

THE DRAFT 2008 DEMOCRATIC
NATIONAL PLATFORM

**RENEWING
AMERICA'S
PROMISE**



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by the
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Arizona Governor Janet Napolitano, Chair

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Preamble

1
2
3 We come together at a defining moment in the history of our nation. America is the
4 country that led the 20th Century, built a thriving middle class, defeated fascism and
5 communism, and provided bountiful opportunity to many. We Democrats have a special
6 commitment to this promise of America. We believe that each American, whatever their
7 background or station in life, should have the chance to get a good education, to work at a
8 good job with good wages, to raise and provide for a family, to live in safe surroundings,
9 and to retire with dignity and security. We believe that quality and affordable health care
10 is a basic right. We believe that each succeeding generation should have the opportunity,
11 through hard work, service and sacrifice, to enjoy a brighter future than the last.

12
13 But today, we are at a crossroads. As we meet, we are in the sixth year of a two-front
14 war. Our economy is struggling. Our planet is in peril.

15
16 A great nation now demands that its leaders abandon the politics of partisan division and
17 find creative solutions to promote the common good. A people that prizes candor,
18 accountability and fairness insists that a government for the people must level with them
19 and champion the interests of all American families. A land of historic resourcefulness
20 has lost its patience with elected officials who have failed to lead.

21
22 It is time for a change. We can do better.

23
24 And so, Democrats –through the most open platform process in history –are reaching out
25 today to Republicans and Independents who hunger for a new direction and a reason to
26 hope. Today, at a defining moment in our history, the Democratic Party resolves to renew
27 America’s promise.

28
29 Over the past seven years, our nation's leaders have failed us. Sometimes they invited
30 calamity, rushing us into an ill-considered war in Iraq. But other times, when calamity
31 arrived in the form of hurricanes or financial storms, they sat back, doing too little too
32 late, and too poorly. The list of failures of this Administration is historic.

33
34 The American Dream is at risk. Incomes are down and foreclosures are up. Millions of
35 our fellow citizens have no health insurance while families working longer hours are
36 pressed for time to care for their children and aging parents. Gas and home heating costs
37 are squeezing seniors and working families alike. We are less secure and less respected
38 in the world. After September 11, we could have built the foundation for a new
39 American century, but instead we instigated an unnecessary war in Iraq before finishing a
40 necessary war in Afghanistan. Careless policies, inept stewardship and the broken politics
41 of this Administration, have taken their toll on our economy, our security and our
42 reputation.

43
44
45 But even worse than the conditions we find ourselves in are the false promises that
46 brought us here. The Republican leadership said they would keep us safe, but they

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

8
9 These are not just policy failures. They are failures of a broken politics –a politics that
10 rewards self-interest over the common interest and the short-term over the long-term, that
11 puts our government at the service of the powerful. A politics that creates a state-of-the-
12 art system for doling out favors and shuts out the voice of the American people.

13
14 So, we come together not only to replace this President and his party –and not only to
15 offer policies that will undo the damage they have wrought. Today, we pledge a return to
16 core moral principles like stewardship, service to others, personal responsibility, shared
17 sacrifice and a fair shot for all –values that emanate from the integrity and optimism of
18 our Founders and generations of Americans since. Today, we Democrats offer leaders -
19 from the White House to the State House – worthy of this country’s trust.

20
21 We will start by renewing the American Dream for a new era -- with the same new hope
22 and new ideas that propelled Franklin Delano Roosevelt towards the New Deal and John
23 F. Kennedy to the New Frontier. We will provide immediate relief to working people
24 who have lost their jobs, families who have lost their homes, and people who have lost
25 their way. We will invest in America again –in world-class public education, in our
26 infrastructure, and in green technology –so that our economy can generate the good,
27 high-paying jobs of the future. We will end the outrage of unaffordable, unavailable
28 health care, protect Social Security and help Americans save for retirement. We will
29 return the American economy to the values that made it great—fairness and opportunity
30 for all – and we will harness American ingenuity to free this nation from the tyranny of
31 oil.

32
33 The Democratic Party believes that there is no more important priority than renewing
34 American leadership on the world stage. This will require diplomatic skill as capable as
35 our military might. Instead of refusing to confront our most pressing threats, we will use
36 all elements of American power to keep us safe, prosperous and free. Instead of
37 alienating our nation from the world, we will enable America –once again –to lead.

38
39 For decades, Americans have been told to act for ourselves, by ourselves, on our own.
40 Democrats reject this recipe for division and failure. We commit to renewing our
41 American community by recognizing that solutions to our greatest challenges can only be
42 rooted in common ground and the strength of our civic life. The American people do not
43 want government to solve all our problems; we know that personal responsibility,
44 character, imagination, diligence, hard work and faith ultimately determine individual
45 achievement. But we also know that at every turning point in our nation’s history, we
46 have demonstrated our love of country by uniting to overcome our challenges—whether

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

9
 10 Americans have been promised change before. And too often we have been disappointed.
 11 We believe we must change not just our policies, but our politics as well. We cannot
 12 expect to keep doing the same things and expect to get different results. That is why
 13 today we come together not only to prevent a third Bush term. Today, we pledge to renew
 14 American democracy by promoting the use of new technologies to make it easier for
 15 Americans to participate in their government. We will shine a light on government
 16 spending and Washington lobbying –so that every American is empowered to be a
 17 watchdog and a whistle blower. We may not always agree, but we will work together
 18 with the respect and good will needed to move this country forward. There can be no
 19 Republican or Democratic ideas, only policies that are smart and right and fair and good
 20 for America –and those that aren’t. We will form a government as decent, candid,
 21 purposeful and compassionate as the American people themselves.

22
 23 This is the essence of what it means to be a patriot: not only to declare our love of this
 24 nation, but to show it –by our deeds, our priorities and the commitments we keep.

25
 26 If we choose to change, just imagine what we can do. What makes America great has
 27 never been its perfection, but the belief that it can be made better. And that people who
 28 love this country can change it.

29
 30 We have a choice to make. We can choose to stay the current failed course. Or we can
 31 choose a path that builds upon the best of who and what we are, that reflects our highest
 32 values. We can have more of the last eight years, or we can rise together and create a
 33 new kind of government. The time for change has come, and America must seize it.

34 35 **I. Renewing the American Dream**

36
 37 For months the state of our economy has dominated the headlines–and the news has not
 38 been good. The sub-prime lending debacle has sent the housing market into a tailspin,
 39 and many Americans have lost their homes. By early August, the economy had shed
 40 463,000 jobs over seven straight months of job loss. Health, gas and food prices are rising
 41 dramatically.

42
 43 But the problem goes deeper than the current crisis. Families have seen their incomes go
 44 down even as they have been working longer hours and as productivity has grown. At the
 45 same time, health costs have risen while companies have shed health insurance coverage

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

3
4 We are living through an age of fundamental economic transformation. Technology has
5 changed the way we live and the way the world does business. The collapse of the Soviet
6 Union and the advance of capitalism have vanquished old challenges to America's global
7 leadership, but new challenges have emerged. Today, jobs and industries can move to any
8 country with an Internet connection and willing workers.

9
10 Leadership on these issues has been sorely lacking these past eight years. In the 1990s,
11 under Bill Clinton's leadership, employment and incomes grew and we built up a budget
12 surplus. However, our current President pursued misguided policies, missed
13 opportunities, and maintained a rigid, ideological adherence to discredited ideas. Our
14 surplus is now a deficit, and almost a decade into this century, we still have no coherent
15 national strategy to compete in a global economy. The price tag for these failures is being
16 passed on to our families.

17
18 From the mother working two jobs to pay the bills and the couple struggling to care for
19 young children and aging parents, to the tens of millions of Americans without health
20 insurance and the workers who have seen their jobs shipped overseas, too many
21 Americans have been invisible to our current President and his party for too long. The
22 people who do the work in America have never been invisible to the Democratic Party. It
23 is time to make the American Dream real for them again.

24
25 We need a government that stands up for the hopes, values, and interests of working
26 people, and gives everyone willing to work hard the chance to make the most of their
27 God-given potential.

28
29 In platform hearings around the country, Americans reaffirmed our belief that this great
30 nation can compete—and succeed—in the 21st century but only if we take a new approach.
31 One that is both innovative and faithful to the basic economic principles that made this
32 country great. We Democrats want—and we hereby pledge—a government led by Barack
33 Obama that looks out for families in the new economy with health care, retirement
34 security, and help, especially in bad times. Investment back in our country—in energy,
35 education, infrastructure, science. A ladder of opportunity for all. Democrats see these as
36 the pillars of a more competitive and fair economy that will allow all Americans to take
37 advantage of the opportunities of our new era.

38
39 **Jumpstart the Economy and Provide Middle Class Americans Immediate Relief**

40 We will provide an immediate energy rebate to American families struggling with the
41 record price of gasoline and the skyrocketing cost of other necessities. We will devote
42 \$50 billion to jumpstarting the economy, helping economic growth, and preventing
43 another 1 million jobs from being lost. This will include assistance to states and localities
44 to prevent them from having to cut their vital services like education, health care and
45 infrastructure. We will quickly implement the housing bill recently passed by Congress
46 and ensure that states and localities that have been hard-hit by the housing crisis can

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

8 9 **Empowering Families for a New Era**

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

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

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

25 26 **Affordable, Quality Health Care Coverage for All Americans**

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

37
 38 The American people understand that good health is the foundation of individual
 39 achievement and economic prosperity. Ensuring quality, affordable health care for every
 40 single American is essential to children's educations, workers' productivity and
 41 businesses' competitiveness. We believe that covering all is not just a moral imperative,
 42 but is necessary to making our health system workable and affordable. Doing so would
 43 end cost-shifting from the uninsured, promote prevention and wellness, stop insurance
 44 discrimination, help eliminate health care disparities, and achieve savings through

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

6
7 “I worked for a manufacturer for
8 over 15 years. My wages stayed
9 the same for six years as I found
10 myself paying more and more for
11 health care. Co-pays went up,
12 deductibles went up. In late
13 2006, the company sent my
14 production job to Mexico and
15 china and I was laid off. I could
16 not afford COBRA premiums. I
17 am two years away from
18 Medicare and unemployed and
19 on the “faith based” healthcare
20 system—I meaning I just pray I
21 don’t get sick. Oh yeah, and I’m
22 a cancer survivor and I haven’t
23 done the yearly checkup in three
24 years.” –Dorene in Veneta,
25 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.

24 Families and individuals should have the option of keeping the coverage they have or
25 choosing from a wide array of health insurance plans, including many private health
26 insurance options and a public plan. Coverage should be made affordable for all
27 Americans with direct financial assistance through tax credits and other means.

28
29 *Shared Responsibility.* Health care should be a shared responsibility between employers,
30 workers, insurers, providers and government. All Americans should have coverage they
31 can afford; employers should have incentives to provide coverage to their workers;
32 insurers and providers should ensure high quality affordable care; and the government
33 should ensure that health insurance is affordable and provides meaningful coverage. As
34 affordable coverage is made available, individuals
35 should purchase health insurance and take steps to lead
36 healthy lives.

37
38 *An End to Insurance Discrimination.* Health insurance
39 plans should accept all applicants and be prohibited
40 from charging different prices based on pre-existing
41 conditions. They should compete on the cost of
42 providing health care and the quality of that care, not
43 their ability to avoid or over-charge people who are or
44 may get sick. Premiums collected by insurers should be
45 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

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

3
4 *Meaningful Benefits.* Families should have health insurance coverage similar to what
5 Members of Congress enjoy. They should not be forced to bear the burden of
6 skyrocketing premiums, unaffordable deductibles or benefit limits that leave them at
7 financial risk when they become sick. We will finally achieve long-overdue mental health
8 and addiction treatment parity.

9
10 *An Emphasis on Prevention and Wellness.* Chronic diseases account for 70 percent of the
11 nation's overall health care spending. We need to promote healthy lifestyles and disease
12 prevention and management in places of employment and in school. All Americans
13 should be empowered to promote wellness and have access to preventive services to
14 impede the development of costly chronic conditions, such as childhood obesity,
15 diabetes, heart disease, and hypertension. Chronic-care and behavioral health
16 management should be assured for all Americans who require care coordination,
17 including those with mental health and substance use disorders. We should promote
18 additional tobacco and substance abuse prevention.

19
20 *A Modernized System That Lowers Cost and Improves the Quality of Care.* As Americans
21 struggle with increasing health care costs, we believe a strengthened, uniquely American
22 system should provide the highest quality, most cost-effective care. This should be
23 advanced by aggressive efforts to cut costs and eliminate waste from our health system,
24 which will save the typical family up to \$2,500 per year. These efforts include driving
25 adoption of state-of-the-art health information technology systems, privacy-protected
26 electronic medical records, reimbursement incentives and an independent organization
27 that reviews drugs, devices, and procedures to ensure that people get the right care at the
28 right time. By working with the medical community to improve quality, these reforms
29 will have the added benefit of reducing the prevalence of lawsuits related to medical
30 errors. We should increase competition in the insurance and drug markets; remove some
31 of the cost burden of catastrophic illness from employers and their employees; and lower
32 drug costs by allowing Medicare to negotiate for lower prices, allowing importation of
33 safe medicines from other developed countries, creating a generic pathway for biologic
34 drugs, and increasing use of generics in public programs.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

29 *Reproductive Health Care*

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

34
35 *Fiscal Responsibility.* As we improve and strengthen our health care system, we must do
36 so in a fiscally responsible way that ensures that we get value for the dollars that are
37 invested.

38 **Retirement and Social Security**

39 We will make it a priority to secure for hardworking families the part of the American

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

18
19 We reject the notion of the presumptive Republican nominee that Social Security is a
20 disgrace; we believe that it is indispensable. We will fulfill our obligation to strengthen
21 Social Security and to make sure that it provides guaranteed benefits Americans can
22 count on, now and in future generations. We will not privatize it. We will safeguard from
23 discrimination those who choose to work past the age of 65.

24 **Good Jobs with Good Pay**

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

1 contractors.

2
3 The Bush Administration Department of Labor has failed in its obligation to stand up and
4 protect American workers. Our Department of Labor will restore and expand overtime
5 rights for millions of Americans, and will actively enforce wage and hour laws. Our
6 Occupational Safety and Health Administration will
7 adopt and enforce comprehensive safety standards;
8 the Bush Administration is the only administration
9 that has never voluntarily issued a significant final
10 standard for workplace safety. Right now, far too
11 many workers-especially those in the construction and
12 mining industries-risk their lives every day just by
13 going to work.

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

23 **Work and Family**

24 Over the last few decades, fundamental changes in the
25 way we work and live have trapped too many
26 American families between an economy that's gone
27 global and a government that's gone AWOL. It's time we stop just talking about family
28 values, and start pursuing policies that truly value families. Families are increasingly
29 responsible for caring for children and aging relatives, and its time for the government to
30 meet them halfway. We will expand the Family and Medical Leave Act to reach millions
31 more workers than are currently covered, and will enable workers to take leave to care for
32 an elderly parent, address domestic violence and sexual assault, or attend a parent-teacher
33 conference. Today 78 percent of the workers who are eligible for leave cannot take it
34 because it's unpaid, so we will work with states and make leave paid. We will also
35 ensure that every American worker is able earn up to seven paid sick days to care for
36 themselves or an ill family member. And we will encourage employers to provide
37 flexible work arrangements—with the federal government leading by example. We will
38 expand the childcare tax credit, provide every child access to quality, affordable early
39 childhood education, and double funding for after-school and summer learning
40 opportunities for children. We will provide assistance to those who need long-term care
41 and to the working men and women of this country who do the heroic job of providing
42 care for their aging relatives. All Americans who are working hard and taking
43 responsibility deserve the chance to do right by their loved ones. That's the America we
44 believe in.
45

“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

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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.

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

Opportunity for Women

27 We, the Democratic Party, are the party that has produced more women Governors,
28 Senators, and Members of Congress than any other. We have produced first woman
29 Secretary of State, the first woman Speaker of the House of Representatives, and, in
30 2008, Hillary Rodham Clinton, the first woman in American history to win presidential
31 primaries in our nation. We believe that our daughters should have the
32 same opportunities as our sons; our party is proud that we have put 18 million cracks in
33 the highest glass ceiling. We know that when America extends its promise to women, the
34 result is increased opportunity for families, communities, and aspiring people
35 everywhere.
36

37
38 When women still earn 76 cents for every dollar that a man earns, it doesn’t just hurt
39 women; it hurts families and children. We will pass the “Lilly Ledbetter” Act, which will
40 make it easier to combat pay discrimination; we will pass the Fair Pay Act; and we will
41 modernize the Equal Pay Act. We will invest in women-owned small businesses and
42 remove the capital gains tax on start-up small businesses. We will support women in
43 math and science, combat sex-discrimination and increase American competitiveness by
44 retaining the best workers in those fields, regardless of gender. We recognize that women
45 still carry the majority of childrearing responsibilities so we have created a

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

6
 7 We believe that standing up for our country means standing up against sexism and all
 8 intolerance. Demeaning portrayals of women cheapen our debates, dampen the dreams of
 9 our daughters, and deny us the contributions of too many. Responsibility lies with us all.

10 11 **Investing in American Competitiveness**

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

22 23 **New American Energy**

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

37
 38 For the sake of our security—and for every American family that is paying the price at the
 39 pump—we will break our addiction to foreign oil. In platform hearings around the
 40 country, Americans called for a Manhattan or Apollo Project level commitment to
 41 achieve energy independence. We hear that call and we Democrats commit to fasttrack
 42 investment of billions of dollars over the next ten years to establish a green energy sector
 43 that will create up to five million jobs. Good jobs, like those in Pennsylvania where
 44 workers manufacture wind turbines, the ones in the factory in Nevada producing
 45 components for solar energy generation plants, or the jobs that will be created when plug-
 46 in hybrids start rolling off the assembly line in Michigan. This transition to a clean-

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

4
5 It will not be easy, but neither was getting to the moon. We know we can't drill our way
6 to energy independence and so we must summon all of our ingenuity and legendary hard
7 work and we must invest in research, development, and deployment of forms of new
8 energy—solar, wind, as well as technologies to store energy through advanced batteries
9 and clean up our coal plants. And we will call on businesses, government, and the
10 American people to make America 50 percent more energy efficient by 2030, because we
11 know that the most energy efficient economy will also gain the competitive edge for new
12 manufacturing and jobs that stay here at home. We will help pay for all of it by
13 dedicating a portion of the revenues generated by an economy wide cap and trade
14 program- a step that will also dramatically reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and
15 jumpstart billions in private capital investment in a new energy economy.

16
17 We'll double fuel efficiency standards and we'll help manufacturers—particularly in the
18 auto industry—convert to build the cars and trucks of the future and other green
19 innovations. And we will help workers learn the skills they need to compete in the green
20 economy. We are committed to getting at least 25% of our electricity from renewable
21 sources by 2025. Building on the innovative efforts of the private sector, states, cities,
22 and tribes across the country, we will create new federal-local partnerships to scale the
23 success and deployment of new energy solutions, install a smarter grid, build more
24 efficient buildings, and use the power of federal and military purchasing programs to
25 jumpstart promising new markets and technologies. We'll invest in advanced biofuels
26 like cellulosic ethanol which will provide American-grown fuel and help free us from the
27 tyranny of oil. We will use innovative measures to dramatically improve the energy
28 efficiency of buildings.

29
30 To lower the price of gasoline, we will crack down on speculators who are driving up
31 prices beyond the natural market rate. We will direct the Federal Trade Commission and
32 Department of Justice to vigorously investigate and prosecute market manipulation in oil
33 futures. And we will help those who are hit hardest by high energy prices by increasing
34 funding for low-income heating assistance programs and providing energy assistance to
35 help middle-class families make ends meet in this time of inflated energy prices.

36
37 This plan will safeguard our economy, our country, and the future of our planet. This plan
38 will create good jobs that pay well and can't be outsourced. With these policies, we will
39 protect our country from the national security threats created by reliance on foreign oil
40 and global insecurity due to climate change. And this is how we'll solve the problem of
41 four dollar a gallon gas—with a comprehensive plan and investment in clean energy.

42 43 **A World Class Education for Every Child**

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

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

6
 7 The Democratic Party clearly believes that graduation from a quality public school and
 8 the opportunity to succeed in college must be the birthright of every child—not the
 9 privilege of the few. We must prepare all our students with the 21st century skills they
 10 need to succeed by progressing to a new era of mutual responsibility in education. We
 11 must set high standards for our children, but we must also hold ourselves accountable—
 12 our schools, our teachers, our parents, business leaders, our community and our elected
 13 leaders. And we must come together, form partnerships, and commit to providing the
 14 resources and reforms necessary to help every child reach their full potential.

15
 16 *Pre-school*

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

22
 23 *K-12*

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

32
 33 To reward our teachers, we will follow the lead of
 34 school districts and educators that have pioneered
 35 innovative ways to increase teacher pay that are
 36 developed with teachers, not imposed on them.

37 We will make an unprecedented national
 38 investment to provide teachers with better pay
 39 and better support to improve their skills, and
 40 their students' learning. We'll reward effective
 41 teachers who teach in underserved areas, take on
 42 added responsibilities like mentoring new
 43 teachers, or consistently excel in the classroom.

44
 45 We will fix the failures and broken promises of
 46 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

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

12
 13 We will promote innovation within our public schools—because research shows that
 14 resources alone will not create the schools that we need to help our children succeed. We
 15 need to adapt curricula and the school calendar to the needs of the 21st century;
 16 reform the schools of education that produce most of our teachers; promote public charter
 17 schools that are accountable; and streamline the certification process for those with
 18 valuable skills who want to shift careers and teach.

19
 20 We will also meet our commitment to special education and to students who are English
 21 Language Learners. We support full funding of the Individuals with Disabilities
 22 Education Act. We also support transitional bilingual education and will help Limited
 23 English Proficient students get ahead by supporting and funding English Language
 24 Learner classes. We support teaching students second languages, as well as contributing
 25 through education to the revitalization of American Indian languages.

26
 27 We know that there is no program and no policy that can substitute for parents who are
 28 involved in their children's education from day one—who make sure their children are in
 29 school on time, helps them with their homework, and attends those parent-teacher
 30 conferences; who are willing to turn off the TV once in awhile, put away the video
 31 games, and read to their children. Responsibility for our children's education has to start
 32 at home. We have to set high standards for them, and spend time with them, and love
 33 them. We have to hold ourselves accountable.

34 35 **Higher Education**

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

41
 42 At community colleges and training programs across the country, we will invest in short-
 43 term accelerated training and technical certifications for the unemployed and under-
 44 employed to speed their transition into careers in high-demand occupations and emerging
 45 industries. We will reward successful community colleges with grants so they can

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

6
 7 We will make college affordable for all Americans by creating a new American
 8 Opportunity Tax Credit to ensure that the first \$4,000 of a college education is
 9 completely free for most Americans. In exchange for the credit, students will be expected
 10 to perform community service. We will continue to support programs, especially the Pell
 11 Grant program, that open the doors of college opportunity to low-income Americans. We
 12 will enable families to apply for financial aid simply by checking a box on their tax form.

13
 14 Our institutions of higher education are also the economic engines of today and
 15 tomorrow. We will partner with them to translate new ideas into innovative products,
 16 processes and services.

17
 18 **Science, Technology and Innovation**

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

22
 23 It is time again to lead. We took a critical step with the America Competes Act and we
 24 will start by implementing that act —then we will do more. We will make science,
 25 technology, engineering, and math education a national priority. We will double federal
 26 funding for basic research, invest in a strong and inspirational vision for space
 27 exploration and make the Research and Development Tax Credit permanent. We will
 28 invest in the next generation of transformative energy technologies and health IT and we
 29 will renew the defense R&D system. We will lift the current Administration's ban on
 30 using federal funding for embryonic stem cells—cells that would have otherwise have
 31 been discarded and lost forever—for research that could save lives. We will ensure that
 32 our patent laws protect legitimate rights while not stifling innovation and creativity. We
 33 will end the Bush Administration's war on science, restore scientific integrity, and return
 34 to evidence-based decision-making.

35
 36 In sum, we will strengthen our system, treat science and technology as crucial
 37 investments, and use these forces to ensure a future of economic leadership, health well-
 38 being and national security.

39 **Invest in Manufacturing and Our Manufacturing Communities**

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

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

7
 8 Our manufacturing communities need
 9 immediate relief. And we will help
 10 states and localities whose budgets are
 11 strained in times of need. We will
 12 modernize and expand Trade
 13 Adjustment Assistance. We will help
 14 workers build a safety net, with health
 15 care, retirement security, and a way to
 16 stay out of crippling debt. We will
 17 partner with community colleges and
 18 other higher education institutions, so
 19 that we're training workers to meet the
 20 demands of local industry, including
 21 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

22 **Creating New Jobs by Rebuilding**
 23 **American Infrastructure**

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

38
 39 **A Connected America**

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

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

10
 11 We will toughen penalties, increase enforcement resources, and spur private sector
 12 cooperation with law enforcement to identify and prosecute those who exploit the
 13 Internet to try to harm children. We will encourage more educational content on the Web
 14 and in our media. We will give parents the tools and information they need to manage (in
 15 ways fully consistent with the First Amendment) what their children see on television and
 16 the Internet. We will strengthen privacy protections in the digital age and will harness
 17 the power of technology to hold government and business accountable for violations of
 18 personal privacy.

19 20 **Support Small Business and Entrepreneurship**

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

30 31 **Real Leadership for Rural 32 America**

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

44
 45 In return, we will provide a strong
 46 safety net for family farms, a permanent disaster relief program, expansion of agriculture

“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

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

7 8 **Economic Stewardship**

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

18
19 But the American experiment has worked in large part because we have guided the
20 market's invisible hand with a higher principle. Our free market was never meant to be a
21 free license to take whatever you can get, however you can get it. That is why we have
22 put in place rules of the road to make competition fair, open, and honest. We have done
23 this not to stifle—but rather to advance prosperity and liberty.

24
25 In this time of economic transformation and crisis, we must be stewards of this economy
26 more than ever before. We will maintain fiscal responsibility, so that we do not mortgage
27 our children's future on a mountain of debt. We can do this at the same time that we
28 invest in our future. We will restore fairness and responsibility to our tax code. We will
29 bring back balance to the housing markets, so that people do not have to lose their homes.
30 And we will encourage personal savings, so that our economy remains strong and
31 Americans can live well in their retirements.

32 33 **Restoring Fairness to our Tax Code**

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

45

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

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

3 4 **Savings**

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

18 19 **Smart, Strong, and Fair Trade Policies**

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

26
27 Trade policy must be an integral part of an overall national economic strategy that
28 delivers on the promise of good jobs at home and shared prosperity abroad. We will
29 enforce trade laws and safeguard our workers, businesses and farmers from unfair trade
30 practices—including currency manipulation, lax consumer standards, illegal subsidies, and
31 violations of workers' rights and environmental standards. We must also show leadership
32 at the World Trade Organization to improve transparency and accountability, and to
33 ensure it acts effectively to stop countries from continuing unfair government subsidies to
34 foreign exporters and non-tariff barriers on U.S. exports.

35
36 We need tougher negotiators on our side of the table—to strike bargains that are good not
37 just for Wall Street, but also for Main Street. We will negotiate free trade agreements that
38 open markets to U.S. exports and include enforceable international labor and
39 environmental standards; we pledge to enforce those standards consistently and fairly.
40 We will not negotiate free trade agreements that stop the government from protecting the
41 environment, food safety or the health of its citizens, give greater rights to foreign
42 investors than to U.S. investors, require the privatization of our vital public services, or
43 prevent developing country governments from adopting humanitarian licensing policies
44 to improve access to life-saving medications. We will stand firm against agreements that
45 fail to live up to these important benchmarks. We will work with Canada and Mexico to
46 amend the North American Free Trade Agreement so that it works better for all three

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

6
7 Just as important, we will invest in a world-class infrastructure, skilled workforce, and
8 cutting-edge technology so that we can compete successfully on high-value-added
9 products, not sweatshop wages and conditions. We will end tax breaks for companies that
10 ship American jobs overseas, and provide incentives for companies that keep and
11 maintain good jobs here in the U.S. And, we will also provide access to affordable health
12 insurance and enhance retirement security, and we will update and expand Trade
13 Adjustment Assistance to help workers in industries vulnerable to international
14 competition, as well as service sector and public sector workers impacted by trade, and
15 we will improve TAA's health care benefits. The United States should renew its own
16 commitment to respect for workers' fundamental human rights, and at the same time
17 strengthen the ILO's ability to promote workers' rights abroad through technical
18 assistance and capacity building.

19 20 **Fiscal Responsibility**

21 Our agenda is ambitious—particularly in light of the current Administration's policies that
22 have run up the national debt to over \$4 trillion. Just as America cannot afford to
23 continue to run up huge deficits, so too can we not afford to short-change investments.
24 The key is to make the tough choices, in particular enforcing pay-as-you-go budgeting
25 rules. We will honor these rules by our plan to end the Iraq war responsibly, eliminate
26 waste in existing government programs, generate revenue by charging polluters for the
27 greenhouse gases they are releasing—and put an end to the reckless, special interest driven
28 corporate loopholes and tax cuts for the wealthy that have been the centerpiece of the
29 Bush Administration's economic policy. We will not raise taxes on people making less
30 than \$250,000, and will eliminate all income taxes for seniors making less than \$50,000.
31 We recognize that Social Security is not in crisis and we should do everything we can to
32 strengthen this vital program, including asking those making over \$250,000 to pay a bit
33 more. The real long-run fiscal challenge is rooted in the rising spending on health care,
34 but we cannot address this in a way that puts our most vulnerable families in jeopardy
35 . Instead, we must strengthen our public programs by bringing down the cost of health
36 care and reducing waste while making strategic investments that emphasize quality,
37 efficiency, and prevention. In the name of our children, we reject the proposals of those
38 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.

1
2 We will re-center American foreign policy by responsibly redeploying our combat forces
3 from Iraq and refocusing them on urgent missions. We will give our military a new
4 mission: ending this war and giving Iraq back to its people. We will be as careful getting
5 out of Iraq as we were careless getting in. We can safely remove our combat brigades at
6 the pace of one to two per month and expect to complete redeployment within 16 months.
7 After this redeployment, we will keep a residual force in Iraq to perform specific
8 missions: targeting terrorists; protecting our embassy and civil personnel; and advising
9 and supporting Iraq's Security Forces, provided the Iraqis make political progress.

10
11 At the same time, we will provide generous assistance to Iraqi refugees and internally
12 displaced persons. We will launch a comprehensive regional and international diplomatic
13 surge to help broker a lasting political settlement in Iraq, which is the only path to a
14 sustainable peace. We will make clear that we seek no permanent bases in Iraq. This is
15 the future the American people want. This is the future that Iraqis want. This is what our
16 common interests demand.

17 18 **Defeating Al Qaeda and Combating Terrorism**

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

22 23 **Win in Afghanistan**

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

28
29 We will send at least two additional combat brigades to Afghanistan, and use this
30 commitment to seek greater contributions—with fewer restrictions—from our NATO allies.
31 We will focus on building up our special forces and intelligence capacity, training,
32 equipping and advising Afghan security forces, building Afghan governmental capacity,
33 and promoting the rule of law. We will bolster our State Department's Provincial
34 Reconstruction Teams and our other government agencies helping the Afghan people.
35 We will help Afghans educate their children, including their girls, provide basic human
36 services to their population and grow their economy from the bottom up, with an
37 additional \$1 billion in non-military assistance each year—including investments in
38 alternative livelihoods to poppy-growing for Afghan farmers—just as we crack down on
39 trafficking and corruption. Afghanistan must not be lost to a future of narco-terrorism—or
40 become again a haven for terrorists.

41 42 **Seek a new partnership with Pakistan**

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

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

6
7 We will ask more of the Pakistani government, rather than offer a blank check to an
8 undemocratic President. We will significantly increase non-military aid to the Pakistani
9 people and sustain it for a decade, while ensuring that the military assistance we provide
10 is actually used to fight extremists. We must move beyond an alliance built on individual
11 leaders, or face mounting opposition in a nuclear-armed nation at the nexus of terror,
12 extremism, and the instability wrought by autocracy.

13 14 **Combat Terrorism**

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

23
24 We will pursue policies to expand our understanding of the circumstances and beliefs that
25 underpin extremism, so that we can effectively address them. A crucial debate is
26 occurring within Islam. The vast majority of Muslims believe in a future of peace,
27 tolerance, development, and democratization. A small minority embrace a rigid and
28 violent intolerance of personal liberty and the world at large. To empower forces of
29 moderation, America must live up to our values, respect civil liberties, reject torture, and
30 lead by example. We will make every effort to export hope and opportunity—access to
31 education, secure food and water supplies, and health care, trade, capital and investment.
32 We will provide steady support for political reformers, democratic institutions and civil
33 society that is necessary to uphold human rights and build respect for the rule of law.

34 35 **Secure the Homeland**

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

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

3 4 **Pursue Intelligence Reform**

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

17 18 **Preventing the Spread and Use of Weapons of Mass Destruction**

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

25 26 **A World without Nuclear Weapons.**

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

37 38 **Secure Nuclear Weapons and the Materials to Make Them**

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

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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-

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

9 10 **Stronger Cyber-Security**

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

14 15 **Revitalizing and Supporting the Military, Keeping Faith With Veterans**

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

18
19 Ending the war in Iraq will be the beginning, but not the end, of addressing our defense
20 challenges. We will use this moment both to rebuild our military and to prepare it for the
21 missions of the future. We must retain the capacity to swiftly defeat any conventional
22 threat to our country and our vital interests. But we must also become better prepared to
23 take on foes that fight asymmetrical and highly adaptive campaigns on a global scale.

24
25 We will not hesitate to use force to protect the American people or our vital interests
26 whenever we are attacked or imminently threatened. But we will use our armed forces
27 wisely, with others when we can, unilaterally when we must. When we send our men and
28 women into harm's way, we must clearly define the mission, listen to the advice of our
29 military commanders, objectively evaluate intelligence, and ensure that our troops have
30 the strategy, resources and support they need to prevail.

31
32 We believe we must also be willing to consider using military force in circumstances
33 beyond self-defense in order to provide for the common security that underpins global
34 stability—to support friends, participate in stability and reconstruction operations, or
35 confront mass atrocities. But when we do use force in situations other than self-defense,
36 we should make every effort to garner the clear support and participation of others. The
37 consequences of forgetting that lesson in the context of the current conflict in Iraq have
38 been grave.

39 40 **Expand the Armed Forces**

41 We support plans to increase the size of the Army by 65,000 troops and the Marines by
42 27,000 troops. Increasing our end strength will help units retrain and re-equip properly
43 between deployments and decrease the strain on military families.

44 45 **Recruit and Retain**

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

10 **Rebuild the Military for 21st-Century Tasks**

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

21 **Develop Civilian Capacity to Promote Global Stability and Improve Emergency 22 Response**

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

30 **Do Right by Our Veterans and their Families**

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

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

1 all servicemembers upon their return from combat.
 2 We will aggressively address Post-Traumatic Stress
 3 Disorder and Traumatic Brain Injury. We will work
 4 to ensure that every veteran receives the benefits he
 5 or she has earned and the assistance they need by
 6 making the disability benefits process more fair,
 7 efficient and equitable. We will dramatically reduce
 8 the backlog of disability claims. We will combat
 9 homelessness, unemployment and
 10 underemployment among veterans and improve the
 11 transition for servicemen between the Departments
 12 of Defense and Veterans Affairs. We will continue
 13 to honor our promises to all veterans, including the
 14 Filipino veterans, especially with regards to
 15 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

16

17 **Lift Burdens on Our Troops and Their Families**

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

21

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

28

29 **Support the Readiness of the Guard and Reserve**

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

39

40 **Allow All Americans to Serve**

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

1 of “Don’t Ask Don’t Tell” and the implementation of policies to allow qualified men and
2 women to serve openly regardless of sexual orientation
3

4 **Reform Contracting Practices and Make Contractors Accountable**

5 We believe taxpayer dollars should be spent to invest in our fighting men and women, not
6 to fatten the pockets of private companies. We will instruct the Defense and State
7 Departments to develop a strategy for determining when contracting makes sense, and
8 when certain functions are “inherently governmental” and should not be contracted out.
9 We will establish the legal status of contractor personnel, making possible prosecution of
10 any abuses committed by private military contractors, and create a system of improved
11 oversight and management, so that government can restore honesty, openness and
12 efficiency to the contracting and procurement.
13

14 **Working for Our Common Security**

15 To renew American leadership in the world, we will rebuild the alliances, partnerships,
16 and institutions necessary to confront common threats and enhance common security.
17 Needed reform of these alliances and institutions will not come by bullying other
18 countries to ratify American demands. It will come when we convince other governments
19 and peoples that they, too, have a stake in effective partnerships. It is only leadership if
20 others join America in working toward our common security.
21

22 Too often, in recent years, we have sent the opposite
23 signal to our international partners. In the case of Europe,
24 we dismissed European reservations about the wisdom
25 and necessity of the Iraq war and their concerns about
26 climate change. In Asia, we belittled South Korean
27 efforts to improve relations with the North. In Latin
28 America, from Mexico to Argentina, we failed to address
29 concerns about immigration and equity and economic
30 growth. In Africa, we have allowed genocide to persist
31 for over five years in Darfur and have not done nearly enough to answer the United
32 Nation’s call for more support to stop the killing. Under Barack Obama, We will rebuild
33 our ties to our allies in Europe and Asia and strengthen our partnerships throughout the
34 Americas and Africa.
35

“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

36 **Support Africa’s Democratic Development**

37 U.S. engagement with Africa should reflect its vital significance to the U.S. as well as its
38 emerging role in the global economy. We recognize Africa’s promise as a trade and
39 investment partner and the importance of policies which can contribute to sustainable
40 economic growth, job creation and poverty alleviation. We are committed to bringing the
41 full weight of American leadership to bear in unlocking the spirit of entrepreneurship and
42 economic independence that is sweeping across markets of Africa.
43

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

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

6
 7 Many African countries have embraced democratization and economic liberalization.
 8 We will help strengthen Africa's democratic development and respect for human rights,
 9 while encouraging political and economic reforms that result in improved transparency
 10 and accountability. We will defend democracy and stand up for rule of law when it is
 11 under assault, such as in Zimbabwe.

12 **Recommit to an Alliance of the Americas**

13
 14 We recognize that the security and prosperity of the United States is fundamentally tied
 15 to the future of the Americas. We believe that in the 21st century, the U.S. must treat
 16 Canada, Latin America and the Caribbean as full partners, just as our neighbors to the
 17 south should reject the bombast of authoritarian bullies. An alliance of the Americas will
 18 only succeed if it is founded on the bedrock of mutual respect and works to advance
 19 democracy, opportunity and security from the bottom-up. We must turn the page on the
 20 arrogance in Washington and the anti-Americanism across the region that stands in the
 21 way of progress. We must work with close partners like Mexico, Brazil and Colombia on
 22 issues like ending the drug trade, fighting poverty and inequality, and immigration. And
 23 we must build ties to the people of Cuba and help advance their liberty by allowing
 24 unlimited family visits and remittances to the island, while presenting the Cuban regime
 25 with a clear choice: if it takes significant steps toward democracy, beginning with the
 26 unconditional release of all political prisoners, we will be prepared to take steps to begin
 27 normalizing relations.

28 **Lead in Asia**

29
 30 We are committed to U.S. engagement in Asia. This begins with maintaining strong
 31 relationships with allies like Japan, Australia, South Korea, Thailand and the Philippines
 32 and deepening our ties to vital democratic partners, like India, in order to create a stable
 33 and prosperous Asia. We must also forge a more effective framework in Asia that goes

34
 35 “We need to be a
 36 ‘super smart power’
 37 not a ‘super power.’
 38 That means we need
 39 to be a world leader;
 40 not a world bully.” -
 41 *Listening to America*
 42 participants, Lebanon,
 43 PA

34 beyond bilateral agreements, occasional summits, and ad hoc
 35 diplomatic arrangements. We need an open and inclusive
 36 infrastructure with the countries in Asia that can promote
 37 stability, prosperity and human rights, and help confront
 38 transnational threats, from terrorist cells in the Philippines to
 39 avian flu in Indonesia. We will encourage China to play a
 40 responsible role as a growing power—to help lead in addressing
 41 the common problems of the twenty-first century. We are
 42 committed to a "One China" policy, and will continue to
 43 support a peaceful resolution of cross-Straits issues. It's time to engage China on
 44 common interests like climate change, trade and energy, even as we continue to
 45 encourage its shift to a more open society and a market-based economy and promote
 46 greater respect for human rights, including freedom of speech, press, assembly, religion,

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

4 **Strengthen Transatlantic Relations**

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

21 **Stand with Allies and Pursue Diplomacy in the Middle East**

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

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

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

6 **Deepen Ties with Emerging Powers**

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

17 **Revitalize Global Institutions**

18 To enhance global cooperation on issues from weapons proliferation to climate change,
 19 we need stronger international institutions. We believe that the United Nations is
 20 indispensable but requires far-reaching reform. The U.N. Secretariat's management
 21 practices remain inadequate. Peacekeeping operations are overextended. The new U.N.
 22 Human Rights Council remains biased and ineffective. Yet none of these problems will
 23 be solved unless America rededicates itself to the organization and its mission. We
 24 support reforming key global institutions —such as the U.N. Security Council and the G-
 25 8—so they will be more reflective of 21st century realities.

27 **Advancing Democracy, Development and Respect for Human Rights**

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

35 **Build Democratic Institutions**

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

40
 41 The United States must be a relentless advocate for democracy and put forward a vision
 42 of democracy that goes beyond the ballot box. We will increase our support for strong
 43 legislatures, independent judiciaries, free press, vibrant civil society, honest police forces,
 44 religious freedom, equality for women and minorities, and the rule of law. In new
 45 democracies, we will support the development of civil society and representative
 46 institutions that can protect fundamental human rights and improve the quality of life for

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

6 7 **Invest in our Common Humanity**

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

14
15 It is time to make the U.N. Millennium Development Goals, which aim to cut extreme
16 poverty in half by 2015, America's goals as well. We need to invest in building capable,
17 democratic states that can establish healthy and educated communities, develop markets,
18 and generate wealth. Such states would also have greater institutional capacities to fight
19 terrorism, halt the spread of deadly weapons, and build health-care infrastructures to
20 prevent, detect, and treat deadly diseases such as HIV/AIDS, malaria, and avian flu.

21
22 We will double our annual investment in meeting these challenges to \$50 billion by 2012
23 and ensure that those new resources are directed toward worthwhile goals. But if America
24 is going to help others build more just and secure societies, our trade deals, debt relief,
25 and foreign aid must not come as blank checks. We will couple our support with an
26 insistent call for reform, to combat the corruption that rots societies and governments
27 from within. As part of this new funding, we will create a \$2 billion Global Education
28 Fund that will bring the world together in eliminating the global education deficit with
29 the goal of supporting a free, quality basic education for every child in the world.
30 Education increases incomes, reduces poverty, strengthens communities, prevents the
31 spread of disease, improves child and maternal health and empowers women and girls.
32 We cannot hope to shape a world where opportunity outweighs danger unless we ensure
33 that every child everywhere is taught to build and not to destroy.

34
35 Our policies will recognize that human rights are women's rights and that women's rights
36 are human rights. Women make up the majority of the poor in the world. So we will
37 expand access to women's' economic development opportunities and seek to expand
38 microcredit. Women produce half of the world's food but only own 1% of the land upon
39 which it is grown. We will work to ensure that women have equal protection under the
40 law and are not denied rights and therefore locked them into poverty.

41
42 We will modernize our foreign assistance policies, tools, and operations in an elevated,
43 empowered, consolidated, and streamlined U.S. development agency. Development and
44 diplomacy will be reinforced as key pillars of U.S. foreign policy, and our civilian
45 agencies will be staffed, resourced and equipped to address effectively new global
46 challenges.

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

16 17 **Global Health**

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

21
22 The HIV/AIDS pandemic is a massive human tragedy. It is also a security risk of the
23 highest order that threatens to plunge nations into chaos. There are an estimated 33
24 million people across the planet infected with HIV/AIDS, including more than 1 million
25 people in the U.S. Nearly 8,000 people die every day of AIDS. We must do more to
26 fight the global HIV/AIDS pandemic, as well as malaria, tuberculosis, and neglected
27 tropical diseases. We will provide \$50 billion over five years to strengthen existing U.S.
28 programs and expand them to new regions of the world, including Southeast Asia, India,
29 and parts of Europe, where the HIV/AIDS burden is growing. We will increase U.S.
30 contributions to the Global Fund to ensure that global efforts to fight endemic disease
31 continue to move ahead.

32
33 We also support the adoption of humanitarian licensing policies that ensure medications
34 developed with the U.S. taxpayer dollars are available off patent in developing countries.
35 We will repeal the global gag rule and reinstate funding to the United Nations Population
36 Fund (UNFPA). We will expand access to health care and nutrition for women and
37 reduce the burden of maternal mortality.

38
39 We will leverage the engagement of the private sector and private philanthropy to launch
40 Health Infrastructure 2020—a global effort to work with developing countries to invest in
41 the full range of infrastructure needed to improve and protect both American and global
42 health.

43 44 **Human Trafficking**

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

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

4
5 **Protecting our Security and Saving our Planet**

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

12
13 We understand that climate change is not just an economic issue or an environmental
14 concern—this is a national security crisis.

15
16 **Establish Energy Security**

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

22
23 Rather, energy security requires stemming the flow of money to oil rich regimes that are
24 hostile to America and its allies; it requires combating climate change and preparing for
25 its impacts both at home and abroad; it requires making international energy markets

26 work for us and not against us; it requires standing up to the
27 oil companies that spend hundreds of millions of dollars on
28 lobbying and political contributions; it requires that we
29 address nuclear safety, waste, and proliferation challenges
30 around the world; and more.

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“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.

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

6
7 We will reach out to the leaders of the biggest carbon emitting nations and ask them to
8 join a new Global Energy Forum that will lay the foundation for the next generation of
9 climate protocols. China has replaced America as the world's largest emitter of
10 greenhouse gases. Clean energy development must be a central focus in our relationships
11 with major countries in Europe and Asia. We need a global response to climate change
12 that includes binding and enforceable commitments to reducing emissions, especially for
13 those that pollute the most: the United States, China, India, the European Union, and
14 Russia.

15
16 This challenge is massive, but rising to it will also bring new benefits to America. By
17 2050, global demand for low-carbon energy could create an annual market worth \$500
18 billion. Meeting that demand would open new frontiers for American entrepreneurs and
19 workers.

20 21 **Seizing the Opportunity**

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

29
30 It was not all that long ago that farmers in Venezuela and Indonesia welcomed American
31 doctors to their villages and hung pictures of John F. Kennedy on their living room walls,
32 when millions, waited every day for a letter in the mail that would grant them the
33 privilege to come to America to study, work, live, or just be free.

34
35 We can be this America again. This is our moment to renew the trust and faith of our
36 people—and all people—in an America that battles immediate evils, promotes an ultimate
37 good, and leads the world once more.

38

III. Renewing the American Community

1
2
3 In local platform hearings around the country, people talked of the need for compassion,
4 empathy, a commitment to our values and the importance of being united in order to take
5 on the challenges and opportunities of the new century. They said that they valued
6 Barack Obama’s message, that alongside Americans’ famous individualism, there’s
7 another ingredient in the American saga: a belief that we are connected to each other. We
8 could all choose to focus on our own concerns and live our lives in a way that tries to
9 keep our individual stories separate from the larger story of America. But that is not who
10 we are. That is not our American story. If there’s a child on the south side of Chicago
11 who can’t read, that matters to us, even if it’s not our child. If there’s a senior citizen in
12 Elko, Nevada who has to choose between medicine and the rent, that makes our lives
13 poorer, even if it’s not our grandmother. Because our individual salvation depends on
14 collective salvation. Because thinking only about yourself, fulfilling only your immediate
15 wants and needs, betrays a poverty of ambition. Because it is only when we join together
16 in something larger than ourselves that we can write the next great chapter in America’s
17 story.

18 19 **Service**

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

33 34 **Immigration**

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

40
41 Nonetheless, our current immigration system has been broken for far too long. We need
42 comprehensive immigration reform, not just piecemeal efforts. We must work together to
43 pass immigration reform in a way that unites this country, not in a way that divides us by
44 playing on our worst instincts and fears. We are committed to pursuing tough, practical,
45 and humane immigration reform immigration reform in the first year of the next
46 administration.

1
2 For the millions living here illegally but otherwise playing by the rules, we must require
3 them to come out of the shadows and get right with the law. We support a system that
4 requires undocumented immigrants who are in good standing to pay a fine, pay taxes,
5 learn English, and go to the back of the line for the opportunity to become citizens. They
6 are our neighbors, and we can help them become full tax paying, law-abiding, productive
7 members of society.

8
9 At the same time, we cannot continue to allow people to enter the United States
10 undetected, undocumented, and unchecked. The American people are a welcoming and
11 generous people, but those who enter our country's borders illegally, and those who
12 employ them, disrespect the rule of the law. We need to secure our borders, and support
13 additional personnel, infrastructure and technology on the border and at our ports of
14 entry. We need additional Customs and Border Protection agents equipped with better
15 technology and real-time intelligence. We need to dismantle human smuggling
16 organizations, combating the crime associated with this trade. We also need to do more
17 to promote economic development in migrant-sending nations, to reduce incentives to
18 come to the United States illegally. And we need to crack down on employers who hire
19 undocumented immigrants, especially those who pay their workers less than the
20 minimum wage. It's a problem when we only enforce our laws against the immigrants
21 themselves, with raids that are ineffective, tear apart families and leave people detained
22 without adequate access to counsel. We realize that employers need a method to verify
23 whether their employees are legally eligible to work in the U.S., and will ensure that our
24 system is accurate, fair to legal workers, safeguards people's privacy, and cannot be used
25 to discriminate against workers.

26
27 We must also improve the legal immigration system, and make our nation's naturalization
28 process fair and accessible to the thousands of legal permanent residents who are eager to
29 become full Americans. We should fix the dysfunctional immigration bureaucracy that
30 hampers family reunification, the cornerstone of our immigration policy for years. Given
31 the importance of both keeping families together and supporting American businesses,
32 we will increase the number of immigration visas for family members of people living
33 here and for immigrants who meet the demand for jobs that employers cannot fill, as long
34 as appropriate labor market protections and standards are in place. We will fight
35 discrimination against Americans who have always played by our immigration rules but
36 are sometimes treated as if they had not.

37 38 **Hurricane Katrina**

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

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

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

9
10 “Every American
11 community and city is
12 vulnerable, as recent
13 floods in the Midwest and
14 fires and earthquakes in
15 California have reminded
16 us. All citizens and
17 elected leaders must
18 understand that *crisis du*
19 *jour* could occur in your
20 city today or tomorrow!” -
21 *Women of the Storm*, a
22 non-partisan grassroots
23 civic organization made
24 up of diverse women from
25 metropolitan New Orleans
26 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.

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

Stewardship of Our Planet and Natural Resources

30 Global climate change is the planet’s greatest threat, and our response will determine the
31 very future of life on this earth. Despite the efforts of our current Administration to deny
32 the science of climate change and the need to act, we still believe that America can be
33 earth’s best hope, not its greatest impediment. We will implement a market-based cap-
34 and-trade system to reduce carbon emissions by the amount scientists say is necessary to
35 avoid catastrophic change and we will set interim targets along the way to ensure that we
36 meet our goal. We will invest in advanced energy technologies, to build the clean energy
37 economy and create millions of new, good, “Green Collar” American jobs. Because the
38 environment is a truly global concern, the U.S. must be a leader in combating climate
39 change around the world, including exporting climate-friendly technologies to developing
40 countries. We will use innovative measures to dramatically improve the energy efficiency
41 of buildings, including establishing a grant program for early adopters and providing
42 incentives for energy conservation. We will encourage local initiatives, sustainable
43 communities, personal responsibility, and environmental stewardship and education
44 nationwide.
45
46

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

11 *Federal Lands*

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

26 **Partnerships with States**

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

36 **Metropolitan and Urban Policy**

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

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

10 11 **Firearms**

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

21 22 **Faith**

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

36 37 **The Arts**

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

44 45 **Americans with Disabilities**

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

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

13 **Children and Families**

14 If we are to renew America, we must do a better job
 15 of investing in the next generation of Americans. For
 16 parents, our first and most sacred responsibility is to
 17 support our children: we must set an example of excellence, turn off the TV, and help our
 18 children with their homework. But we must also support parents as they strive to raise
 19 their children in a new era. We must make it easier for working parents to spend time
 20 with their families when they need to. We will make an unprecedented national
 21 investment to guarantee that every child has access to high-quality Pre-K programs, and
 22 access to Head Start and Early Head Start and we will help pay for child care. We will
 23 ensure that every child has health insurance, invest in playgrounds to promote healthy
 24 and active lifestyles, and protect children from lead poisoning in their homes and toys.
 25 Improving maternal health also improves children's health, so we will provide access to
 26 home visits by medical professionals to low-income expectant first-time mothers. We
 27 must protect our most vulnerable children, by supporting and supplementing our
 28 struggling foster care system, enhancing adoption programs, and protecting children from
 29 violence and neglect. Online and on TV, we will give parents tools to block content they
 30 find objectionable. We also must recognize that caring for family members and managing
 31 a household is real and valuable work.
 32

33 *Fatherhood*

34 Too many fathers are missing—missing from too many lives and too many homes.
 35 Children who grow up without a father are five times more likely to live in poverty and
 36 are more likely to commit crime, drop out of school, abuse drugs and end up in prison.
 37 We need more fathers to realize that responsibility does not end at conception. We need
 38 them to understand that what makes a man is not the ability to have a child—it's the
 39 courage to raise one. We will support fathers by providing transitional training to get
 40 jobs, removing tax penalties on married families, and expanding maternity and paternity
 41 leave. We will reward those who are responsibly supporting their children by giving them
 42 a tax credit, crack down on men who avoid child support payments, and we will ensure
 43 that payments go directly to families instead of bureaucracies.
 44

45 **Seniors**

“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

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

8
9 We will take steps to ensure that our seniors have meaningful long-term care options that
10 are consistent with their individual needs, including the option of home care. We believe
11 that we must pay caregivers a fair wage and train more nurses and health care workers so
12 as to improve the availability and quality of long-term care. We must reform the
13 financing of long-term care to ease the burden on seniors and their families. We will
14 safeguard social security. We will develop new retirement plans and pension protections
15 that will give Americans a secure, portable way to save for retirement. We will ensure a
16 safe and dignified retirement.

17 18 **Choice**

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

22
23 The Democratic Party also strongly supports access to affordable family planning
24 services and comprehensive age-appropriate sex education which empowers people to
25 make informed choices and live healthy lives. We also recognize that such health care
26 and education help reduce the number of unintended pregnancies and thereby also reduce
27 the need for abortions.

28
29 The Democratic Party also strongly supports a woman's decision to have a child by
30 ensuring access to and availability of programs for pre- and post-natal health care,
31 parenting skills, income support, and caring adoption programs.

32 33 **Criminal Justice**

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

42
43 We will end the dangerous cycle of violence, especially youth violence with proven
44 community-based law enforcement such as the Community Oriented Policing Services,
45 and other community programs. We will reduce recidivism in our neighborhoods by
46 supporting local prison-to-work programs. We will continue to fight inequalities in our

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

6
7 We support the rights of victims to be respected, to be heard, and to be compensated.
8

9 Ending violence against women must be a top priority. We will create a special advisor to
10 the president regarding violence against women. We will increase funding to domestic
11 violence and sexual assault prevention programs. We will strengthen sexual assault and
12 domestic violence laws, support the Violence Against Women Act, and provide job
13 security to survivors. Our foreign policy will be sensitive to issues of aggression against
14 women around the world.
15

16 **A More Perfect Union**

17 We believe in the essential American ideal that we are not constrained by the
18 circumstances of birth but can make of our lives what we will. Unfortunately, for too
19 many, that ideal is not a reality. When our laws, our leaders or our government are out of
20 alignment with our ideals, the dissent and activism of ordinary Americans becomes the
21 truest expression of patriotism. We have more work to do. Democrats will fight to end
22 discrimination based on race, sex, ethnicity, national origin, language, religion, sexual
23 orientation, gender identity, age and disability in every corner of our country, because
24 that's the America we believe in.
25

26 We all have to do our part to lift up this country, and that means changing hearts,
27 changing minds, and making sure that every American is treated equally under the law.
28 We will restore professionalism over partisanship at the Department of Justice, and staff
29 the civil rights division with civil rights lawyers, not ideologues. We will restore vigorous
30 federal enforcement of civil rights laws in order to provide every American an equal
31 chance at employment, housing, health, contracts, and pay. We are committed to banning
32 racial, ethnic, and religious profiling and requiring federal, state and local enforcement
33 agencies to take steps to eliminate the practice.
34

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

1 in.

2
3 It is not enough to look back in wonder of how far we have come; those who came before
4 us did not strike a blow against injustice only so that we would allow injustice to fester in
5 our time. That means removing the barriers of prejudice and misunderstanding that still
6 exist in America. We support the full inclusion of all families in the life of our nation,
7 and support equal responsibility, benefits, and protections. We will enact a
8 comprehensive bipartisan employment non-discrimination act. We oppose the Defense of
9 Marriage Act and all attempts to use this issue to divide us.

10
11 But it is no good to be able to ride the bus when you can't afford the bus fare. We will
12 work to provide real opportunities for all Americans suffering from disadvantage; we will
13 pioneer new policies and remedies against poverty and violence that address real human
14 needs and we will close the achievement gap in education and provide every child a
15 world-class education. We support affirmative action, including in federal contracting
16 and higher education, to make sure that those locked out of the doors of opportunity will
17 be able to walk through those doors in the future. If we are to live up to our founding
18 promise of equality for all, we must make sure that opportunity is open to all Americans.

21 **IV. Renewing American Democracy**

22
23 Americans of every political stripe are hungry for a new kind of government. We want a
24 government that favors common sense over ideology, honesty over spin, that worries less
25 about losing the next election and more about winning the battles we owe to the next
26 generation.

27
28 In local platform hearings, the over 20,000 Americans who attended over 1600 hearings
29 demonstrated their commitment to reasserting government of, by and for the people.
30 Democrats want to continue the momentum of the election. Only by doing so can we
31 bring the change necessary to restore the promise of America.

32
33 The government we create will open up democracy to the people and protect our civil
34 liberties. We'll invite the service and participation of American citizens, and use the tools
35 of government and technology to lead us into a new era of connectedness, teamwork, and
36 progress. A Barack Obama Administration will make it clear to the special interests that
37 their days of setting the agenda in Washington are over, because the American people are
38 not the problem in the 21st century—they are the solution. We'll make every vote count,
39 because in America, everyone's voice matters in the political process.

41 **Open, Accountable and Ethical Government**

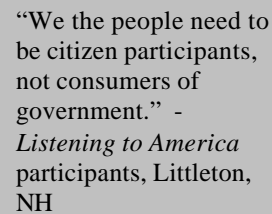
42 In Barack Obama's Administration, we will open up the doors of democracy. We will
43 create a new "open-source" government, using technology to make government more
44 transparent, accountable and inclusive. Rather than obstruct people's use of the Freedom
45 of Information Act, we will require that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

1 protected interest.

2
3 We will lift the veil of secret deals in Washington by publishing searchable, online
4 information about federal grants, contracts, earmarks, loans, and lobbyist contacts with
5 government officials. We will make government data available online and will have an
6 online video archive of significant agency meetings. We will put all non-emergency bills
7 that Congress has passed online for five days, to allow the American public to review and
8 comment on them before they are signed into law. We will require Cabinet officials to
9 have periodic national online town hall meetings to discuss issues before their agencies.

10
11 Implementing our Party’s agenda will require running an efficient government that gets
12 results. We will develop a comprehensive management agenda to prevent operational
13 breakdowns in government and ensure that government provides the level of service that
14 the American people deserve. Because we understand that good government depends on
15 good people, we will work to rebuild and reengage our federal workforce. We will make
16 government a more attractive place to work. Our hiring will be based only on
17 qualification and experience, and not on ideology or party affiliation. We will pay for
18 our new spending, eliminate waste in government programs, demand and measure results,
19 and stop funding programs that don’t work.

20
21 We are committed to a participatory government. We
22 will use the most current technology available to
23 improve the quality of government decision-making
24 and make government less beholden to special interest
25 groups and lobbyists. We will enhance the flow of
26 information between citizens and government—in both
27 directions—by involving the public in the work of
28 government agencies. We will not simply solicit
29 opinions, but will also use new technology to tap into
30 the vast expertise of the American citizenry, for the benefit of government and our
31 democracy.



“We the people need to be citizen participants, not consumers of government.” -
Listening to America
participants, Littleton,
NH

32
33 Americans want real reform that will help them pay their medical bills and put the
34 country on the path to energy independence. They are tired of lobbyists standing in their
35 way. So we’ll end the abuse of no-bid contracts and tell the drug companies and the oil
36 companies and the insurance industry that, while they may get a seat at the table in
37 Washington, they don’t get to buy every chair. We will institute a gift ban so that no
38 lobbyist can curry favor with the Administration. We will close the revolving door that
39 has allowed people to use their position in the Administration as a stepping-stone to
40 further their lobbying careers. We support campaign finance reform to reduce the
41 influence of moneyed special interests, including public financing of campaigns
42 combined with free television and radio time. As a national party, we will not take any
43 contributions from Political Action Committees during this election.

44
45 **Reclaiming Our Constitution and Our Liberties**

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

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

5
6 We support constitutional protections and judicial oversight on any surveillance program
7 involving Americans. We will review the current Administration's warrantless
8 wiretapping program. We reject illegal wire-tapping of American citizens.

9
10 We reject the use of national security letters to spy on citizens who are not suspected of a
11 crime. We reject the tracking of citizens who do nothing more than protest a misguided
12 war. We reject torture. We reject sweeping claims of "inherent" presidential power. We
13 will revisit the Patriot Act and overturn unconstitutional executive decisions issued
14 during the past eight years. We will not use signing statements to nullify or undermine
15 duly enacted law. And we will ensure that law-abiding Americans of any origin,
16 including Arab-Americans and Muslim-Americans, do not become the scapegoats of
17 national security fears.

18
19 We believe that our Constitution, our courts, our institutions, and our traditions work.

20
21 In its operations overseas, while claiming to spread freedom throughout the world, the
22 current Administration has tragically helped give rise to a new generation of potential
23 adversaries who threaten to make America less secure. We will provide our intelligence
24 and law enforcement agencies with the tools to hunt down and take out terrorists without
25 undermining our Constitution, our freedom, and our privacy.

26
27 To build a freer and safer world, we will lead in ways that reflect the decency and
28 aspirations of the American people. We will not ship away prisoners in the dead of night
29 to be tortured in far-off countries, or detain without trial or charge prisoners who can and
30 should be brought to justice for their crimes, or maintain a network of secret prisons to
31 jail people beyond the reach of the law. We will respect the time-honored principle of
32 habeas corpus, the seven century-old right of individuals to challenge the terms of their
33 own detention that was recently reaffirmed by our Supreme Court. We will close the
34 detention camp in Guantanamo Bay, the location of so many of the worst constitutional
35 abuses in recent years. With these necessary changes, the attention of the world will be
36 directed where it belongs: on what terrorists have done to us, not on how we treat
37 suspects.

38
39 We recognize what leaders on the front lines of the struggle against terrorism have long
40 known: to win this fight, we must maintain the moral high ground. When millions
41 around the world see America living up to its highest ideals, we win friends and allies in
42 this struggle for our safety and our lives, and our enemies lose ground.

43
44 For our Judiciary, we will select and confirm judges who are men and women of
45 unquestionable talent and character, who firmly respect the rule of law, and who listen to
46 and are respectful of different points of view and who represent the diversity of America.

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

5
 6 Our Constitution is not a nuisance. It is the foundation of our democracy. It makes
 7 freedom and self-governance possible, and helps to protect our security. The Democratic
 8 Party will restore our Constitution to its proper place in our government and return our
 9 Nation to our best traditions—including our commitment to government by law, and not
 10 by men.

11 12 **Voting Rights**

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

29 30 **Partnership with Civic Institutions**

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

37 38 **District of Columbia**

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

42 43 **Tribal Sovereignty**

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

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

8
9 We support the efforts for self-determination and sovereignty of Native Hawaiians,
10 consistent with principles enumerated in the Native Hawaiian Sovereignty Act.

11
12 **Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the Northern Mariana Islands and the U.S.**
13 **Virgin Islands**

14 We believe that the people of Puerto Rico have the right to pursue the political status of
15 their choice, obtained through a **fair, neutral and** democratic process of self-
16 determination. The White House and Congress will work with all groups in Puerto Rico
17 to enable the question of Puerto Rico’s status to be resolved during the next four years.

18 We also believe that economic conditions in Puerto Rico call for effective and equitable
19 programs to maximize job creation and financial investment. Furthermore, in order to
20 provide fair assistance to those in greatest need, the U.S. citizens in Puerto Rico should
21 receive treatment under federal programs that is comparable to that of citizens in the
22 States, without the current tight restrictions on Medicaid funding and with equitable
23 participation in other federal health care assistance programs and programs providing
24 refundable tax credit to working families.

25
26 We support full self-government and self-determination for the people of Guam,
27 American Samoa, the Northern Mariana Islands, and the Virgin Islands, and their right to
28 decide their future status. We will seek out input from Guam on relevant military matters
29 and we acknowledge the unique health care challenges that Pacific Island communities
30 face. For all those who live under our flag, we support strong economic development and
31 fair and equitable treatment under federal programs.

32