperity that is the envy of the world, and opportunity for generations of Americans. A market that has provided great rewards to the innovators and risk-takers who have made America a beacon for science, technology, and discovery.

But the American experiment has worked in large part because we have guided the market's invisible hand with a higher principle. Our free market was never meant to be a free license to take whatever you can get, however you can get it. That is why we have put in place rules of the road to make competition fair, open, and honest. We have done this not to stifle–but rather to advance prosperity and liberty.

In this time of economic transformation and crisis, we must be stewards of this economy more than ever before. We will maintain fiscal responsibility, so that we do not mortgage our children's future on a mountain of debt. We can do this at the same time that we invest in our future. We will restore fairness and responsibility to our tax code. We will bring back balance to the housing markets, so that people do not have to lose their homes. And we will encourage personal savings, so that our economy remains strong and Americans can live well in their retirements.

Restoring Fairness to our Tax Code

We must reform our tax code. It's thousands of pages long, a monstrosity that high-priced lobbyists have rigged with page after page of special interest loopholes and tax shelters. We will shut down the corporate loopholes and tax havens and use the money so that we can provide an immediate middle-class tax cut that will offer relief to workers and their families. We'll eliminate income taxes for millions of retirees, because every senior deserves to live out their life in dignity and respect. We won't increase taxes on any family earning under $250,000 and we will offer additional tax cuts for middle class families. For families making more than $250,000, we'll ask them to give back a portion of the Bush tax cuts to invest in health care and other key priorities. We will expand the Earned Income Tax Credit, and dramatically simplify tax filings so that millions of Americans can do their taxes in less than five minutes.

Housing

The housing crisis has been devastating for many Americans. Minorities have been hit particularly hard—in 2006, more than 40% of the home loans made to Hispanic borrowers were subprime, while more than half of those made to African Americans were subprime. We will ensure that the foreclosure prevention program enacted by Congress is implemented quickly and effectively so that at-risk homeowners can get help and hopefully stay in their homes. We will work to reform bankruptcy laws to restore balance between lender and homeowner rights. Because we have an obligation to prevent this crisis from recurring in the future, we will crack down on fraudulent brokers and lenders and invest in financial literacy. We will pass a Homebuyers Bill of Rights, including establishing new lending standards to ensure that loans are affordable and fair, providing adequate remedies to make sure the standards are met, and ensuring that homeowners have accurate and complete information about their mortgage options. We will support affordable rental housing, which is now more critical than ever. We will implement the newly created Affordable Housing Trust Fund to ensure that it can start to support the development and preservation of affordable housing in mixed-income neighborhoods throughout the country, restore cuts to public housing operating subsidies and fully fund the Community Development Block Grant program. We will work with local jurisdictions on the problem of vacant and abandoned housing in our communities. We will work to end housing discrimination and to ensure equal housing opportunity. We will combat homelessness and target homelessness among veterans in particular by expanding proven programs and launching innovative preventive services.

Reforming Financial Regulation and Corporate Governance

We have failed to guard against practices that all too often rewarded financial manipulation instead of productivity and sound business practices. We have let the special interests put their thumbs on the economic scales. We do not believe that government should stand in the way of innovation, or turn back the clock to an older era of regulation. But we do believe that government has a role to play in advancing our common prosperity: by providing stable macroeconomic and financial conditions for sustained growth; by demanding transparency; and by ensuring fair competition in the marketplace. We will reform and modernize our regulatory structures and will work to promote a shift in the cultures of our financial institutions and our regulatory agencies. We will ensure shareholders have an advisory vote on executive compensation, in order to spur increased transparency and public debate over pay packages.

Consumer Protection

We will establish a Credit Card Bill of Rights to protect consumers and a Credit Card Rating System to improve disclosure. Americans need to pay what they owe, but they should pay what's fair. We'll reform our bankruptcy laws to give Americans in debt a second chance. If people can demonstrate that they went bankrupt because of medical expenses, they will be able to relieve that debt and get back on their feet. We will ban executive bonuses for bankrupt companies. We will crack down on predatory lenders and make it easier for low-income families to buy homes. We will require all non-home-based child care facilities to be lead-safe within five years. We must guarantee that consumer products coming in from other countries are truly safe, and will call on the

Federal Trade Commission to ensure vulnerable consumer populations, such as seniors, are addressed.

Savings

The personal savings rate is at its lowest since the Great Depression. Currently, 75 million working Americans—roughly half the workforce—lack employer-based retirement plans. That's why we will create automatic workplace pensions. People can add to their pension, or can opt out at any time; the savings account will be easily transferred between jobs and people can control it themselves if they become self-employed. And employers will have an easy opportunity to match employee savings. We believe this program will increase the savings participation rate for low and middle-income workers from its current 15 percent to 80 percent. We support good pensions, and will adopt measures to preserve and protect existing public and private pension plans. We will require that employees who have company pensions receive annual disclosures about their pension fund's investments, and will ensure savings incentives are fair to all workers by matching half of the initial $1000 of savings for families that need help. This will put a secure retirement within reach for millions of working families.

Smart, Strong, and Fair Trade Policies

We believe that trade should strengthen the American economy and create more American jobs, while also laying a foundation for democratic, equitable, and sustainable growth around the world. Trade has been a cornerstone of our growth and global development but we will not be able to sustain this growth if it favors the few rather than the many. We must build on the wealth that open markets have created, and share its benefits more equitably.

Trade policy must be an integral part of an overall national economic strategy that delivers on the promise of good jobs at home and shared prosperity abroad. We will enforce trade laws and safeguard our workers, businesses and farmers from unfair trade practices–including currency manipulation, lax consumer standards, illegal subsidies, and violations of workers' rights and environmental standards. We must also show leadership at the World Trade Organization to improve transparency and accountability, and to ensure it acts effectively to stop countries from continuing unfair government subsidies to foreign exporters and non-tariff barriers on U.S. exports.

We need tougher negotiators on our side of the table–to strike bargains that are good not just for Wall Street, but also for Main Street. We will negotiate free trade agreements that open markets to U.S. exports and include enforceable international labor and environmental standards; we pledge to enforce those standards consistently and fairly. We will not negotiate free trade agreements that stop the government from protecting the environment, food safety or the health of its citizens, give greater rights to foreign investors than to U.S. investors, require the privatization of our vital public services, or prevent developing country governments from adopting humanitarian licensing policies to improve access to life-saving medications. We will stand firm against agreements that fail to live up to these important benchmarks. We will work with Canada and Mexico to amend the North American Free Trade Agreement so that it works better for all three

North American countries. We will work together with other countries to achieve a successful completion of the Doha Round Agreement that would increase U.S. exports, support good jobs in America, protect worker rights and the environment, benefit our businesses and our farms, strengthen the rules-based multilateral system, and advance development of the world's poorest countries.

Just as important, we will invest in a world-class infrastructure, skilled workforce, and cutting-edge technology so that we can compete successfully on high-value-added products, not sweatshop wages and conditions. We will end tax breaks for companies that ship American jobs overseas, and provide incentives for companies that keep and maintain good jobs here in the U.S. And, we will also provide access to affordable health insurance and enhance retirement security, and we will update and expand Trade Adjustment Assistance to help workers in industries vulnerable to international competition, as well as service sector and public sector workers impacted by trade, and we will improve TAA's health care benefits. The United States should renew its own commitment to respect for workers' fundamental human rights, and at the same time strengthen the ILO's ability to promote workers' rights abroad through technical assistance and capacity building.

Fiscal Responsibility

Our agenda is ambitious–particularly in light of the current Administration's policies that have run up the national debt to over $4 trillion. Just as America cannot afford to continue to run up huge deficits, so too can we not afford to short-change investments. The key is to make the tough choices, in particular enforcing pay-as-you-go budgeting rules. We will honor these rules by our plan to end the Iraq war responsibly, eliminate waste in existing government programs, generate revenue by charging polluters for the greenhouse gases they are releasing–and put an end to the reckless, special interest driven corporate loopholes and tax cuts for the wealthy that have been the centerpiece of the Bush Administration's economic policy. We will not raise taxes on people making less than $250,000, and will eliminate all income taxes for seniors making less than $50,000. We recognize that Social Security is not in crisis and we should do everything we can to strengthen this vital program, including asking those making over $250,000 to pay a bit more. The real long-run fiscal challenge is rooted in the rising spending on health care, but we cannot address this in a way that puts our most vulnerable families in jeopardy . Instead, we must strengthen our public programs by bringing down the cost of health care and reducing waste while making strategic investments that emphasize quality, efficiency, and prevention. In the name of our children, we reject the proposals of those who want to continue on George Bush's disastrous policies.

II. Renewing American Leadership

At moments of great peril in the last century, American leaders such as Franklin Roosevelt, Harry Truman, and John F. Kennedy managed both to protect the American people and to expand opportunity for the next generation. They ensured that America, by deed and example, led and lifted the world–that we stood for and fought for the freedoms sought by billions of people beyond our borders. They used our strengths to show people everywhere America at its best.

Today, we are again called to provide visionary leadership. This century's threats are at least as dangerous as, and in some ways more complex than, those we have confronted in the past. They come from weapons that can kill on a mass scale and from violent extremists who respond to alienation or perceived injustice with terror. They come from rogue states allied to terrorists and from rising powers that could challenge both America and the international foundation of liberal democracy. They come from weak states that cannot control their territory or provide for their people. They come from an addiction to oil that helps fund the extremism we must fight and empowers repressive regimes. And they come from a warming planet that will spur new diseases, spawn more devastating natural disasters, and catalyze deadly conflicts.

We will confront these threats head on while working with our allies and restoring our standing in the world. We will pursue a tough, smart and principled national security strategy. It is a strategy that recognizes that we have interests not just in Baghdad, but in Kandahar and Karachi, in Beijing, Berlin, Brasilia and Bamako. It is a strategy that contends with the many disparate forces shaping this century, including: the fundamentalist challenge to freedom; the emergence of new powers like China, India, Russia and a united Europe; the spread of lethal weapons; uncertain supplies of energy, food and water; the persistence of poverty and the growing gap between rich and poor; and extraordinary new technologies that send people, ideas and money across the globe at ever faster speeds.

Barack Obama will focus this strategy on seven goals: (i) ending the war in Iraq responsibly; (ii) defeating Al Qaeda and combating violent extremism; (iii) securing nuclear weapons and materials from terrorists; (iv) revitalizing and supporting our military; (v) renewing our partnerships to promote our common security; (vi) advancing democracy and development; and (vii) protecting our planet by achieving energy security and combating climate change.

Ending the War in Iraq

To renew American leadership in the world, we must first bring the Iraq war to a responsible end. Our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines have performed admirably while sacrificing immeasurably. Our civilian leaders have failed them. Iraq was a diversion from the fight against the terrorists who struck us on 9-11, and incompetent prosecution of the war by civilian leaders compounded the strategic blunder of choosing to wage it in the first place.

We will re-center American foreign policy by responsibly redeploying our combat forces from Iraq and refocusing them on urgent missions. We will give our military a new mission: ending this war and giving Iraq back to its people. We will be as careful getting out of Iraq as we were careless getting in. We can safely remove our combat brigades at the pace of one to two per month and expect to complete redeployment within 16 months. After this redeployment, we will keep a residual force in Iraq to perform specific missions: targeting terrorists; protecting our embassy and civil personnel; and advising and supporting Iraq's Security Forces, provided the Iraqis make political progress.

At the same time, we will provide generous assistance to Iraqi refugees and internally displaced persons. We will launch a comprehensive regional and international diplomatic surge to help broker a lasting political settlement in Iraq, which is the only path to a sustainable peace. We will make clear that we seek no permanent bases in Iraq. This is the future the American people want. This is the future that Iraqis want. This is what our common interests demand.

Defeating Al Qaeda and Combating Terrorism

The central front in the war on terror is not Iraq, and it never was. We will defeat Al Qaeda in Afghanistan and Pakistan, where those who actually attacked us on 9-11 reside and are resurgent.

Win in Afghanistan

Our troops are performing heroically in Afghanistan, but as countless military commanders and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff acknowledge, we lack the resources to finish the job because of our commitment to Iraq. We will finally make the fight against al Qaeda and the Taliban the top priority that it should be.

We will send at least two additional combat brigades to Afghanistan, and use this commitment to seek greater contributions–with fewer restrictions–from our NATO allies. We will focus on building up our special forces and intelligence capacity, training, equipping and advising Afghan security forces, building Afghan governmental capacity, and promoting the rule of law. We will bolster our State Department's Provincial Reconstruction Teams and our other government agencies helping the Afghan people. We will help Afghans educate their children, including their girls, provide basic human services to their population and grow their economy from the bottom up, with an additional $1 billion in non-military assistance each year–including investments in alternative livelihoods to poppy-growing for Afghan farmers–just as we crack down on trafficking and corruption. Afghanistan must not be lost to a future of narco-terrorism–or become again a haven for terrorists.

Seek a new partnership with Pakistan

The greatest threat to the security of the Afghan people–and the American people–lies in the tribal regions of Pakistan, where terrorists train, plot attacks and strike into Afghanistan and move back across the border. We cannot tolerate a sanctuary for al Qaeda. We need a stronger and sustained partnership between Afghanistan, Pakistan and

NATO–including necessary assets like satellites and predator drones–to better secure the border, to take out terrorist camps, and to crack down on cross-border insurgents. We must help Pakistan develop its own counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency capacity. We will invest in the long-term development of the Pashtun border region, so that the extremists' program of hate is met with an agenda of hope.

We will ask more of the Pakistani government, rather than offer a blank check to an undemocratic President. We will significantly increase non-military aid to the Pakistani people and sustain it for a decade, while ensuring that the military assistance we provide is actually used to fight extremists. We must move beyond an alliance built on individual leaders, or face mounting opposition in a nuclear-armed nation at the nexus of terror, extremism, and the instability wrought by autocracy.

Combat Terrorism

Beyond Afghanistan and Pakistan, we must forge a more effective global response to terrorism. There must be no safe haven for those who plot to kill Americans. We need a comprehensive strategy to defeat global terrorists–one that draws on the full range of American power, including but not limited to our military might. We will create a properly resourced Shared Security Partnership to enhance counter-terrorism cooperation with countries around the world, including through information sharing as well as funding for training, operations, border security, anti-corruption programs, technology, and targeting terrorist financing.

We will pursue policies to expand our understanding of the circumstances and beliefs that underpin extremism, so that we can effectively address them. A crucial debate is occurring within Islam. The vast majority of Muslims believe in a future of peace, tolerance, development, and democratization. A small minority embrace a rigid and violent intolerance of personal liberty and the world at large. To empower forces of moderation, America must live up to our values, respect civil liberties, reject torture, and lead by example. We will make every effort to export hope and opportunity–access to education, secure food and water supplies, and health care, trade, capital and investment. We will provide steady support for political reformers, democratic institutions and civil society that is necessary to uphold human rights and build respect for the rule of law.

Secure the Homeland

Here at home, we will strengthen our security and protect the critical infrastructure on which the entire world depends. We will fully fund and implement the recommendations of the bi-partisan 9-11 Commission. We will spend homeland security dollars on the basis of risk. This means investing more resources to defend mass transit, closing the gaps in our aviation security by screening all cargo on passenger airliners and checking all passengers against a reliable and comprehensive watch list, and upgrading plant security and port security by ensuring that cargo is screened for radiation. To ensure that resources are targeted, we will establish a Quadrennial Review at the Department of Homeland Security to undertake a top to bottom assessment of the threats we face and our ability to confront them. And we will develop a comprehensive National Infrastructure Protection Plan that draws on both local know-how and national priorities.

We will ensure direct coordination with state, local and tribal jurisdictions so that first responders are always resourced and prepared.

Pursue Intelligence Reform

To succeed, our homeland security and counter-terrorism actions must be linked to an intelligence community that deals effectively with the threats we face. Today, we rely largely on the same institutions and practices that were in place before 9-11. Barack Obama will depoliticize intelligence by appointing a Director of National Intelligence with a fixed term, create a bipartisan Consultative Group of congressional leaders on national security, and establish a National Declassification Center to ensure openness. To keep pace with highly adaptable enemies, we need technologies and practices that enable us to efficiently collect and share information within and across our intelligence agencies. We must invest still more in human intelligence and deploy additional trained operatives with specialized knowledge of local cultures and languages. And we will institutionalize the practice of developing competitive assessments of critical threats and strengthen our methodologies of analysis.

Preventing the Spread and Use of Weapons of Mass Destruction

We will urgently seek to reduce dramatically the risks from three potentially catastrophic threats: nuclear weapons, biological attacks and cyber warfare. In an age of terrorism, these dangers take on new dimensions. Nuclear, biological, and cyber attacks all pose the potential for large-scale damage and destruction to our people, to our economy and to our way of life. The capacity to inflict such damage is spreading not only to other countries, but also potentially to terrorist groups.

A World without Nuclear Weapons.

America will seek a world with no nuclear weapons and take concrete actions to move in this direction. We face growing threats of terrorists acquiring nuclear weapons or the means to make them with more countries seeking nuclear weapons, unsecured nuclear materials in many countries, and of the potential spread of nuclear technologies. As George Shultz, Bill Perry, Henry Kissinger and Sam Nunn have warned, current measures are not adequate to address these dangers. We will maintain a strong and reliable deterrent as long as nuclear weapons exist, but America will be safer in a world that is reducing reliance on nuclear weapons and ultimately eliminates all of them. We will make the goal of eliminating nuclear weapons worldwide a central element of U.S. nuclear weapons policy.

Secure Nuclear Weapons and the Materials to Make Them

We will work with other nations to secure, eliminate and stop the spread of nuclear weapons and materials to dramatically reduce the dangers to our nation and the world. There are nuclear weapons materials in 40 countries, and we will lead a global effort to work with other countries to secure all nuclear weapons material at vulnerable sites within four years. We will work with nations to increase security for nuclear weapons. We will convene a summit in 2009 (and regularly thereafter) of leaders of Permanent Members of the U.N. Security Council and other key countries to agree on implementing many of these measures on a global basis.

End the Production of Fissile Material

We will negotiate a verifiable global ban on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons. We will work to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons technology so that countries cannot build–or come to the brink of building–a weapons program under the guise of developing peaceful nuclear power. We will seek to double the International Atomic Energy Agency's budget, support the creation of an IAEA-controlled nuclear fuel bank to guarantee fuel supply to countries that do not build enrichment facilities, and work to strengthen the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

End Cold War Nuclear Postures

To enhance our security and help meet our commitments under the Non-Proliferation Treaty, we will seek deep, verifiable reductions in United States and Russian nuclear weapons and work with other nuclear powers to reduce global stockpiles dramatically. We will work with Russia to take as many weapons as possible off Cold War, quick-launch status, and extend key provisions of the START Treaty, including their essential monitoring and verification requirements. We will not develop new nuclear weapons, and will work to create a bipartisan consensus to support ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, which will strengthen the NPT and aid international monitoring of nuclear activities.

Prevent Iran from Acquiring Nuclear Weapons

The world must prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. That starts with tougher sanctions and aggressive, principled and direct high-level diplomacy, without preconditions. We will pursue this strengthened diplomacy alongside our European allies, and with no illusions about the Iranian regime. We will present Iran with a clear choice: if you abandon your nuclear weapons program, support for terror, and threats to Israel you will receive meaningful incentives; so long as you refuse, the United States and the international community will further ratchet up the pressure, with stronger unilateral sanctions; stronger multilateral sanctions inside and outside the U.N. Security Council, and sustained action to isolate the Iranian regime. The Iranian people and the international community must know that it is Iran, not the United States, choosing isolation over cooperation. By going the extra diplomatic mile, while keeping all options on the table, we make it more likely the rest of the world will stand with us to increase pressure on Iran, if diplomacy is failing.

De-Nuclearize North Korea

We support the belated diplomatic effort to secure a verifiable end to North Korea's nuclear weapons program and to fully account for and secure any fissile material or weapons North Korea has produced to date. We will continue direct diplomacy and are committed to working with our partners through the six-party talks to ensure that all agreements are fully implemented in the effort to achieve a verifiably nuclear-free Korean peninsula.

Biological and Chemical Weapons

We will strengthen U.S. intelligence collection overseas to identify and interdict would-

be bioterrorists before they strike. We will also build greater capacity to mitigate the consequences of bio-terror attacks, ensuring that the federal government does all it can to get citizens the information and resources they need to help protect themselves and their families. We will accelerate the development of new medicines, vaccines, and production capabilities, and lead an international effort to detect and diminish the impact of major infectious disease epidemics. And we will fully fund our contribution to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and work to ensure that remaining stockpiles of chemical weapons are destroyed swiftly, safely and securely.

Stronger Cyber-Security

We will work with private industry, the research community and our citizens, to build a trustworthy and accountable cyber infrastructure that is resilient, protects America's competitive advantage, and advances our national and homeland security.

Revitalizing and Supporting the Military, Keeping Faith With Veterans

To renew American leadership in the world, we must revitalize our military. A strong military is, more than anything, necessary to sustain peace.

Ending the war in Iraq will be the beginning, but not the end, of addressing our defense challenges. We will use this moment both to rebuild our military and to prepare it for the missions of the future. We must retain the capacity to swiftly defeat any conventional threat to our country and our vital interests. But we must also become better prepared to take on foes that fight asymmetrical and highly adaptive campaigns on a global scale.

We will not hesitate to use force to protect the American people or our vital interests whenever we are attacked or imminently threatened. But we will use our armed forces wisely, with others when we can, unilaterally when we must. When we send our men and women into harm's way, we must clearly define the mission, listen to the advice of our military commanders, objectively evaluate intelligence, and ensure that our troops have the strategy, resources and support they need to prevail.

We believe we must also be willing to consider using military force in circumstances beyond self-defense in order to provide for the common security that underpins global stability–to support friends, participate in stability and reconstruction operations, or confront mass atrocities. But when we do use force in situations other than self-defense, we should make every effort to garner the clear support and participation of others. The consequences of forgetting that lesson in the context of the current conflict in Iraq have been grave.

Expand the Armed Forces

We support plans to increase the size of the Army by 65,000 troops and the Marines by 27,000 troops. Increasing our end strength will help units retrain and re-equip properly between deployments and decrease the strain on military families.

Recruit and Retain

A nation of 300 million people should not struggle to find additional qualified personnel to serve. Recruiting and retention problems have been swept under the rug, including by applying inconsistent standards and using the "Stop Loss" program to keep our servicemen and women in the force after their enlistment has expired. We will reach out to youth, as well as to the parents, teachers, coaches, and community and religious leaders who influence them and make it an imperative to restore the ethic of public service, whether it be serving their local communities in such roles as teachers or first responders, or serving in the military and reserve forces or diplomatic corps that keep our nation free and safe.

Rebuild the Military for 21st-Century Tasks

We will rebuild our armed forces to meet the full spectrum needs of the new century. We will strongly support efforts to: build up our special operations forces, civil affairs, information operations, engineers, foreign area officers, and other units and capabilities that remain in chronic short supply; invest in foreign language training, cultural awareness, and human intelligence and other needed counter-insurgency and stabilization skill sets; and create a specialized military advisor corps, which will enable us to better build up local allies' capacities to take on mutual threats. We also will ensure that military personnel have sufficient training time before they are sent into battle. This is not the case at the moment, when American forces are being rushed to Iraq and Afghanistan, often with less individual and unit training than is required.

Develop Civilian Capacity to Promote Global Stability and Improve Emergency Response

We will build the capacity of U.S. civilian agencies to deploy personnel and area experts where they are needed, so that we no longer have to ask our soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines to perform non-military functions. The creation of a volunteer Civilian Assistance Corps of skilled experts (e.g. doctors, lawyers, engineers, city planners, agriculture specialists, police) who are pre-trained and willing to aid in emergencies will involve more Americans in public service and provide our nation with a pool of talent to assist America in times of need at home and abroad.

Do Right by Our Veterans and their Families

We believe that every servicemember is a hero who deserves our respect and gratitude, not just on Veterans Day or Memorial Day, but every day. When they put on their uniforms, these servicemembers become all of our daughters and all of our sons, and it is time we started treating them as such. As the shameful events at Walter Reed hospital and the recent reports on growing numbers of homeless and unemployed veterans show, this administration that has asked so much of them has not repaid their sacrifice.

We will build a 21st century Department of Veterans Affairs that reflects the reality of America's all volunteer military and has the resources, without returning every year to fight the same battles, to uphold America's sacred trust with our veterans. We will make sure that members of our Armed Forces have a fair shot at the American Dream by implementing the new GI Bill. We will ensure that every veteran has quality health care for injuries both physical and mental, and we will require that health professionals screen

all servicemembers upon their return from combat. We will aggressively address Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Traumatic Brain Injury. We will work to ensure that every veteran receives the benefits he or she has earned and the assistance they need by making the disability benefits process more fair, efficient and equitable. We will dramatically reduce the backlog of disability claims. We will combat homelessness, unemployment and underemployment among veterans and improve the transition for servicemen between the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs. We will continue to honor our promises to all veterans, including the Filipino veterans, especially with regards to citizenship and family reunification.

> "Americans are frustrated with our continued involvement in the War and Middle East involvement. We feel too much money has been spent on a war that is not needed. Many young lives have been lost, and too many of our brave heroes are coming home wounded, both physically and psychologically, to a veteran hospital system unequipped to adequately care for them." -*Listening to America* participants, Tell City, Indiana

Lift Burdens on Our Troops and Their Families

We must better support those families of whom we are asking so much. We will create a Military Families Advisory Board to help identify and develop practical policies to ease the burden on spouses and families.

We will protect our military families from losing their homes to foreclosure. We will work for pay parity so that compensation for military service is more in line with that of the private sector. We will end the stop-loss and reserve recall policies that allow an individual to be forced to remain on active duty well after his or her enlistment has expired, and we will establish regularity in deployments so that active duty and reserve troops know what they must expect and their families can plan for it.

Support the Readiness of the Guard and Reserve

Democrats will provide the National Guard with the equipment it needs for foreign and domestic emergencies and time to restore and refit between deployments. We will also ensure that reservists and Guard members are treated fairly when it comes to employment, health, and education benefits. We will do this by adequately funding reintegration programs to assist returning servicemembers and by enforcing the Service Members Civil Relief Act and the Uniformed Service Employment Rights and Readjustment Act, laws too often observed in the breach today. To ensure that the concerns of our citizen soldiers reach the level they mandate, Democrats will elevate the Chief of the National Guard to be a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Allow All Americans to Serve

We will also put national security above divisive politics. More than 10,000 service men and women have been discharged on the basis of sexual orientation since the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy was implemented, at a cost of over $360 million. Many of those forced out had special skills in high demand, such as translators, engineers and pilots. At a time when the military is having a tough time recruiting and retaining troops, it is wrong to deny our country the service of brave, qualified people. We support the repeal

of "Don't Ask Don't Tell" and the implementation of policies to allow qualified men and women to serve openly regardless of sexual orientation

Reform Contracting Practices and Make Contractors Accountable

We believe taxpayer dollars should be spent to invest in our fighting men and women, not to fatten the pockets of private companies. We will instruct the Defense and State Departments to develop a strategy for determining when contracting makes sense, and when certain functions are "inherently governmental" and should not be contracted out. We will establish the legal status of contractor personnel, making possible prosecution of any abuses committed by private military contractors, and create a system of improved oversight and management, so that government can restore honesty, openness and efficiency to the contracting and procurement.

Working for Our Common Security

To renew American leadership in the world, we will rebuild the alliances, partnerships, and institutions necessary to confront common threats and enhance common security. Needed reform of these alliances and institutions will not come by bullying other countries to ratify American demands. It will come when we convince other governments and peoples that they, too, have a stake in effective partnerships. It is only leadership if others join America in working toward our common security.

> "We believe in and demand a new era of civility and support in international affairs to promote decent living conditions, protect the environment, and support human rights." *-Listening to America* participants, Poison. MT

Too often, in recent years, we have sent the opposite signal to our international partners. In the case of Europe, we dismissed European reservations about the wisdom and necessity of the Iraq war and their concerns about climate change. In Asia, we belittled South Korean efforts to improve relations with the North. In Latin America, from Mexico to Argentina, we failed to address concerns about immigration and equity and economic growth. In Africa, we have allowed genocide to persist for over five years in Darfur and have not done nearly enough to answer the United Nation's call for more support to stop the killing. Under Barack Obama, We will rebuild our ties to our allies in Europe and Asia and strengthen our partnerships throughout the Americas and Africa.

Support Africa's Democratic Development

U.S. engagement with Africa should reflect its vital significance to the U.S. as well as its emerging role in the global economy. We recognize Africa's promise as a trade and investment partner and the importance of policies which can contribute to sustainable economic growth, job creation and poverty alleviation. We are committed to bringing the full weight of American leadership to bear in unlocking the spirit of entrepreneurship and economic independence that is sweeping across markets of Africa.

We believe that sustainable economic growth and development will mitigate and even help to reverse such chronic and debilitating challenges as poverty, hunger, conflict and HIV/AIDS. We are committed to bringing the full weight of American leadership to bear

to work in partnership with Africa to confront these crises. We will work with the United Nations and Africa's regional organizations to prevent and resolve conflict and to build the capacity of Africa's weak and failing states. We must respond effectively when there is a humanitarian crisis–particularly at this moment in Sudan where genocide persists in Darfur and the Comprehensive Peace Agreement is threatened.

Many African countries have embraced democratization and economic liberalization. We will help strengthen Africa's democratic development and respect for human rights, while encouraging political and economic reforms that result in improved transparency and accountability. We will defend democracy and stand up for rule of law when it is under assault, such as in Zimbabwe.

Recommit to an Alliance of the Americas

We recognize that the security and prosperity of the United States is fundamentally tied to the future of the Americas. We believe that in the 21st century, the U.S. must treat Canada, Latin America and the Caribbean as full partners, just as our neighbors to the south should reject the bombast of authoritarian bullies. An alliance of the Americas will only succeed if it is founded on the bedrock of mutual respect and works to advance democracy, opportunity and security from the bottom-up. We must turn the page on the arrogance in Washington and the anti-Americanism across the region that stands in the way of progress. We must work with close partners like Mexico, Brazil and Colombia on issues like ending the drug trade, fighting poverty and inequality, and immigration. And we must build ties to the people of Cuba and help advance their liberty by allowing unlimited family visits and remittances to the island, while presenting the Cuban regime with a clear choice: if it takes significant steps toward democracy, beginning with the unconditional release of all political prisoners, we will be prepared to take steps to begin normalizing relations.

Lead in Asia

We are committed to U.S. engagement in Asia. This begins with maintaining strong relationships with allies like Japan, Australia, South Korea, Thailand and the Philippines and deepening our ties to vital democratic partners, like India, in order to create a stable and prosperous Asia. We must also forge a more effective framework in Asia that goes beyond bilateral agreements, occasional summits, and ad hoc diplomatic arrangements. We need an open and inclusive infrastructure with the countries in Asia that can promote stability, prosperity and human rights, and help confront transnational threats, from terrorist cells in the Philippines to avian flu in Indonesia. We will encourage China to play a responsible role as a growing power–to help lead in addressing the common problems of the twenty-first century. We are committed to a "One China" policy, and will continue to support a peaceful resolution of cross-Straits issues. It's time to engage China on common interests like climate change, trade and energy, even as we continue to encourage its shift to a more open society and a market-based economy and promote greater respect for human rights, including freedom of speech, press, assembly, religion,

> "We need to be a 'super smart power' not a 'super power.' That means we need to be a world leader; not a world bully." - *Listening to America* participants, Lebanon, PA

uncensored use of the internet, and Chinese workers' right to freedom of association, as well as the rights of Tibetans.

Strengthen Transatlantic Relations

Europe remains America's indispensable partner. We support the historic project to build a strong European Union that can be an even stronger partner for the United States. NATO has made tremendous strides over the last 15 years, transforming itself from a Cold War security structure into a partnership for peace. But today, NATO's challenge in Afghanistan has exposed a gap between its missions and its capabilities. To close this gap, we will invest more in NATO's mission in Afghanistan and use that investment to leverage our NATO allies to contribute more resources to collective security operations and to invest more in reconstruction and stabilization capabilities. As we promote democracy and accountability in Russia, we must work with the country in areas of common interest–above all, in making sure that nuclear weapons and materials are secure. We are committed to active Presidential leadership in the full implementation of the Irish Good Friday Agreement and St. Andrews Accords. We will seek to strengthen and broaden our strategic partnership with Turkey, end the division of Cyprus, and continue to support a close U.S. relationship with states that seek to strengthen their ties to NATO and the West, such as Georgia and Ukraine.

Stand with Allies and Pursue Diplomacy in the Middle East

For more than three decades, Israelis, Palestinians, Arab leaders, and the rest of the world have looked to America to lead the effort to build the road to a secure and lasting peace. Our starting point must always be our special relationship with Israel, grounded in shared interests and shared values, and a clear, strong, fundamental commitment to the security of Israel, our strongest ally in the region and its only established democracy. That commitment, which requires us to ensure that Israel retains a qualitative edge for its national security and its right to self-defense, is all the more important as we contend with growing threats in the region–a strengthened Iran, a chaotic Iraq, the resurgence of al Qaeda, the reinvigoration of Hamas and Hezbollah. We support the implementation of the memorandum of understanding that pledges $30 billion in assistance to Israel over the next decade to enhance and ensure its security.

It is in the best interests of all parties, including the United States, that we take an active role to help secure a lasting settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict with a democratic, viable Palestinian state dedicated to living in peace and security side by side with the Jewish State of Israel. To do so, we must help Israel identify and strengthen those partners who are truly committed to peace, while isolating those who seek conflict and instability, and standing with Israel against those who seek its destruction. The United States and its Quartet partners should continue to isolate Hamas until it renounces terrorism, recognizes Israel's right to exist, and abides by past agreements. Sustained American leadership for peace and security will require patient efforts and the personal commitment of the president of the United States. The creation of a Palestinian state through final status negotiations, together with an international compensation mechanism, should resolve the issue of Palestinian refugees by allowing them to settle there, rather than in Israel. All understand that it is unrealistic to expect the outcome of

final status negotiations will be a full and complete return to the armistice lines of 1949. Jerusalem is and will remain the capital of Israel. The parties have agreed that Jerusalem is a matter for final status negotiations. It should remain an undivided city accessible to people of all faiths.

Deepen Ties with Emerging Powers

We also will pursue effective collaboration on pressing global issues among all the major powers–including such newly emerging ones as China, India, Russia, Brazil, Nigeria, and South Africa. With India, we will build on the close partnership developed over the past decade. As two of the world's great, multi-ethnic democracies, the U.S. and India are natural strategic allies, and we must work together to advance our common interests and to combat the common threats of the 21st century. We believe it is in the United States' interest that all of these emerging powers and others assume a greater stake in promoting international peace, and respect for human rights, including through their more constructive participation in key global institutions.

Revitalize Global Institutions

To enhance global cooperation on issues from weapons proliferation to climate change, we need stronger international institutions. We believe that the United Nations is indispensable but requires far-reaching reform. The U.N. Secretariat's management practices remain inadequate. Peacekeeping operations are overextended. The new U.N. Human Rights Council remains biased and ineffective. Yet none of these problems will be solved unless America rededicates itself to the organization and its mission. We support reforming key global institutions —such as the U.N. Security Council and the G-8—so they will be more reflective of 21st century realities.

Advancing Democracy, Development and Respect for Human Rights

No country in the world has benefited more from the worldwide expansion of democracy than the United States. Democracies are our best trading partners, our most valuable allies, and the nations with which we share our deepest values. The United States must join with our democratic partners around the world to meet common security challenges and uphold our shared values whenever they are threatened by autocratic practices, coups, human rights abuses or genocide.

Build Democratic Institutions

The Democratic Party reaffirms its longstanding commitment to support democratic institutions and practices worldwide. A more democratic world is a more peaceful and prosperous place. Yet, democracy cannot be imposed by force from the outside; it must be nurtured with moderates on the inside by building democratic institutions.

The United States must be a relentless advocate for democracy and put forward a vision of democracy that goes beyond the ballot box. We will increase our support for strong legislatures, independent judiciaries, free press, vibrant civil society, honest police forces, religious freedom, equality for women and minorities, and the rule of law. In new democracies, we will support the development of civil society and representative institutions that can protect fundamental human rights and improve the quality of life for

all citizens, including independent and democratic unions. In non-democratic countries, we pledge to work with international partners to assist the efforts of those struggling to promote peaceful political reforms. Ongoing funding to the National Endowment for Democracy and other U.S. government-funded democracy programs reflects American values and serves our interests.

Invest in our Common Humanity

To renew American leadership in the world, we will strengthen our common security by investing in our common humanity. In countries wracked by poverty and conflict, citizens long to enjoy freedom from want. Because extremely poor societies and weak states provide optimal breeding grounds for terrorism, disease, and conflict, the United States has a direct national security interest in dramatically reducing global poverty and joining with our allies in sharing more of our riches to help those most in need.

It is time to make the U.N. Millennium Development Goals, which aim to cut extreme poverty in half by 2015, America's goals as well. We need to invest in building capable, democratic states that can establish healthy and educated communities, develop markets, and generate wealth. Such states would also have greater institutional capacities to fight terrorism, halt the spread of deadly weapons, and build health-care infrastructures to prevent, detect, and treat deadly diseases such as HIV/AIDS, malaria, and avian flu.

We will double our annual investment in meeting these challenges to $50 billion by 2012 and ensure that those new resources are directed toward worthwhile goals. But if America is going to help others build more just and secure societies, our trade deals, debt relief, and foreign aid must not come as blank checks. We will couple our support with an insistent call for reform, to combat the corruption that rots societies and governments from within. As part of this new funding, we will create a $2 billion Global Education Fund that will bring the world together in eliminating the global education deficit with the goal of supporting a free, quality basic education for every child in the world. Education increases incomes, reduces poverty, strengthens communities, prevents the spread of disease, improves child and maternal health and empowers women and girls. We cannot hope to shape a world where opportunity outweighs danger unless we ensure that every child everywhere is taught to build and not to destroy.

Our policies will recognize that human rights are women's rights and that women's rights are human rights. Women make up the majority of the poor in the world. So we will expand access to women's' economic development opportunities and seek to expand microcredit. Women produce half of the world's food but only own 1% of the land upon which it is grown. We will work to ensure that women have equal protection under the law and are not denied rights and therefore locked them into poverty.

We will modernize our foreign assistance policies, tools, and operations in an elevated, empowered, consolidated, and streamlined U.S. development agency. Development and diplomacy will be reinforced as key pillars of U.S. foreign policy, and our civilian agencies will be staffed, resourced and equipped to address effectively new global challenges.

American leadership on human rights is essential to making the world safer, more just and more humane. Such leadership must begin with steps to undo the damage of the Bush years. But we also must go much further. We should work with others to shape human rights institutions and instruments tailored to the twenty-first century. We must make the United Nations' human rights organs more objective, energetic and effective. The U.S. must lead global efforts to promote international humanitarian standards and to protect civilians from indiscriminate violence during warfare. We will champion accountability for genocide and war crimes, ending the scourge of impunity for massive human rights abuses. We will stand up for oppressed people from Cuba to North Korea and from Burma to Zimbabwe and Sudan. The United States should renew its own commitment to respect for workers' fundamental human rights by ensuring that our trade partners are required to enforce the ILO's core conventions. We will accord greater weight to human rights, including the rights of women and children, in our relationships with other global powers, recognizing that America's long-term strategic interests are more likely to be advanced when our partners are rights-respecting.

Global Health

Democrats will invest in improving global health. It is a human shame that many of the diseases which compound the problem of global poverty are treatable, but they are yet to be treated.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic is a massive human tragedy. It is also a security risk of the highest order that threatens to plunge nations into chaos. There are an estimated 33 million people across the planet infected with HIV/AIDS, including more than 1 million people in the U.S. Nearly 8,000 people die every day of AIDS. We must do more to fight the global HIV/AIDS pandemic, as well as malaria, tuberculosis, and neglected tropical diseases. We will provide $50 billion over five years to strengthen existing U.S. programs and expand them to new regions of the world, including Southeast Asia, India, and parts of Europe, where the HIV/AIDS burden is growing. We will increase U.S. contributions to the Global Fund to ensure that global efforts to fight endemic disease continue to move ahead.

We also support the adoption of humanitarian licensing policies that ensure medications developed with the U.S. taxpayer dollars are available off patent in developing countries. We will repeal the global gag rule and reinstate funding to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). We will expand access to health care and nutrition for women and reduce the burden of maternal mortality.

We will leverage the engagement of the private sector and private philanthropy to launch Health Infrastructure 2020–a global effort to work with developing countries to invest in the full range of infrastructure needed to improve and protect both American and global health.

Human Trafficking

We will address human trafficking—both labor and sex trafficking–through strong legislation and enforcement to ensure that trafficking victims are protected and traffickers

are brought to justice. We will also address the root causes of human trafficking, including poverty, discrimination, and gender inequality, as well as the demand for prostitution.

Protecting our Security and Saving our Planet

We must end the tyranny of oil in our time. This immediate danger is eclipsed only by the longer-term threat from climate change, which will lead to devastating weather patterns, terrible storms, drought, conflict and famine. That means people competing for food and water in the next fifty years in the very places that have known horrific violence in the last fifty: Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia. That could also mean destructive storms on our shores, and the disappearance of our coastline.

We understand that climate change is not just an economic issue or an environmental concern–this is a national security crisis.

Establish Energy Security

Not since the 1970s has America's national security been so threatened by its energy insecurity, and, as we have learned the hard way over the past eight years, achieving energy security in the 21st century requires far more than simply expending our economic and political resources to keep oil flowing steadily out of unstable and even hostile countries and regions.

Rather, energy security requires stemming the flow of money to oil rich regimes that are hostile to America and its allies; it requires combating climate change and preparing for its impacts both at home and abroad; it requires making international energy markets work for us and not against us; it requires standing up to the oil companies that spend hundreds of millions of dollars on lobbying and political contributions; it requires that we address nuclear safety, waste, and proliferation challenges around the world; and more.

> "The health of our planet is at risk. We believe all citizens of our planet require us as Americans to make real changes in the way we consumer our planet's limited resources, produce energy, and use energy."-*Listening to America* participants, Anne Arundel, MD

Democrats will halt this dangerous trend, and take the necessary steps to achieving energy independence. We will make it a top priority to reduce oil consumption by at least 35%, or 10 million barrels per day, by 2030. This will more than offset the equivalent of oil we are expected to import from OPEC nations in 2030.

Lead to Combat Climate Change

We will lead to defeat the epochal, man-made threat to the planet: climate change. Without dramatic changes, rising sea levels will flood coastal regions around the world, including much of the eastern seaboard. Warmer temperatures and declining rainfall will reduce crop yields, increasing conflict, famine, disease, and poverty. By 2050, famine could displace more than 250 million people worldwide. That means increased instability in some of the most volatile parts of the world.

Never again will we sit on the sidelines, or stand in the way of collective action to tackle this global challenge. Getting our own house in order is only a first step. We will invest in efficient and clean technologies at home while using our assistance policies and export promotions to help developing countries curb deforestation and leapfrog the carbon-energy-intensive stage of development.

We will reach out to the leaders of the biggest carbon emitting nations and ask them to join a new Global Energy Forum that will lay the foundation for the next generation of climate protocols. China has replaced America as the world's largest emitter of greenhouse gases. Clean energy development must be a central focus in our relationships with major countries in Europe and Asia. We need a global response to climate change that includes binding and enforceable commitments to reducing emissions, especially for those that pollute the most: the United States, China, India, the European Union, and Russia.

This challenge is massive, but rising to it will also bring new benefits to America. By 2050, global demand for low-carbon energy could create an annual market worth $500 billion. Meeting that demand would open new frontiers for American entrepreneurs and workers.

Seizing the Opportunity

It is time for a new generation to tell the next great American story. If we act with boldness and foresight, we will be able to tell our grandchildren that this was the time we confronted climate change and secured the weapons that could destroy the human race. This was the time we defeated global terrorists and brought opportunity to forgotten corners of the world. This was the time when we helped forge peace in the Middle East. This was the time when we renewed the America that has led generations of weary travelers from all over the world to find opportunity and liberty and hope on our doorstep.

It was not all that long ago that farmers in Venezuela and Indonesia welcomed American doctors to their villages and hung pictures of John F. Kennedy on their living room walls, when millions, waited every day for a letter in the mail that would grant them the privilege to come to America to study, work, live, or just be free.

We can be this America again. This is our moment to renew the trust and faith of our people–and all people–in an America that battles immediate evils, promotes an ultimate good, and leads the world once more.

III. Renewing the American Community

In local platform hearings around the country, people talked of the need for compassion, empathy, a commitment to our values and the importance of being united in order to take on the challenges and opportunities of the new century. They said that they valued Barack Obama's message, that alongside Americans' famous individualism, there's another ingredient in the American saga: a belief that we are connected to each other. We could all choose to focus on our own concerns and live our lives in a way that tries to keep our individual stories separate from the larger story of America. But that is not who we are. That is not our American story. If there's a child on the south side of Chicago who can't read, that matters to us, even if it's not our child. If there's a senior citizen in Elko, Nevada who has to choose between medicine and the rent, that makes our lives poorer, even if it's not our grandmother. Because our individual salvation depends on collective salvation. Because thinking only about yourself, fulfilling only your immediate wants and needs, betrays a poverty of ambition. Because it is only when we join together in something larger than ourselves that we can write the next great chapter in America's story.

Service

The future of our country will be determined not only by our government and our policies but through the efforts of the American people. That is why we will ask all Americans to be actively involved in meeting the challenges of the new century. In this young century, our military has answered the call to serve, even as that call has come too often. We must now make it possible for all citizens to serve. We will expand AmeriCorps; double the size of the Peace Corps; enable more to serve in the military, create new opportunities for international service, integrate service into primary education and create new opportunities for experienced and retired persons to serve. And if you invest in America, America will invest in you: we will increase support for service-learning, establish tax incentives for college students who serve, and create scholarships for students who pledge to become teachers. We will use the Internet to better match volunteers to service opportunities. In these ways, we will unleash the power of service to meet America's challenges in a uniquely American way.

Immigration

America has always been a nation of immigrants. Over the years, millions of people have come here in the hope that in America, you can make it if you try. Each successive wave of immigrants has contributed to our country's rich culture, economy and spirit. Like the immigrants that came before them, today's immigrants will shape their own destinies and enrich our country.

Nonetheless, our current immigration system has been broken for far too long. We need comprehensive immigration reform, not just piecemeal efforts. We must work together to pass immigration reform in a way that unites this country, not in a way that divides us by playing on our worst instincts and fears. We are committed to pursuing tough, practical, and humane immigration reform immigration reform in the first year of the next administration.

For the millions living here illegally but otherwise playing by the rules, we must require them to come out of the shadows and get right with the law. We support a system that requires undocumented immigrants who are in good standing to pay a fine, pay taxes, learn English, and go to the back of the line for the opportunity to become citizens. They are our neighbors, and we can help them become full tax paying, law-abiding, productive members of society.

At the same time, we cannot continue to allow people to enter the United States undetected, undocumented, and unchecked. The American people are a welcoming and generous people, but those who enter our country's borders illegally, and those who employ them, disrespect the rule of the law. We need to secure our borders, and support additional personnel, infrastructure and technology on the border and at our ports of entry. We need additional Customs and Border Protection agents equipped with better technology and real-time intelligence. We need to dismantle human smuggling organizations, combating the crime associated with this trade. We also need to do more to promote economic development in migrant-sending nations, to reduce incentives to come to the United States illegally. And we need to crack down on employers who hire undocumented immigrants, especially those who pay their workers less than the minimum wage. It's a problem when we only enforce our laws against the immigrants themselves, with raids that are ineffective, tear apart families and leave people detained without adequate access to counsel. We realize that employers need a method to verify whether their employees are legally eligible to work in the U.S., and will ensure that our system is accurate, fair to legal workers, safeguards people's privacy, and cannot be used to discriminate against workers.

We must also improve the legal immigration system, and make our nation's naturalization process fair and accessible to the thousands of legal permanent residents who are eager to become full Americans. We should fix the dysfunctional immigration bureaucracy that hampers family reunification, the cornerstone of our immigration policy for years. Given the importance of both keeping families together and supporting American businesses, we will increase the number of immigration visas for family members of people living here and for immigrants who meet the demand for jobs that employers cannot fill, as long as appropriate labor market protections and standards are in place. We will fight discrimination against Americans who have always played by our immigration rules but are sometimes treated as if they had not.

Hurricane Katrina

For many in America, Hurricane Katrina conjures up the memory of a time when America's government failed its citizens. When the winds blew and the floodwaters came, we learned that for all of our wealth and power, something wasn't right with Washington. Our government’s response during Hurricane Katrina is a national shame– and yet three years later, the government has still failed to keep its promise to rebuild.

The people of New Orleans and the Gulf Coast are heroes for returning and rebuilding, and they shouldn’t face these challenges alone. We will partner with the people of the

Gulf Coast to assist the victims of Hurricane Katrina and restore the region economically. We will create jobs and training opportunities for returning and displaced workers and contracting opportunities for local businesses to help create stronger, safer, and more equitable communities. We will increase funding for affordable housing and home ownership opportunities for returning families, workers, and residents moving out of unsafe trailers. We will reinvest in infrastructure in New Orleans: we will construct levees that work, fight crime by rebuilding local police departments and courthouses, invest and hospitals and rebuild the public school system.

> "Every American community and city is vulnerable, as recent floods in the Midwest and fires and earthquakes in California have reminded us. All citizens and elected leaders must understand that *crisis du jour* could occur in your city today or tomorrow!"- *Women of the Storm*, a non-partisan grassroots civic organization made up of diverse women from metropolitan New Orleans and South Louisiana

Preventing and Responding to Future Catastrophes

We will also work to prevent future catastrophic response failures, whether the emergency comes from hurricanes, earthquakes, floods, tornadoes, wild fires, drought, bridge collapses, or any other natural or man-made disaster. Maintaining our levees and dams is not pork barrel spending—it is an urgent priority. We will fix governmental agencies like the Federal Emergency Management Agency, ensure that they are staffed with professionals, and create integrated communication and response plans. We will reform the Small Business Administration bureaucracy, and develop a real National Response Plan.

We will develop a National Catastrophic Insurance Fund to offer an affordable insurance mechanism for high-risk catastrophes that no single private insurer can cover by itself for fear of bankruptcy. This will allow states to deal comprehensively with the economic dislocation of natural disasters.

Stewardship of Our Planet and Natural Resources

Global climate change is the planet's greatest threat, and our response will determine the very future of life on this earth. Despite the efforts of our current Administration to deny the science of climate change and the need to act, we still believe that America can be earth's best hope, not its greatest impediment. We will implement a market-based cap-and-trade system to reduce carbon emissions by the amount scientists say is necessary to avoid catastrophic change and we will set interim targets along the way to ensure that we meet our goal. We will invest in advanced energy technologies, to build the clean energy economy and create millions of new, good, "Green Collar" American jobs. Because the environment is a truly global concern, the U.S. must be a leader in combating climate change around the world, including exporting climate-friendly technologies to developing countries. We will use innovative measures to dramatically improve the energy efficiency of buildings, including establishing a grant program for early adopters and providing incentives for energy conservation. We will encourage local initiatives, sustainable communities, personal responsibility, and environmental stewardship and education nationwide.

We will help local communities in the American West preserve water to meet their fast growing needs. We support a comprehensive solution for restoring our national treasures—such as the Great Lakes, Everglades and Chesapeake Bay—including expanded scientific research and protections for species and habitats there.. We will reinvigorate the Environmental Protection Agency so that we can work with communities to reduce air and water pollution and protect our children from environmental toxins, and never sacrifice science to politics. We will protect Nevada and its communities from the high-level nuclear waste dump at Yucca Mountain, which has not been proven to be safe by sound science We will restore the "polluter pays" principle to fund the cleanup of the most polluted sites, so that those who cause environmental problems pay to fix them.

Federal Lands

We will create a new vision for conservation that works with local communities to conserve our existing publicly-owned lands while dramatically expanding investments in conserving and restoring forests, grasslands, and wetlands across America for generations to come. Unlike the current Administration, we will reinvest in our nation's forests by providing the federal agencies with resources to reduce the threat of wildland fires, promote sustainable forest product industries for rural economic development and ensure that national resources are in place to respond to catastrophic wildland fires. We will treat our national parks with the same respect that millions of families show each year when they visit. We will recognize that our parks are national treasures, protected for special values, and will ensure that they are protected as part of the overall natural system so they are here for generations to come. We are committed to conserving the lands used by hunters and anglers, and we will open millions of new acres of land to public hunting and fishing.

Partnerships with States

Given the economic crisis across the country, states today face serious difficulties. More than half of our states face a combined billions of dollars in shortfalls. As a result, states have had to innovate and take matters into their own hands—and they have done an extraordinary job. Yet they should not have to do it alone. We will provide significant and immediate temporary funding to state and local governments. We will give the states a partner in the federal government, and a president who understand that prosperity comes not only from Wall Street and Washington, but from the perseverance of the states and the American people.

Metropolitan and Urban Policy

We believe that strong cities are the building blocks of strong regions, and strong regions are essential for a strong America. For the past eight years, the current Administration has ignored urban areas. We look forward to greater partnership with urban America. We will strengthen federal commitment to cities, including by creating a new White House Office on Urban Policy and fully funding the Community Development Block Grant. To help regional business development we will double federal funding for basic research, expand the deployment of broadband technology, increase access to capital for businesses in underserved areas, create a national network of public-private business incubators; and provide grants to support regional innovation clusters. Since businesses can only function

when workers can get to their place of employment, we will invest in public transportation including rail, expand transportation options for low-income communities, and strengthen core infrastructure like our roads and bridges. We will provide cities the support they need to perform public safety and national security functions, reinvest in Community Oriented Policing Services, and we will help keep children off the streets by supporting expanded after school and summer opportunities. Finally, we will work to make cities greener and more livable by training employees to work in skilled clean technologies industries, improving the environmental efficiency of city buildings, and taking smart growth principles into account when designing transportation.

Firearms

We recognize that the right to bear arms is an important part of the American tradition, and we will preserve Americans' continued Second Amendment right to own and use firearms. We believe that the right to own firearms is subject to reasonable regulation, but we know that what works in Chicago may not work in Cheyenne. We can work together to enact and enforce common-sense laws and improvements, like closing the gun show loophole, improving our background check system and reinstating the assault weapons ban, so that guns do not fall into the hands of terrorists or criminals. Acting responsibly and with respect for differing views on this issue, we can both protect the constitutional right to bear arms and keep our communities and our children safe.

Faith

We honor the central place of faith in our lives. Like our Founders, we believe that our nation, our communities, and our lives are made vastly stronger and richer by faith and the countless acts of justice and mercy it inspires. We believe that change comes not from the top-down, but from the bottom-up, and that few are closer to the people than our churches, synagogues, temples, and mosques. To face today's challenges–from saving our planet to ending poverty—we need all hands on deck. Faith-based groups are not a replacement for government or secular non-profit programs, rather, they are yet another sector working to meet challenges of the 21st century. We will empower grassroots faith-based and community groups to help meet challenges like poverty, ex-offender reentry, and illiteracy. At the same time, we can ensure that these partnerships do not endanger First Amendment protections and that public funds are not used to proselytize or discriminate. We will also ensure that taxpayer dollars are only used on programs that actually work.

The Arts

Investment in the arts is an investment in our creativity and cultural heritage, in our diversity, in our communities, and in our humanity. We support art in schools and increased public funding for the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities. We support the cultural exchange of artists around the world, spreading democracy and renewing America's status as a cultural and artistic center.

Americans with Disabilities

We will once again reclaim our role as world leaders in protecting the rights of people

with disabilities. We will make the United States a signatory to the U.N. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities—the first human rights treaty approved by the U.N. in the 21st century. We will ensure there is sufficient funding to empower Americans with disabilities to succeed in school and beyond. We will fully fund and increase staffing for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. We will restore dignity for Americans with disabilities by signing the Community Choice Act into law, which will allow them the choice of living in their communities rather than being warehoused in nursing homes or other institutions.

> "I was a college student when I became disabled and had to ready myself for the workforce. In spite of my grades, extra-curricular activities and achievements, I received no job offers after 30 initial interviews and 2 second round interviews. I know my story is like millions of other people with disabilities who desperately wish to work and are qualified to do so." - Carmen Jones, Solutions Marketing Group

Children and Families

If we are to renew America, we must do a better job of investing in the next generation of Americans. For parents, our first and most sacred responsibility is to support our children: we must set an example of excellence, turn off the TV, and help our children with their homework. But we must also support parents as they strive to raise their children in a new era. We must make it easier for working parents to spend time with their families when they need to. We will make an unprecedented national investment to guarantee that every child has access to high-quality Pre-K programs, and access to Head Start and Early Head Start and we will help pay for child care. We will ensure that every child has health insurance, invest in playgrounds to promote healthy and active lifestyles, and protect children from lead poisoning in their homes and toys. Improving maternal health also improves children's health, so we will provide access to home visits by medical professionals to low-income expectant first-time mothers. We must protect our most vulnerable children, by supporting and supplementing our struggling foster care system, enhancing adoption programs, and protecting children from violence and neglect. Online and on TV, we will give parents tools to block content they find objectionable. We also must recognize that caring for family members and managing a household is real and valuable work.

Fatherhood

Too many fathers are missing–missing from too many lives and too many homes. Children who grow up without a father are five times more likely to live in poverty and are more likely to commit crime, drop out of school, abuse drugs and end up in prison. We need more fathers to realize that responsibility does not end at conception. We need them to understand that what makes a man is not the ability to have a child–it's the courage to raise one. We will support fathers by providing transitional training to get jobs, removing tax penalties on married families, and expanding maternity and paternity leave. We will reward those who are responsibly supporting their children by giving them a tax credit, crack down on men who avoid child support payments, and we will ensure that payments go directly to families instead of bureaucracies.

Seniors

We will protect and strengthen Medicare by cutting costs, protecting seniors from fraud, and fixing Medicare's prescription drug program. We will repeal the prohibition on negotiating prescription drug prices, ban drug companies from paying generic producers to refrain from entering drug markets and eliminate drug company interference with generic competition–and dedicate all of the savings from these measures towards closing the donut hole. We will end special preferences for insurance companies and private plans like Medicare Advantage to force them to compete on a level playing field.

We will take steps to ensure that our seniors have meaningful long-term care options that are consistent with their individual needs, including the option of home care. We believe that we must pay caregivers a fair wage and train more nurses and health care workers so as to improve the availability and quality of long-term care. We must reform the financing of long-term care to ease the burden on seniors and their families. We will safeguard social security. We will develop new retirement plans and pension protections that will give Americans a secure, portable way to save for retirement. We will ensure a safe and dignified retirement.

Choice

The Democratic Party strongly and unequivocally supports *Roe v. Wade* and a woman's right to choose a safe and legal abortion, regardless of ability to pay, and we oppose any and all efforts to weaken or undermine that right.

The Democratic Party also strongly supports access to affordable family planning services and comprehensive age-appropriate sex education which empowers people to make informed choices and live healthy lives. We also recognize that such health care and education help reduce the number of unintended pregnancies and thereby also reduce the need for abortions.

The Democratic Party also strongly supports a woman's decision to have a child by ensuring access to and availability of programs for pre- and post-natal health care, parenting skills, income support, and caring adoption programs.

Criminal Justice

We will support communities as they work to save their residents from the violence that plagues our streets. We will reverse the policy of cutting resources for the brave men and women who protect our communities every day. At a time when our nation's officers are being asked both to provide traditional law enforcement services and to help protect the homeland, taking police off of the street is neither tough nor smart; we reject this disastrous approach. We support and will restore funding to our courageous police officers and will ensure that they are equipped with the best technology, equipment and innovative strategies to prevent and fight crimes.

We will end the dangerous cycle of violence, especially youth violence with proven community-based law enforcement such as the Community Oriented Policing Services, and other community programs. We will reduce recidivism in our neighborhoods by supporting local prison-to-work programs. We will continue to fight inequalities in our

criminal justice system. We must help state, local and tribal law enforcement work together to combat and prevent drug crime and drug and alcohol abuse, which are a blight on our communities. We will restore funding for the Byrne Justice Assistance Grant Program and expand the use of drug courts and rehabilitation programs for first-time, non-violent drug offenders.

We support the rights of victims to be respected, to be heard, and to be compensated.

Ending violence against women must be a top priority. We will create a special advisor to the president regarding violence against women. We will increase funding to domestic violence and sexual assault prevention programs. We will strengthen sexual assault and domestic violence laws, support the Violence Against Women Act, and provide job security to survivors. Our foreign policy will be sensitive to issues of aggression against women around the world.

A More Perfect Union

We believe in the essential American ideal that we are not constrained by the circumstances of birth but can make of our lives what we will. Unfortunately, for too many, that ideal is not a reality. When our laws, our leaders or our government are out of alignment with our ideals, the dissent and activism of ordinary Americans becomes the truest expression of patriotism. We have more work to do. Democrats will fight to end discrimination based on race, sex, ethnicity, national origin, language, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, age and disability in every corner of our country, because that's the America we believe in.

We all have to do our part to lift up this country, and that means changing hearts, changing minds, and making sure that every American is treated equally under the law. We will restore professionalism over partisanship at the Department of Justice, and staff the civil rights division with civil rights lawyers, not ideologues. We will restore vigorous federal enforcement of civil rights laws in order to provide every American an equal chance at employment, housing, health, contracts, and pay. We are committed to banning racial, ethnic, and religious profiling and requiring federal, state and local enforcement agencies to take steps to eliminate the practice.

We are committed to ensuring full equality for women: We reaffirm our support for the Equal Rights Amendment, recommit to enforcing Title IX, and will urge passage of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. We will pursue a unified foreign and domestic policy that promotes civil rights and human rights, for women and minorities, at home and abroad. We will pass the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act, because hate crimes desecrate sacred spaces and belittle all good people. We will restore and support the White House Initiative on Asian-American and Pacific Islanders, including enforcement on disaggregation of Census data. We will make the Census more culturally sensitive, including outreach and increased confidentiality protections to ensure accurate counting of the growing Latino population. We will sign the U.N. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and restore the original intent of the Americans with Disabilities Act. That is the America we believe

in.

It is not enough to look back in wonder of how far we have come; those who came before us did not strike a blow against injustice only so that we would allow injustice to fester in our time. That means removing the barriers of prejudice and misunderstanding that still exist in America. We support the full inclusion of all families in the life of our nation, and support equal responsibility, benefits, and protections. We will enact a comprehensive bipartisan employment non-discrimination act. We oppose the Defense of Marriage Act and all attempts to use this issue to divide us.

But it is no good to be able to ride the bus when you can't afford the bus fare. We will work to provide real opportunities for all Americans suffering from disadvantage; we will pioneer new policies and remedies against poverty and violence that address real human needs and we will close the achievement gap in education and provide every child a world-class education. We support affirmative action, including in federal contracting and higher education, to make sure that those locked out of the doors of opportunity will be able to walk through those doors in the future. If we are to live up to our founding promise of equality for all, we must make sure that opportunity is open to all Americans.

IV. Renewing American Democracy

Americans of every political stripe are hungry for a new kind of government. We want a government that favors common sense over ideology, honesty over spin, that worries less about losing the next election and more about winning the battles we owe to the next generation.

In local platform hearings, the over 20,000 Americans who attended over 1600 hearings demonstrated their commitment to reasserting government of, by and for the people. Democrats want to continue the momentum of the election. Only by doing so can we bring the change necessary to restore the promise of America.

The government we create will open up democracy to the people and protect our civil liberties. We'll invite the service and participation of American citizens, and use the tools of government and technology to lead us into a new era of connectedness, teamwork, and progress. A Barack Obama Administration will make it clear to the special interests that their days of setting the agenda in Washington are over, because the American people are not the problem in the 21st century—they are the solution. We'll make every vote count, because in America, everyone's voice matters in the political process.

Open, Accountable and Ethical Government

In Barack Obama's Administration, we will open up the doors of democracy. We will create a new "open-source" government, using technology to make government more transparent, accountable and inclusive. Rather than obstruct people's use of the Freedom of Information Act, we will require that agencies conduct significant business in public and release all relevant information unless an agency reasonably foresees harm to a

protected interest.

We will lift the veil of secret deals in Washington by publishing searchable, online information about federal grants, contracts, earmarks, loans, and lobbyist contacts with government officials. We will make government data available online and will have an online video archive of significant agency meetings. We will put all non-emergency bills that Congress has passed online for five days, to allow the American public to review and comment on them before they are signed into law. We will require Cabinet officials to have periodic national online town hall meetings to discuss issues before their agencies.

Implementing our Party's agenda will require running an efficient government that gets results. We will develop a comprehensive management agenda to prevent operational breakdowns in government and ensure that government provides the level of service that the American people deserve. Because we understand that good government depends on good people, we will work to rebuild and reengage our federal workforce. We will make government a more attractive place to work. Our hiring will be based only on qualification and experience, and not on ideology or party affiliation. We will pay for our new spending, eliminate waste in government programs, demand and measure results, and stop funding programs that don't work.

We are committed to a participatory government. We will use the most current technology available to improve the quality of government decision-making and make government less beholden to special interest groups and lobbyists. We will enhance the flow of information between citizens and government—in both directions—by involving the public in the work of government agencies. We will not simply solicit opinions, but will also use new technology to tap into the vast expertise of the American citizenry, for the benefit of government and our democracy.

> "We the people need to be citizen participants, not consumers of government." - *Listening to America* participants, Littleton, NH

Americans want real reform that will help them pay their medical bills and put the country on the path to energy independence. They are tired of lobbyists standing in their way. So we'll end the abuse of no-bid contracts and tell the drug companies and the oil companies and the insurance industry that, while they may get a seat at the table in Washington, they don't get to buy every chair. We will institute a gift ban so that no lobbyist can curry favor with the Administration. We will close the revolving door that has allowed people to use their position in the Administration as a stepping-stone to further their lobbying careers. We support campaign finance reform to reduce the influence of moneyed special interests, including public financing of campaigns combined with free television and radio time. As a national party, we will not take any contributions from Political Action Committees during this election.

Reclaiming Our Constitution and Our Liberties

As we combat terrorism, we must not sacrifice the American values we are fighting to

protect. In recent years, we've seen an Administration put forward a false choice between the liberties we cherish and the security we demand. The Democratic Party rejects this dichotomy. We will restore our constitutional traditions, and recover our nation's founding commitment to liberty under law.

We support constitutional protections and judicial oversight on any surveillance program involving Americans. We will review the current Administration's warrantless wiretapping program. We reject illegal wire-tapping of American citizens.

We reject the use of national security letters to spy on citizens who are not suspected of a crime. We reject the tracking of citizens who do nothing more than protest a misguided war. We reject torture. We reject sweeping claims of "inherent" presidential power. We will revisit the Patriot Act and overturn unconstitutional executive decisions issued during the past eight years. We will not use signing statements to nullify or undermine duly enacted law. And we will ensure that law-abiding Americans of any origin, including Arab-Americans and Muslim-Americans, do not become the scapegoats of national security fears.

We believe that our Constitution, our courts, our institutions, and our traditions work.

In its operations overseas, while claiming to spread freedom throughout the world, the current Administration has tragically helped give rise to a new generation of potential adversaries who threaten to make America less secure. We will provide our intelligence and law enforcement agencies with the tools to hunt down and take out terrorists without undermining our Constitution, our freedom, and our privacy.

To build a freer and safer world, we will lead in ways that reflect the decency and aspirations of the American people. We will not ship away prisoners in the dead of night to be tortured in far-off countries, or detain without trial or charge prisoners who can and should be brought to justice for their crimes, or maintain a network of secret prisons to jail people beyond the reach of the law. We will respect the time-honored principle of habeas corpus, the seven century-old right of individuals to challenge the terms of their own detention that was recently reaffirmed by our Supreme Court. We will close the detention camp in Guantanamo Bay, the location of so many of the worst constitutional abuses in recent years. With these necessary changes, the attention of the world will be directed where it belongs: on what terrorists have done to us, not on how we treat suspects.

We recognize what leaders on the front lines of the struggle against terrorism have long known: to win this fight, we must maintain the moral high ground. When millions around the world see America living up to its highest ideals, we win friends and allies in this struggle for our safety and our lives, and our enemies lose ground.

For our Judiciary, we will select and confirm judges who are men and women of unquestionable talent and character, who firmly respect the rule of law, and who listen to and are respectful of different points of view and who represent the diversity of America.

We support the appointment of judges who respect our system of checks and balances and the separation of power among the Executive Branch, Congress, and the Judiciary– and who understand that the Constitution protects not only the powerful, but also the disadvantaged and the powerless.

Our Constitution is not a nuisance. It is the foundation of our democracy. It makes freedom and self-governance possible, and helps to protect our security. The Democratic Party will restore our Constitution to its proper place in our government and return our Nation to our best traditions–including our commitment to government by law, and not by men.

Voting Rights

Voting rights are fundamental rights because they are protective of all other rights. We will work to fully protect and enforce the fundamental Constitutional right of every American vote—to ensure that the Constitution's promise is fully realized. We will fully fund the Help America Vote Act and work to fulfill the promise of election reform, including fighting to end long lines at voting booths and ensuring that all registration materials, voting materials, polling places and voting machines are truly accessible to seniors, Americans with disabilities, and citizens with limited English proficiency. We will call for a national standard for voting that includes voter-verified paper ballots. We will vigorously enforce our voting rights laws instead of making them tools of partisan political agendas; we oppose laws that require identification in order to vote or register to vote, which create discriminatory barriers to the right to vote and disenfranchise many eligible voters; we oppose tactics which purge eligible voters from voter rolls. We are committed to passing the "Count Every Vote Act." Finally, we will enact legislation that establishes harsh penalties for those who engage in voter intimidation and establishes a process for providing accurate information to misinformed voters so they can cast their votes in time.

Partnership with Civic Institutions

Social entrepreneurs and leading nonprofit organizations are assisting schools, lifting families out of poverty, filling health care gaps and inspiring others to lead change in their own communities. To support these results-oriented innovators, we will create a Social Investment Fund Network that invests in ideas that work, tests their impact and expands the most successful programs. We will create an office to coordinate government and non-profit efforts.

District of Columbia

Our civil rights leaders sacrificed too much over the years for us to tolerate denial to the nearly 600,000 residents of our nation's capital of the benefits of full citizenship, especially the vote, that are accorded to citizens of every state.

Tribal Sovereignty

American Indian and Alaska Native tribes have always been sovereign, self-governing communities, and we affirm their inherent right to self-government as well as the unique government-to-government relationship they share with the United States. In exchange

for millions of acres of land, our nation pledged to provide certain services in perpetuity; we will honor our nation's treaty and trust obligations by increasing resources for economic development, health care, Indian education, and other important services. We will respect American Indian cultural rights and sacred places. We will reexamine the legal framework that allows extreme rates of violent crime in Indian countries; we will create a White House advisor on Indian Affairs; and we will host an annual summit with Indian leaders.

We support the efforts for self-determination and sovereignty of Native Hawaiians, consistent with principles enumerated in the Native Hawaiian Sovereignty Act.

Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the Northern Mariana Islands and the U.S. Virgin Islands

We believe that the people of Puerto Rico have the right to pursue the political status of their choice, obtained through a fair, neutral and democratic process of self-determination. The White House and Congress will work with all groups in Puerto Rico to enable the question of Puerto Rico's status to be resolved during the next four years. We also believe that economic conditions in Puerto Rico call for effective and equitable programs to maximize job creation and financial investment. Furthermore, in order to provide fair assistance to those in greatest need, the U.S. citizens in Puerto Rico should receive treatment under federal programs that is comparable to that of citizens in the States, without the current tight restrictions on Medicaid funding and with equitable participation in other federal health care assistance programs and programs providing refundable tax credit to working families.

We support full self-government and self-determination for the people of Guam, American Samoa, the Northern Mariana Islands, and the Virgin Islands, and their right to decide their future status. We will seek out input from Guam on relevant military matters and we acknowledge the unique health care challenges that Pacific Island communities face. For all those who live under our flag, we support strong economic development and fair and equitable treatment under federal programs.