



# BLUE PRINT

**for Making Sense in 2008**

CAMPAIGN<sup>FOR</sup> AMERICA'S FUTURE

**OURFUTURE.ORG**

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# What's this booklet about?

At this historic moment, we progressives need to do everything we can to persuade undecided Americans to join our side.

But how do we get through to those Americans when they seldom talk—or even think—like those of us in the progressive base? By framing the issues that are most important to *them* in language that appeals to *them*. The goal of message framing is not to sell out or sink to the lowest common denominator. It is to start from a point of agreement and show how that agreement naturally leads to progressive solutions.

This booklet is intended to give you a taste of the kind of information available from the Campaign for America's Future *Making Sense 2008* project. For many more talking points, hot facts, poll results, and progressive solutions, visit us at [www.ourfuture.org/makingsense](http://www.ourfuture.org/makingsense).

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# Economy



**WE KNOW** that “free market” fundamentalism, deregulation, and irresponsible tax cuts have wrecked our economy. Yet Americans generally favor free markets, lower taxes, and smaller government. So don’t start by attacking these ideas. Frame the issue by agreeing with Americans that the current economic system is broken.

**We Should Say:** Our economy’s broken, we’re in a recession, and the conservatives in Washington don’t get it.

**We need change.** Let’s make certain the economy works for Main Street, not Wall Street. Let’s build a society where hard-working Americans can earn a decent living, afford high-quality health care, access world-class education for their children, and retire with security.

# Energy



**WE KNOW** that we need to end our national addiction to oil and address the problem of global warming. Yet soaring gas prices are hitting Americans hard, and they want immediate action. So don't start by talking about sacrifice. Frame the issue by agreeing with Americans that our nation needs to become energy independent.

**We Should Say:** We can't afford our addiction to imported oil. Oil prices are squeezing families, sabotaging the economy, and undermining our national security.

**We need change.** Let's invest in energy efficiency and renewable energy—because we can't drill our way to energy independence. In the short term, let's crack down on oil company price gouging, put a stop to Wall Street oil speculation, and pressure companies to start exploring for oil on the millions of acres of federal land they already lease.

# Health



**WE KNOW** that health care should be a human right, and it's a national shame that 47 million Americans are uninsured. Yet over 90 percent of *voters* are insured, and they are focused on the reality that their own families' health care has become too expensive and too insecure. So don't start with the uninsured. Frame the issue by agreeing with Americans that we need quality, affordable health care that gives us all the choice to keep our current insurance.

**We Should Say:** Americans are struggling with soaring health care costs. Insurance and drug companies are putting profits before people. The McCain plan would make the problem worse by pushing employers to end health insurance benefits, leaving families on their own. **We need change.** Let's create an American system that lets us keep our doctors and gives us the choice of private or public insurance coverage. Let's focus on lowering costs and guaranteeing that every American has access to quality, affordable health care. Declare your support for these principles at [www.healthcareforamericanow.org](http://www.healthcareforamericanow.org).

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# Housing



**WE KNOW** that our nation is faced with a wave of foreclosures caused largely by irresponsible lending practices. Yet conservatives have been fairly successful at blaming homeowners for the crisis instead of the rapacious mortgage industry or negligent conservative regulators. So don't start by talking about foreclosures. Instead, frame the issue by agreeing with Americans that the banking industry is out of control.

**We Should Say:** The banking industry is out of control. To increase profits, finance companies sold subprime and non-traditional mortgages to millions of Americans who—the companies knew—could not afford to make the payments. Bush and conservative regulators did nothing to check this rash of irresponsible lending. **We need change.** Let's help stem the tide of foreclosures to limit the collapse of housing prices. But we shouldn't bail out irresponsible bankers. Instead, we should adopt common-sense protections to stop the worst of their predatory lending practices.

# Immigration



**WE KNOW** that it is impossible to arrest and deport some 12 million immigrants who are in the United States illegally. Yet illegal immigration is a genuine problem and our fellow citizens demand a solution. So don't defend the current failure. Frame the issue by agreeing with Americans that the system is out of control.

**We Should Say:** Our immigration system is broken. Conservatives don't have a realistic solution to this problem—they just want to divide and distract Americans.

**We need change.** Let's protect our borders, crack down on corporations that hire illegal workers for cheap labor, and require immigrants who are here to register and meet a series of strict requirements to earn citizenship.

# Infrastructure



**WE KNOW** that Bush and his conservative allies have intentionally starved government, allowing our national infrastructure of roads, bridges, and schools to deteriorate. Yet Bush has also run up large budget deficits and an even larger range of investment deficits. So don't start by calling for more government spending. Frame the issue by agreeing with Americans that we have to shift our priorities.

**We Should Say:** Bush and his allies have wasted hundreds of billions of taxpayer dollars on corporate giveaways, tax cuts for the rich, and an unnecessary war in Iraq. Conservatives promise to continue those disastrous policies. **We need change.** Let's get our priorities straight, investing in areas that make our nation stronger—like better roads, safer bridges, sturdier levees, and modernized schools.

# Taxation



**WE KNOW** that taxes are necessary, and that when used wisely, they can fund programs that protect freedom, expand opportunity, and provide security. Yet no one likes to pay taxes, and much of our tax code is unfairly tilted toward the rich and corporations. So don't defend taxes. Frame the issue by agreeing with Americans that the system is unjust.

**We Should Say:** Our tax system is unfair. The tax burden on working families is increasing while the wealthy and the large corporations pocket more and more tax breaks. Now conservatives want further cuts in corporate and top-end tax rates, leaving middle-income families to pick up the tab.

**We need change.** Let's cut taxes on the middle class, get rid of tax giveaways and loopholes for wealthy individuals and corporations, and ensure that everyone pays their fair share.

# Trade



**WE KNOW** that NAFTA and similar trade agreements have shipped jobs abroad and undermined wages at home. Americans are now concerned about the risks of globalization. Yet no one thinks we can build walls around our economy. So don't attack trade. Frame the issue by agreeing with Americans that we need to promote fair trade.

**We Should Say:** Our trade policies are weakening America. Corporations are getting tax breaks to move good American jobs—especially manufacturing jobs—to countries with cheap labor and low product standards. Simply put, this is un-American. Conservatives promise more of the same disastrous policies. **We need change.** Let's end tax breaks for companies that move jobs overseas, renegotiate NAFTA, challenge China and others to play by the same set of rules, and build global rules to protect worker rights, consumers, and the environment.

**For many more talking points  
and facts about economic issues,  
visit the**

**CAMPAIGN<sup>FOR</sup> AMERICA'S FUTURE**

**war room at:**

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