

STRAIGHT**TALK**

2007

COMMON SENSE FOR THE COMMON GOOD

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STRAIGHT TALK: INTRODUCTION

Our time has come. Progressives are on the move. We are driving the political debate. This edition of Straight Talk provides new information about public opinion, it updates statistics, and it provides new hot facts for the debate. But the basic themes need not change. The 2006 elections proved that Straight Talk—the vision, direction and arguments it makes—captures the tempo of our time.

The 2006 election exposed the collapse of conservatism. For six years, conservatives had largely their way—with catastrophic effects. Each of the Bush signature failures and follies—Iraq, Katrina, trickle-down economics, privatization of Social Security, Enron and the corporate crime wave, stem cells, Terri Schiavo and poisoned food—can be traced back to conservative ideas and the ideologues and think tanks that championed them. In 2006, Americans had had enough. They voted for change—from the U.S. Senate down to the local city councils.

Conservatives now scramble to divorce themselves from the Bush debacle. The circular firing squad has formed. “We have to recognize that this was a defeat for Republicans, not for conservatives,” former House Speaker Newt Gingrich summarized the 2006 Republican election rout. Republicans, George Will echoed, “were punished not for pursuing but for forgetting conservatism.” Gingrich suggests the failure was due to the “four ‘c’s”—the absence of candor and competence, and the surplus of corruption and consultants.

Wrong. Bush’s failures were not due to corruption or incompetence—although both abounded. They were due to the original conception. Conservatism has failed because it gets the world wrong. Its foreign policy misconceptions have left us less secure and more vilified across the world. Its domestic misconceptions have left us more divided and less secure. Its social and political strategies drive us apart rather than bring us together.

Large majorities of Americans now understand that we are on the wrong track. They are looking for a new direction. They want bold leadership, with real solutions that address real challenges. In poll after poll, conservatives grow more isolated, as self-described moderates and independents embrace more progressive postures.

Progressives now drive the debate. Americans increasingly want the debacle in Iraq brought to an end. The new Congress surprised itself by passing legislation demanding that the troops be withdrawn by a

date certain. The president's veto stands in the way, but that argument will continue.

On clean energy, on health care, on trade, on affordable college, a growing majority of Americans are looking for action. Americans have always embraced opportunity. We've never cared much about economic inequality, as long as every person willing to work hard has a fair shot at the American dream. But increasingly, we see an economy that works—even at its best—only for the few, and not for the many. We see CEOs pocketing hundreds of millions while plundering the companies they lead, sending jobs offshore, selling off assets to generate false profits, cooking the books, using foreign tax shelters and backdating stock options—even as dedicated workers face layoffs, broken pension promises, soaring health care costs.

But while Americans are moving our way, conservative ideas still shackle our imaginations and the conservative message machine backed by powerful corporate lobbies still stifles our progress.

Progressives need to do more than simply stop the damage; we need to propose real changes. We need to raise the bar.

Bringing the debacle in Iraq to an end is vital, but we must challenge the assumption that America's military should police the world, and sustain an "empire of bases" in every corner of the globe.

Saving Social Security from privatization helped begin the unraveling of the conservative project, but it is not sufficient. We need a new economic strategy that makes this global economy work for the many, and not just the few. We need a new public social contract—for living wages, health care, pensions—to replace the private contract that the corporations are now shredding. We need to give workers power, and hold executives accountable to law. We need a global economic strategy in trade and investment that works for the nation, not simply for stateless multinationals.

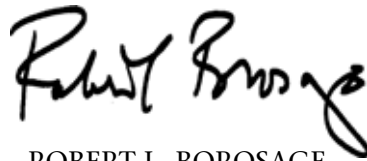
Americans are demanding an end to the costly big oil energy policies of the Bush-Cheney years. But we need to rouse the country to a bigger mission—a concerted drive for energy independence, investing in clean energy and conservation, rebuilding our cities, unleashing our science and technology, and generating good jobs in a green new deal that will make us leaders, not laggards, who will meet the fateful challenges of catastrophic climate change.

Health care is once more on the agenda, but we cannot settle for "incremental change" that only adds to the costs, leaving more Americans with no, or too little, insurance. It is time to take on the insurance and drug industries, to insist that this country join every other industrial nation in providing affordable, high-quality health care to everyone.

For over a quarter century, conservatives have dominated our politics. They have created a society in which we grow apart, rather than together, an economy in which working and middle-class Americans work harder and longer simply to stay afloat. They have left our nation less secure abroad and our citizens with less shared prosperity at home.

It's time for change. We can build a more just and more prosperous nation. We can meet the global challenges we face—from stateless terrorists to catastrophic climate change. We can take on the entrenched interests and the calcified ideas that stand in the way.

That will take organizing, energy, will and bold vision. Straight Talk 2007 provides ammunition for that debate, offering ideas and arguments that will arm progressives for the months ahead. Conservatives have failed. The struggle for the next era has begun. Now is the time to make our voices heard.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert Borosage". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Robert" and last name "Borosage" clearly legible.

ROBERT L. BOROSAGE
Co-Director,
Campaign for America's Future

AN ECONOMY THAT WORKS

INTRODUCTION

President Bush boasts about a glittering economy—jobs are up, profits are up, stock prices are up and GDP is growing. Most Americans think he's out of touch. They live with wages that aren't keeping up with costs. They see good jobs getting shipped abroad while companies are cutting back on health care, pensions and other benefits. For the first time, parents worry their children won't be better off than the generation before them. The Bush White House thinks they just haven't heard the good news. And this is the economy at its best. The conservatives in Washington have mortgaged the country—running up record deficits and foreign debts—without making the investments vital to future prosperity. That bill is starting to come due. It is time for a dramatically different direction.

THE CHALLENGE

This economy isn't working for ordinary families or the nation. Poverty is up. Health care costs have exploded; home heating and gas prices are at record levels; college costs are soaring. Wages can't keep up. Good jobs are getting shipped overseas—we've lost three million manufacturing jobs over the last seven years, and now white collar jobs are heading in the same direction. Companies are cutting back on benefits, abandoning pensions and passing on health care costs. Families are scrambling to make ends meet. In 2005, households spent more than they earned for the first time since 1933.¹ Household debt is at record levels, as basic expenses like housing and transportation consume a record share of family income.

One income can rarely support a family anymore, so both parents in most families work. Too often that leaves children alone after school and makes it hard for families to find time together—much less to cope with sickness or medical emergencies. Family-leave policies, day care and after-school programs haven't kept pace with the new reality. For the nation, the story isn't much better. America remains a rich country, blessed with natural resources and hard-working people. But we're living on borrowed money and not using those loans to make the investments we need for the future. We've almost doubled our national debt over the past seven years and squandered the money largely on tax cuts and costly military actions. We haven't taken the necessary steps to end our dangerous addiction to foreign oil or regain our competitive edge in the global economy. We're hemorrhaging jobs and running dangerously high deficits. We must change course.

HOT QUOTE

"The president claims he has created a strong economy, but working Americans are telling a different story. They feel the American dream slipping further from their grasp and they know the reality is that this economy is not delivering for middle-class families. The Bush administration's call for another round of tax cuts for the wealthy few when middle-class families are struggling to pay their bills is another example of misplaced Republican priorities."

REP. NANCY PELOSI

January 2006

THE CONSERVATIVE FAILURE

President Bush has had his way. His self-declared “CEO administration” has pushed through tax cuts favoring the rich and corporations and persuaded Congress to pass legislation promoting privatization, deregulation, and corporate trade policies. They’ve weakened worker rights at home and abroad, rolled back environmental and consumer protections and blown a hole in the federal budget.

The results are working for the elite, those Bush once jokingly called “my base.” Corporate profits are up, and CEOs and top management are pocketing record percentages of the take. The average compensation of a CEO in 1980 was about 40 times that of the average worker in the company. In 2005, it was more than 400 times. Taxes on wealth and corporations have been slashed. We’ve locked in massive budget deficits, and sooner or later, working families will get stuck with the bill.

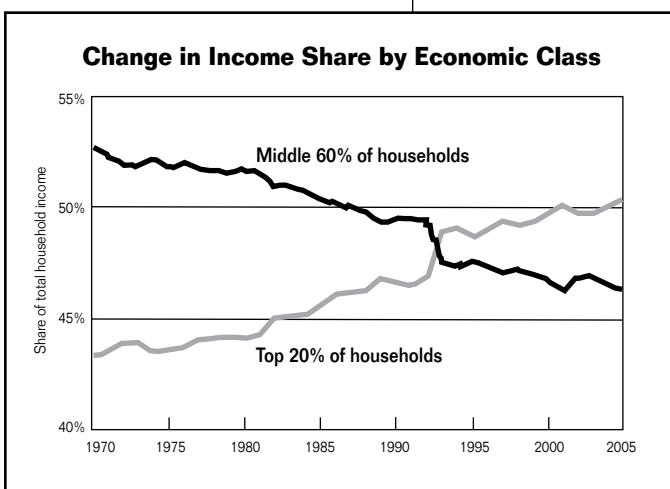
Corporate-friendly economic policies are cutting workers out of a fair share of the wealth they produce. Productivity has increased but workers haven’t seen the benefits in their paychecks. In 2005, households had to work more hours to pay for three basic expenses—housing, transportation and medical care—than at any point in the past 25 years.² Add the cost of day care, because it takes two incomes to keep up with the bills, and it’s a recipe for stressed families and lonely children.

FACTS AT A GLANCE

- Income inequality is the worst ever recorded. The top 20% of earners make more than the bottom 80% combined.³ The top 1% of wealth holders has as much wealth as the bottom 95%.⁴
- Wages are stagnant—and not keeping up with prices. Since Bush came to office gas prices have nearly doubled and average public college tuitions are up 42%.⁵ But the median household income is down 2.7% over the same period.⁶
- As of 2006, the average annual S&P 500 CEO pay was \$15.2

million apiece.⁷ The average compensation of a CEO in 1980 was about 42 times that of the average worker in the company; in 2005, it was about 411 times.⁸

- Americans are paying more of their wages in monthly debt payments than ever. In 2005, we spent more than we earned for the first time since the Great Depression.⁹
- More than 20% of children under age 6 are growing up in poverty,¹⁰ the highest rate of child poverty among the developed nations.¹¹



THE PROGRESSIVE SOLUTION

We need policies that put people first, invest in our future and help us get out of the hole we are in. We have to empower employees and hold executives accountable. We need help for hard-pressed families, and we need a global strategy that works for the nation not just for multinationals and that benefits Main Street not just Wall Street. The progressive solution begins with the following priorities:

- **Put People First.** We need to invest in areas vital to our future: in modern schools and affordable college; in world-class communications and transport systems; and, in alternative energy and energy efficiency. We need to roll back the welfare-like tax cuts for the wealthy and corporations, and use that money to invest in America. That will create more jobs here now and less debt in the future.
- **Make Work Pay.** We need an economy that rewards work. Increase the minimum wage to lift working families out of poverty and strengthen the middle class. Enforce labor laws and remove barriers to workers organizing so they can bargain collectively for a fair share of the profits they create.
- **Make the Economy Work for Working Families.** In most families both parents work; it's time to recognize that. Paid family leave allows parents to care for newborns or sick parents without risking their jobs. Affordable preschool and after-school programs provide children safe learning environments while parents are at work. Universal health care would relieve parents' worries about getting good health care for their kids if they lose their jobs.
- **Create a Global Strategy for Main Street not Wall Street.** We must end the corporate dominance over our nation's tax, trade and energy policies, and recognize that in a global economy what's good for America's multinational corporations isn't necessarily good for America's working families. Corporations can't be allowed to use our tax code to park profits offshore and send jobs overseas. Government investment can spearhead the renewal of America's productive might. With \$300 billion over 10 years, the Apollo Project could create 3 million jobs, develop new technologies and end our dependence on imported oil.
- **Pass progressive tax reform.** The tax code is now a swamp of corporate tax dodges and exemptions. We need a simplified and far more progressive tax code. With globalization generating Gilded Age inequality, those who benefit most should contribute most to the public investments we need.

HOT QUOTES

"It's time to return to a world where workers obtain their fair share of the nation's economic growth. The best way to do so is to give them a stronger voice in the workplace..."

SENATOR EDWARD KENNEDY

March 27, 2007

"In the early days of our republic, President Andrew Jackson established an important principle of American-style democracy -that we should measure the health of our society not at its apex, but at its base. Not with the numbers that come out of Wall Street, but with the living conditions that exist on Main Street. We must recapture that spirit today."

SENATOR JIM WEBB

Response to the President's State of the Union,
January 2007

THE PUBLIC PULSE

Americans are increasingly worried about being able to maintain their standard of living.

41%

- 41% of people say they worry about being able to maintain their standard of living.
- 59% of people making less than \$30,000 per year and 43% of people making \$30,000–\$74,000 per year say they worry about maintaining their standard of living.

(Gallup poll, April 5–7, 2007)

Americans have faith in, but still think the American Dream is increasingly difficult to achieve.

79%

- 79% of workers believe the next generation will be “same” or “worse off” than the current generation.
- 50% of workers believe that the American Dream is still obtainable, but
- 74% of workers think the American Dream is harder to achieve
- 77% of workers believe that hard work should lead to economic security for their family.

(Lake Research Partners and Change to Win, March 2007)

74%

77%

Americans are very negative about Bush’s handling of the economy.

Approve—38% Disapprove—60% *(AP/IPSOS, April 2–4, 2007)*

Americans’ views of unions are changing.

More working people than ever—some 60 million—say they would join a union if they had a chance.

(Peter D. Hart Research Associates and AFL-CIO, December 2006)

Americans are overwhelmingly in favor raising the minimum wage to \$7.25.

Favor—84% Oppose—14% *(Pew Research Center, March 2007)*

There is strong support for Democrat candidate economic narrative

57%

57% agree that, “Americans are working hard but their incomes do not keep up with the costs of health care, energy and outsourcing and competition that threaten all our jobs. My main mission is to make sure America remains a middle class country. That means keeping America safe from terrorism, but it also means tax relief for the middle class, particularly for college tuition, getting drug and health care costs down, and investing in energy independence to create American jobs.”

37%

37% agree that, “we need to get back to basic values that make our country strong. That means cutting taxes so individuals, families and businesses can prosper and our economy can grow. There is no substitute for families that teach right and wrong. I will address health care and education by giving more choice and trusting people. And I will never forget my first responsibility—a strong military and keeping America safe from the terrorists.”

(Democracy Corps poll, April 12, 2007)

TALKING POINTS

There is growing frustration with the right-wing policies that provide welfare to the rich and reward corporations while cutting programs that average families depend on. Americans distinguish between corporate success and corporate greed. They believe it is time that government sided with working and middle-class Americans. The progressive alternative rebuilds America's economy for everyone.

- **Put people first.** We're all in this together. Trickle down tax cuts don't work. We need to invest in areas vital to our future—education, infrastructure, 21st century communications and alternative energy.
- **Empower workers and make work pay.** Globalization and the non-enforcement of labor laws have tilted the balance in the workplace so that employees no longer get a fair share of the profits they help generate. Productivity goes up but wages are stagnant. We need to abide by our labor laws, raise the minimum wage and run a full-employment economy.
- **End the abuse and hold CEOs accountable.** Crack down on stock option plans that give corporate leaders an incentive to cook the books. End sweetheart deals that protect executive pensions but leave workers with empty promises. The government needs to do its job and shareholders need tools to hold business accountable to investors.
- **Create a national strategy for jobs and growth.** We're shipping good jobs abroad and losing our technological, innovative, and economic edge. We can't keep borrowing from foreign countries to buy the goods they produce. We need a new strategy that moves us to energy independence, invests in science and technology, helps seed new industries here in the United States and tackles the unsustainable imbalances with countries like China.
- **Give working families a break.** American families are struggling to make ends meet. Health and education costs are exploding, and people are working longer hours just to keep their heads above water. Americans are spending more than they save. It's time to put the government on the side of the common good, not the special interests—and make sure that Americans have access to affordable health care, quality education and a safe, clean environment.

HOT QUOTES

"And let's be clear. It's not as if America hasn't been successful economically these past years. But the measure of success doesn't relate what's happening in households across our country, because, while productivity and corporate profits are up, the fruits of that success just hasn't reached many of our families. It's like trickle-down economics, but without the trickle. As a result, the gap between those who are enjoying the fruits of the modern economy and those who aren't is growing wider."

SENATOR HILLARY CLINTON

May 2007

HOT QUOTE

"This is the first generation where parents are worried that their children will not do better than they did. The president should not brag about the strength of the economy while middle-class families continue to fall further behind."

"Middle-class Americans' paychecks are flat or dropping, while health care costs continue to rise and home heating costs are skyrocketing. U.S. trade deficits and the borrowing from China to fund tax cuts will have real and harsh impacts on future generations. Recent news about cuts in workers' pay and insecurity about their pensions is also increasing the economic concerns of the American people. And yet the Bush administration is cheerleading policies that help the wealthy while doing nothing to address these fundamental problems."

REP. NANCY PELOSI

January 2006

ELEVATOR SPEECH

This economy doesn't work for working people. Instead of creating good jobs to compete in the global economy, we've given free rein to corporations, cut taxes on the wealthy and reduced protections for workers. Americans are working harder and getting less for it. Wages are stagnant. Costs for housing, health care and home heating oil have skyrocketed. Millions of Americans are living paycheck-to-paycheck and are only a serious illness or personal crisis away from poverty. While CEOs pocket tax cuts, bonuses and stock options, working Americans worry about credit card payments and the price of a tank of gas.

We need to change course. Conservatives say everyone is on their own, but that's never been true about America. We're all in this together, and we all do better when the benefits of prosperity are widely shared. We need new policies that put people first. We need to make sure work pays a living wage and that children aren't forgotten when both parents are out of the house. We need to invest in areas vital to the future and reclaim the manufacturing prowess that made us the strongest economy in the world. Workers need real enforcement of labor laws so they can organize on the job and get a fair share of the profits they help generate. In an economy of unceasing change, we must ensure that health care and retirement plans are secure and cannot be lost because of a change in jobs. And we have to develop a trade strategy that works for the nation not just for the multinationals.

We've seen this before. When the new industrial economy was created at the turn of the last century, robber barons profited amidst the desperation of factory workers denied decent wages. Americans came together and created new rules—the forty-hour week, the right to organize, a minimum wage and worker health and safety provisions—that helped build the broad middle class that is the triumph of America. Now that middle class being squeezed in the new global economy. We must come together again and create the rules and policies needed to empower people once more, and ensure the existence of the middle class glue that holds America together.

COMEBACKS AND COUNTERATTACKS

CONSERVATIVE SPIN	PROGRESSIVE RETORT
<p>Tax cuts are working. Employment numbers are up. Home ownership is at record levels. Increasing taxes now will reduce investment and cost the economy jobs.</p>	<p>The reality is that the tax cuts and trade policies of this administration have created more jobs in China than here. If we rolled back the top-end tax cuts, closed corporate offshore tax shelters and used that money to invest in areas vital to our future—affordable college, energy independence, world-class communications and transport—we’d create more good jobs here and less debt for the future.</p>
<p>Governments can’t choose winners. Competition lets consumers choose, and efficient companies win. The last thing we need is more taxes to support big government programs.</p>	<p>Ironically, under George Bush, we’ve been hemorrhaging private manufacturing jobs. The largest source of new jobs under George Bush has been publicly-funded jobs—created by the military buildup, homeland security and state and local governments. Too many companies have used the tax cuts to merge, purge workers and outsource jobs abroad.</p> <p>And sometimes government must lead. We have a national imperative on energy independence that can’t wait for a “market solution”—soaring gas prices, catastrophic climate changes and massive upheavals for families. We need to stop subsidizing big oil and instead mobilize science and technology to develop alternative energy sources and improve energy efficiency. That will generate jobs and new industries.</p>
<p>Government is the problem not the solution. Raising the minimum wage or encouraging unions just would make U.S. companies less flexible and competitive. All this will cost jobs not generate them.</p>	<p>The measure of an economy isn’t whether it rewards CEOs or corporations but whether it works for most Americans. Now it’s out of whack. Companies are making profits and CEO salaries are soaring, but workers aren’t gaining a fair share. Raising the minimum wage is simply the right thing to do. It is outrageous for a person to work full time and not be able to lift his or her family out of poverty. And empowering workers is the only way we know of—short of government redistribution—to ensure that the benefits of growth are widely shared.</p>
<p>Family leave policies are a burden on small companies. Tax credits for child care are a better idea.</p>	<p>Tax credits are part of the answer but they aren’t enough. Let’s stop talking about family values and start actually valuing families. People need higher wages and more generous leave; companies will find that their employees are more, not less, productive and committed.</p>

"Hard work should be valued in this country, so we're going to reward work, not just wealth."

SENATOR JOHN EDWARDS

HOT QUOTE

MORE RESOURCES

The Economic Policy Institute, <http://www.epi.org>

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, www.cbpp.org

Center for Economic and Policy Research, <http://www.cepr.net/>

CEPR Data Bytes, http://www.cepr.net/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=8&Itemid=108

CEPR's Economic Seminar Series, http://www.cepr.net/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=10&Itemid=36

EFCA, <http://araw.org/takeaction/efca/index.cfm>

ActNow.org, <http://www.actnow.org/>

AFL-CIO, <http://www.aflcio.org/issues/jobseconomy/>

The Conservative Nanny State by Dean Baker, <http://www.conservativenannystate.org/>

United For a Fair Economy's Responsible Wealth Project, <http://www.responsiblewealth.org/>

National Jobs for All Coalition, <http://www.njfac.org/index.html>

All Together Now Common Sense for a Fair Economy by Jared Bernstein, http://www.epinet.org/content.cfm/books_all_together_now

Take Back Your Time, <http://www.simpleliving.net/timeday/>

Families and Work Institute, <http://www.familiesandwork.org/>

Endnotes

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FAIR TRADE

INTRODUCTION

The United States is running trade deficits with the world that cannot be sustained. We are already the world's largest debtor. This year, we will rack up the largest trade deficits ever—about \$1 trillion, nearly \$250 billion to China alone. To finance this debt, we either borrow from abroad or sell off companies and other assets at the rate of nearly \$2.5 billion per day. This cannot go on.

For years, there has been furious debate about trading agreements—NAFTA, WTO and the terms of China's trade status with the United States. Americans have generally favored global trade while growing more skeptical of its costs as jobs in textiles and then steel and auto production were lost to international competition. Now the service sector is under the same unrelenting pressure. It's past time to end the stale debate and recognize that free trade is a slogan, not a policy. Global markets are created by laws and rules. All trade is managed, that's why the trade agreements are thousands of pages long. The question is who makes the rules, who benefits and who pays the costs.

THE CHALLENGE

U.S. trade policy has been largely designed by and for global corporations and banks. Our trade accords protect corporate rights but not worker rights; investors but not the environment. The result has been to create a race to the bottom in which companies have every incentive to move jobs to countries with the cheapest labor, the fewest workplace regulations, and the weakest environmental protections.

The results are clear. We have lost more than 3 million manufacturing jobs since 2000, while China is becoming the manufacturing center of the world.¹ They lend us the money to buy the goods they make with the jobs our companies have taken to them. To add insult to injury, our tax code even gives companies incentives to move jobs abroad.

Americans do get access to cheaper goods; Wal-Mart alone is responsible for about 10% of America's trade deficit with China in 2005.² But as cheap products come in, good jobs go out. American workers find themselves with stagnant wages and less job security while constantly increasing their productivity.³ Those that lose their jobs are likely to end up with jobs that pay less and offer fewer benefits.

Entire industries have now moved abroad. We run a growing deficit with China in advanced technology goods, while China has developed a trillion dollar reserve.⁴ We are borrowing money that our

HOT QUOTE

One of the things that's led to a destructive undermining of workers' rights in this country is our trade agreements. If you go back to when NAFTA was passed, and GATT, and the creation of World Trade Organization, they were written specifically so there wouldn't be any provisions for workers' rights. No protection for the right to organize, the right to strike, the right to collective bargaining. Those were all excluded from trade agreements.

Now, why was that? Cheap labor. They also were looking to move it to places where if possible they could have prison labor, slave labor, child labor. They didn't want environmental restrictions. So what happened is NAFTA and GATT opened up the door for that. And it really undermined workers in this country, it undermined workers in other countries.

SENATOR DENNIS KUCINICH

February 21, 2007

HOT QUOTE

“What I believe we need in this country is fair trade, not just unabashed free trade. What I would do is, first of all, any future international trade agreement should have the following components as part of the law, not as a side agreement. Worker protections, because this is critically important comparing work standards in America and in other countries. We should have environmental protections. One of the unfortunate sides of NAFTA, which I supported, was that it was supposed to improve air quality. It hasn't happened. So there has to be very, very strong labor protections and environmental protections. Last, wage disparities. I think it's critically important that any future trade agreement look what other countries have in terms of wages and find ways to promote equity in those wage disparities. But we are in a global world.”

GOVERNOR

BILL RICHARDSON

February 21, 2007

children will have to repay even as we sell off assets that our children will not control. We need a new strategy for America in the global economy.

THE CONSERVATIVE FAILURE

Republican and Democratic administrations alike have pursued similar trade policies, defined by, for and with global corporations. Both have touted trade accords like NAFTA and the WTO as a source of jobs and growth and dismissed looming trade deficits. Both have slighted workers who have suffered as good jobs moved abroad.

Conservatives argue that the effects of job loss due to trade are easily absorbed in an economy in which millions of jobs are created and destroyed every year. They scorn requiring protections in trade agreements for workers and the environment as meddling in the internal affairs of other nations. They ignore the reality that China and other countries play by a different set of rules and fix the value of their currencies to make their exports cheaper. Corporate liberals essentially take the same position, adding that, if we could afford it, displaced workers should be provided with retraining, wage insurance and temporary support. These good intentions, however, generally do not survive tight budgets.

Neither political party has a response to the unsustainable trade deficits. Both end up leaving it to market forces to make the necessary adjustments. China, Japan and the East Asian countries will eventually stop keeping their currencies cheap. The value of the dollar has already begun to fall, but it isn't clear how far down it must go for US exports to be competitive again. Without a strategy to rebuild production in the United States and a coordinated effort overseas to boost demand and manage currency adjustments, we risk a long and painful economic recession here and the perils of a global depression abroad.

FACTS AT A GLANCE

- The rise in the U.S. trade deficit with China in the last ten years has displaced production that could have supported over 2 million U.S. jobs. Most of these jobs (1.8 million) have been lost since China entered the WTO in 2001.⁵
- Average CEO salaries are now more than 400 times what the typical employee makes...⁶ but CEOs are still pushing outsourcing to save labor costs.
- 3.4 million white-collar service jobs, largely from the information technology industry, are predicted to move overseas by 2015.⁷
- Imports from China total more than \$200 billion or one fourth of our annual trade deficit.⁸ Energy imports account for another \$263 billion of the trade deficit.⁹

- The manufacturing sector lost 3.1 million jobs from 2000 to 2006,¹⁰ the worst record since the demobilization after World War II.

THE PROGRESSIVE SOLUTION

In a hole like this, there are no easy answers. We need new thinking and a long-term strategy. To rebuild the U.S. economy and end our reckless reliance on foreign loans we must take the following steps:

Stop Digging. The first step is common sense, when you are in a hole—stop digging. We should pass no more trade accords—no new rounds of the WTO, no regional accords with Central America or Latin America and no bilateral accords—until we have a detailed strategy that begins to redress our trade and production deficits. We must also eliminate subsidies that reward companies taking jobs overseas.

A Global Strategy for Main Street America. The United States needs a global strategy that serves Main Street and not just the global financiers on Wall Street. This starts with an industrial policy designed to spark development of new industries and good jobs here. It requires targeted investment in science and technology and improving our schools to ensure that our children get the best education possible. We also need national health care so that corporations are not put at a competitive disadvantage by out-of-control costs.

The Apollo Project for Good Jobs and Energy Independence should be a starting point. A concerted drive for energy independence—mobilizing public and private investment to engage science and develop efficient energy technologies—can create good jobs here while making our economy more competitive, dramatically reduce our imports of foreign oil, and help U.S. companies take the lead in emerging markets for efficient appliances and alternative fuels.

International coordination for global growth. As the value of the dollar declines, we will need a global strategy to increase demand in the world economy. China and other East Asian countries will have to agree to let their currencies increase in value and boost domestic demand to generate growth. Europe and Japan have to kick start growth to take up some of the slack. And poor countries will need a global Marshall Plan to develop their economies. This could be paid for by a tax on short-term currency speculation, which would limit the destabilizing volatility in foreign exchange markets.

Enforce worker rights and environmental protections.

The United States should champion labor rights and environmental protections abroad. Just as at the beginning of the 20th century we put rules around the national economy so now at the beginning of the 21st we should promote the spread of such rules throughout the global economy. We should lead the world in creating a fair trade system that empowers workers, shares the benefits of productivity and supports a sustainable environment.

HOT QUOTE

“The American people overwhelmingly disagree with the Bush administration’s view that sending good jobs overseas benefits average Americans... It is time for America’s leaders to admit trade agreements like NAFTA have not delivered on their promises of job creation and economic development. Our policymakers need to dramatically rethink, reform, and renegotiate our trade policies to reflect new priorities and new realities.”

JOHN SWEENEY
President of the AFL-CIO
 (Statement on CAFTA May 28, 2004)

Help those who lose their jobs. Workers dislocated by trade suffer unemployment, lower pay, mortgage foreclosure, and loss of health care. We need a proactive system that ensures health and wage insurance and provides educational opportunities and job placement help.

THE PUBLIC PULSE

For the first time in history, Americans think the next generation will be worse off

79%

- 79% say they think the next generation will be the same or worse off.

15%

- 15% of Americans feel the next generation will be better off

(Lake Research Partners "American Dream Survey," March 2007)

Americans are concerned about the effects of the global economy on the U.S.

48%

- 48% of Americans believe the U.S. is harmed by the global economy

25%

- 25% believe the U.S. benefits

(Wall Street Journal/NBC News poll, March 2007)

Americans are turning against free trade agreements

46%

- 46% of Americans feel that free trade agreements have hurt the U.S.

28%

- 28% feel that free trade agreements have helped the U.S.

(Wall Street Journal/NBC News poll, March 2007)

48%

- 48% of Americans believe that free trade agreements cost jobs

12%

- 12% believe they create jobs

(Pew Research Center, December 2006)

Unions are regaining popularity

57%

- 57% of people have favorable opinions of Unions

33%

- 33% have unfavorable opinions

(Pew Research Center, May 2005)

TALKING POINTS

- Our current trade deficits cannot be sustained. We are selling off assets and exporting jobs, and too often the new jobs being created have lower pay and benefits. We have to end the tax loopholes and subsidies that reward global corporations for outsourcing U.S. jobs abroad. And we should provide real help to workers and families who lose their jobs through no fault of their own—wage support, retraining and help with locating new jobs.
- We need a national strategy to rebuild our economy and reclaim our competitiveness. Programs like the Apollo Project will use federal investment to jumpstart development of new technologies, help capture the growing green markets for alternative energy and energy efficiency, and put Americans back to work at good jobs.
- We need global coordination to grow our way out of this hole. If we don't act together, the market's answer is likely to be a falling dollar and the risk of a global recession. We need a trading system that helps lift up wages and conditions abroad so that they are not driven down here at home. And we should provide worker rights the same international protection as investor rights and protect the environment and not just the corporations.

ELEVATOR SPEECH

In the industrial economy, General Motors was the hallmark company. Its unionized workers won job security, health care, pensions and good wages. In the global economy, Wal-Mart is the model. It is the largest company in the world by revenue, employs 1.2 million Americans and alone, accounts for 2% of U.S. GDP. As of 2005, by itself, Wal-Mart runs a \$10 billion annual trade deficit with China.

Wal-Mart crushes unions and pays its workers too little for them to afford health care. It costs state and federal governments billions in welfare and health care and is facing class action suits for its discriminatory practices against women. It relentlessly leverages its purchasing power over suppliers. *The Washington Post* reports it even presses its suppliers in China to pay their workers less than the Chinese minimum wage. It drives the race to the bottom here and abroad.

We want to compete and win in the new global economy. But we need a strategy for the nation and not just for the multinationals. Trade is essential but we can't accept a trade policy that puts good jobs on the auction block for cheap goods. We need to create a fair trading system that works for everyone not just Wal-Mart.

HOT QUOTE

"One of the major reasons why the middle class is shrinking, poverty is increasing, and the gap between the rich and poor is growing wider is due to our disastrous unfettered free trade policy. If the United States is to remain a major industrial power, producing real products and creating good paying jobs, we must develop trade policies that protect not just the CEOs of large corporations, but the working people of our country... Let me be clear. I am an internationalist. I support fair trade. I want poor people in developing countries and throughout the world to have a higher standard of living than they do today. But, we should not be destroying the American middle class in the process."

CONGRESSMAN BERNIE SANDERS

(Website statement on Free Trade, 2005)

COMEBACKS AND COUNTERATTACKS

CONSERVATIVE SPIN	PROGRESSIVE RETORT
<p>Trade increases efficiency, promotes economic growth and leads to lower consumer prices. In the long run everyone benefits even if there is some job loss along the way. Building protectionist walls would make things worse for workers and consumers.</p>	<p>No one wants to build walls. But we're running up massive foreign deficits while shipping good jobs abroad. We are borrowing money that our children will have to repay even as we sell off assets that our children will not control. This can't go on. We've got to stop pretending that all is well, and take action to rebuild our economy and reduce our trade deficit. We should be worried about hitting a wall not building one.</p>
<p>Trade deficits aren't a problem; the market will make the adjustments necessary to bring them down.</p>	<p>Trade deficits are the canary in the coal mine. When they are this large, you know there's trouble ahead. If we leave it up to market forces, the trade deficit won't be the only thing that comes down. The house-of-cards system that sends IOUs to China instead of U.S.-manufactured goods won't survive the "natural" adjustment. Without a coordinated strategy with other countries, the resulting free fall in the value of the dollar is likely to drive the United States into recession and drag the rest of the world economy with us.</p>
<p>The U.S. economy destroys 15 million jobs every year. The number of jobs that are lost because of outsourcing or overseas competition is minimal, and the economy is creating new jobs all the time.</p>	<p>Job loss is a real hardship in today's economy. We need to be concerned about everyone who loses a job. One-third of workers who lose their job—for any reason—take more than three years to find a new one. And for workers who are displaced by trade, the figures are even worse. We're losing good jobs with decent pay and benefits, and replacing them with jobs that don't measure up. We can't keep ignoring this trend, or the American Dream will simply be a fairy tale for our children.</p>
<p>Trade accords aren't the place for social policy. Labor rights and environmental protections are national policy questions. We shouldn't interfere with the internal choices our trading partners make.</p>	<p>We can either lift conditions up abroad or global competition will lower them here. We should require protection of core labor standards so that workers can organize to improve their wages and working conditions and not be condemned to sweatshop labor. We should require basic environmental protections so corporations can't force countries to allow them to pollute the air or seas. Global warming gives us all a stake in a clean environment.</p>

MORE RESOURCES

Economic Policy Institute, provides updates/analyses on the global economy and its effects on ordinary Americans, <http://www.epi.org/>

The Institute for Policy Studies, provides analysis of and proposals for alternative forms of global trade, http://www.ips-dc.org/global_econ/

Offshoring and Job Insecurity Among U.S. Workers, CRS, <http://www.senate.gov/~hutchison/RL32292.pdf>

TransFair U.S.A, provides real world models for the potential of fair trade on the global market, <http://www.transfairusa.org/>

Fair Trade Federation, <http://www.fairtradefederation.org/>

The AFL-CIO, provides updates on the politics of global trade and its effects on working people, <http://www.aflcio.org/issues/jobseconomy/>

The Center for Economic Policy Research, www.cepr.org

CEPR's Global Imbalances, Power Shifts and the Future of Multilateralism, http://www.cepr.net/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1092&Itemid=182

CEPR's Understanding Low-Wage Work in the United States, <http://www.inclusionist.org/files/lowwagework.pdf>

CEPR's Economic Seminar Series, http://www.cepr.net/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=10&Itemid=36

IFWatchnet, <http://ifwatchnet.org/>

Peace through Interamerican Community Action, <http://www.pica.ws/fairtrade/index.html>

National Jobs for All Coalition, <http://www.njfac.org/index.html>

HOT QUOTES

"I am not opposed to trade; I support fair trade. We need to level the playing field and enact trade agreements that include meaningful labor and environment standards that will prevent the exporting of U.S. jobs and the exploitation of workers abroad. Our trade policies should lift people out of poverty, not keep them in it... Inadequate free trade agreements not only hurt the United States, they also hurt our neighbors."

CONGRESSWOMAN HILDA L. SOLIS
(Statement Opposing CAFTA May 28, 2004)

"Large, multinational corporations understand that each successful worker or producer in a developing nation is a potential consumer. At the same time, they must accept that when a high-paying job is relocated from a developed nation to a poorer nation, a consumer is lost. The Fair Trade model benefits corporations, farmers, producers, individuals and economies. Workers in developing nations receive fair wages for crops and products, and are able to afford more goods produced domestically as well as abroad...The WTO should abandon destabilizing, exploitative models, and support a long-term approach that makes free trade fair—a model for equality, debt reduction, and the creation of a robust global economy benefiting all."

CONGRESSMAN SHERROD BROWN
(*"The Global Economy,"* Sept. 9, 2003)

HOT QUOTE

"Last year our trade deficit was \$726 billion. The external debt of the United States—of us—is now \$3 trillion. We have been buying more than we have been selling and making it up by borrowing. Now you don't have to be a PhD in economics to know that you cannot continue to do that forever. Market forces at some point will force us to rebalance our trade, which will mean reducing the prices we get paid and paying more for the prices of things that we buy from overseas because there's a whole raft of things that we no longer make in America.

...In effect, we embraced a global market system without a social contract...The task for progressives once again is to assert the need for democratic government, not just to help those who are losers in the global economy, not just to clean up after what corporate America has done, but to be a counterweight to the maldistribution of political power that comes from the maldistribution of income and wealth."

JEFF FAUX
Economic Policy Institute
(Feb. 23, 2006, Washington, DC)

Endnotes

¹Lawrence Mishel and Ross Eisenbrey. "What's Wrong with the Economy?" Economic Policy Institute. June 2006. <http://www.epi.org/content.cfm/pm110>.

²Joshua Holland. "Wal-Mart's China Price." *Alternet*. November 2005. <http://www.alternet.org/workplace/27829>.

³Jared Bernstein. "Monetary Policy and the State of the Economy". Testimony to the House Committee on Financial Services." *Economic Policy Institute*. 16 February 2007. http://www.epi.org/content.cfm/webfeatures_viewpoints_monetary_plcy_economy.

⁴Sophia Cao. "China's Foreign Reserves Rise Past \$1.2t." *Associated Press*. 12 April 2007. <http://chinadigitaltimes.net/tag/reserves>.

⁵Robert E. Scott. "Costly Trade With China: Millions of U.S. Jobs Displaced with Net Job Loss in Every State." *Economic Policy Institute*. May 2007. <http://www.epi.org/content.cfm/bp188>.

⁶Sarah Anderson and John Cavanagh. Institute for Policy Studies. Chuck Collins and Eric Benjamin. United for a Fair Economy. *Executive Excess 2006*. August 2006. <http://www.faireconomy.org/reports/2006/ExecutiveExcess2006.pdf>.

⁷Linda Levine. *Offshoring (a.k.a. Offshore Outsourcing) and Job Insecurity Among U.S. Workers*. Congressional Research Service. 18 June 2004. <http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/39338.pdf>.

⁸U.S. Census Bureau. *Table 1288: U.S. Exports, Imports, and Merchandise Trade Balance by Country: 1990 to 2005*. 19 June 2006. <http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/tables/07s1288.xls>.

⁹U.S. Census Bureau. *Table 1289: U.S. Exports, General Imports, and Merchandise Trade Balance by Selected SITC Commodity Group: 1990 to 2005*. 9 June 2006. <http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/tables/07s1289.xls>.

¹⁰Robert E. Scott. "Manufacturing Job Loss: Productivity is Not the Culprit." Economic Policy Institute. February 2007. <http://www.epi.org/content.cfm?id=2626>.

NEW ENERGY FOR AMERICA

INTRODUCTION

Soaring gas prices, record oil company profits, Katrina and catastrophic climate change, soldiers dying in Iraq's deserts and unsustainable trade deficits—Bush's Big Oil energy policy is running us toward ruin. It's time to change course.

We need to launch a concerted drive for energy independence. In 1961, President Kennedy challenged us to send a man to the moon within a decade and launched the Apollo plan to make it happen. Now we need a similar vision—an Apollo initiative for energy independence, mobilizing science and technology and investing in energy efficiency and alternative energy.

The benefits are immense. We can create jobs, capture growing global green energy markets, eliminate our dependence on Persian Gulf oil, slow the rush towards global warming, reduce our trade deficit and improve the health of our children. It's time to act.

THE CHALLENGE

Everyone knows how dependent we are on oil, and everyone who buys gas knows the hit \$3 a gallon puts on the household budget. It isn't likely to get better. The world's oil production is at or near its peak. Increasing demand by China, India and the industrializing world is driving prices ever higher—and spurring an intense scramble for secure sources of supply. The United States has less than 3% of the world's oil reserves and imports more than 60% of the oil we use. We can't drill our way out of the hole we're in.

Our dependence on foreign oil propels a skyrocketing trade deficit and costs our economy productive investments that could create good jobs here. The money we spend on oil ties us to corrupt governments in politically unstable parts of the world. And our increasingly outdated methods of power generation, distribution and use help make the United States the biggest contributor to global warming. Altogether, our energy consumption habits are aiming a shockwave at the American way of life.

Global demand for oil—up to 84 million barrels a day—has exhausted spare capacity and turned the oil market into a game of musical chairs. There's nothing in the pipeline to cushion us from unexpected supply shocks, and unrest or upheaval in the world's unstable oil-producing countries will mean there won't be enough oil to go around. Our margin of error is gone. Now is the time to solve this problem.

HOT QUOTE

"It would be nice if we could produce our way out of this problem, but it's just not possible. We only have 3% of the world's oil reserves. We could start drilling in ANWR today, and at its peak, which would be more than a decade from now, it would give us enough oil to take care of our transportation needs for about a month. As a result, every single hour we spend \$18 million on foreign oil...Budding democracies, despotic regimes, or havens of terror—they get our money because we need their oil."

SENATOR BARACK OBAMA

(Energy Security Is National Security, February 28, 2006)

HOT QUOTES

“Our present system of energy is weakening our national security, hurting our pocketbooks, violating our common values and threatening our children's future. Right now, instead of national security dictating our energy policy, our failed energy policy dictates our national security.”

SENATOR HILLARY CLINTON

MAY 23, 2006

“Winning the 21st-century energy race is as important as winning the 20th-century space race. The country that split the atom can end its dependence on oil and launch a new energy solution. We can call it energy 2.0.”

SENATOR HILLARY CLINTON

MAY 31, 2007

THE CONSERVATIVE FAILURE

The 2005 Bush energy plan claims to address our energy problem but in fact shovels billions more in subsidies to energy companies and gives them greater freedom to pollute the nation's groundwater. Bush's response to tighter oil supplies is to drill in the Arctic and offshore. The bill's few alternative energy programs were first in line to get chopped in the budget cuts.

Why would the administration and Congress push such ineffective energy policy in the face of such a daunting energy crisis? Look no further than campaign contributions. Since 1998 oil interests have funneled 80% of their political giving—more than \$70 million—to the Republicans in power. Americans pay the cost of this corruption daily.

Now, with gas prices soaring, President Bush has announced that the nation must end its addiction to oil. But he put forth no serious plan to deal with the problem. The Bush administration has failed to meet a pressing national security imperative—and seize an emerging economic opportunity. Federal commitment to new energy technologies and efficient energy use could reduce our perilous dependence on foreign oil and create millions of new jobs. Some 2.7 million manufacturing jobs have been lost since Bush was first elected, with no end in sight.

FACTS AT A GLANCE

- A 10-year, \$300 billion investment in energy efficiency could create 3.3 million new jobs in the United States.¹
- Gas prices at the pump are up 50% since 2000, and the price of home heating oil has almost doubled over the same period.²
- The 2005 energy bill pushed through the Congress and signed by President Bush created \$6 billion in subsidies and tax breaks for oil and gas companies though in the same year those companies raked in more than \$64 billion in profits.³
- A single terrorist attack on key Saudi facilities could knock 6 million barrels per day off the world market and push oil prices past \$100 per barrel.⁴
- Unchecked climate change, higher sea levels and temperature fluctuations over the next decades are, insurance companies warn, liable to cost the US \$100 billion to \$300 billion per year.⁵

THE PROGRESSIVE SOLUTION

Nothing short of a crash program for energy independence will solve our energy problems. Targeted public investment can accelerate development of new energy technologies and jumpstart demand for energy-efficient alternatives.

The Apollo Project for Good Jobs and Energy Independence calls for a federal commitment of \$30 billion a year for 10 years to pave the way to energy independence.

This program will develop new technologies, mobilize billions in private capital, tap new sources of energy, dramatically increase energy efficiency and provide an estimated 3 million jobs for Americans in the growth industries of the future. The economic growth it stimulates will more than repay the initial public investment. And we could pay for this by rolling back subsidies for big oil and taxing the excess profits they're now pocketing.

What does a clean energy future look like? Imagine:

- New factories and retooled plants producing wind turbines, solar panels, and hydrogen fuel cells.
- A revived American auto industry leading the world in developing the next generation of clean energy cars such as Flex-Fuel vehicles and hybrids.
- Schools, offices and homes retrofitted to become more energy efficient with large savings for business and families.
- A 21st century public infrastructure with mass transit and high-speed rail systems and a modernized electrical grid.
- Cleaner air and an energy-efficient economy running on cleaner fuels and renewable sources of power such as upgraded electrical infrastructures that reduce emissions from coal plants.

Endorsed by a broad coalition of environmental, labor, business and other groups, the Apollo Project provides a solution that resonates with the American "can-do" spirit. We can't drill our way to independence. We need to get America's energy policy out of the hands of oil companies and implement the Apollo plan.

HOT QUOTE

"A bold initiative for energy independence will create three million jobs. We're going to create jobs in manufacturing, in farms, and in construction... The initiatives that we put forth will create jobs in the areas of research and development, in the areas of greening our buildings and our cities. It is a tremendous opportunity for America as we consider alternative energy and at the same time reduce our dependency on foreign oils."

JEROME RINGO

President of the Apollo Alliance

(America's Oil Needs and New Energy Options,
March 3, 2006)

THE PUBLIC PULSE

Americans believe we need to lessen our dependence on foreign oil.

64%

- 64% of Americans believe that America “needs to act immediately to make our country less dependent on oil and move to cleaner, alternative energy sources.” (Quinlan Rosner, May 2007)

Americans believe less dependence on foreign energy will improve national security.

55%

- 55% of Americans believe “Becoming less dependent on other countries for our supply of energy” is a top ranking move to strengthen the nation’s security. (Foreign Policy Index)

Americans want a government that will lead in energy alternatives.

66%

- 66% of Americans in a 2006 post-election poll support government taking the lead in promoting alternative energy rather than allowing businesses to make major energy investment decisions. (Greenberg Quinlan Rosner, November 2006)

Americans want to expand and create clean energy alternatives.

64%

- 64% of Americans are willing to pay higher taxes on gasoline and other fuels if the money was used for research into renewable sources like solar and wind energy.

75%

- 75% of Americans are willing to pay more for electricity if it were generated by renewable sources like solar or wind energy. (CBS/New York Times, April 2007)

71%

- 71% of Americans believe that, “The most important thing we should do is move quickly to expand the production of clean, alternative energy and reduce our use of oil and coal.” (Greenberg Quinlan Rosner, April 2007)

Americans believe global warming effects are apparent.

76%

- 76% of Americans believe the effects of global warming are apparent now, including 50% who strongly believe this. (Quinlan Rosner, May 2007)

Americans want the government to prioritize the environment.

68%

- 68% of Americans believe a higher priority for the government should be encouraging conservation.

21%

- Only 21% believe increasing production should be a higher priority. (CBS/New York Times, April 2007)

TALKING POINTS

- Current US energy policy weakens our economy, threatens our national security and harms the environment. We need a dramatic change.
- Federal investment in new energy technologies would create new markets, unleash private investment, generate millions of new jobs and help rebuild the nation's manufacturing sector.
- Clean energy and reliance on renewable sources of energy will improve the environment and slow the rate of catastrophic climate change.
- Rebuilding the public infrastructure and retrofitting buildings to become more energy efficient will reduce the nation's energy bill and save businesses and families money.
- The President and the Congress have demonstrated a profound failure of leadership. They only conduct business as usual by continuing to throw subsidies at the oil companies. We need immediate change to solve this problem.

ELEVATOR SPEECH

Nowhere is the failure of the right more apparent and more costly than on energy. The big oil policy has lavished subsidies on the oil companies while starving investment in alternative energy and energy efficiency. Last year the Congress gave \$6 billion in subsidies and tax breaks to oil and gas companies even as they raked in record profits. We grow more dependent on foreign oil, endangering our security, undermining our economy and putting our environment at risk.

There is an alternative. The Apollo Project for Good Jobs and Energy Independence will invest in alternative energy and energy efficiency. It will generate millions of new jobs and capture the growing green markets of the future. It will revitalize manufacturing and save businesses and families on energy bills. Let's get our energy from the Midwest and not the Middle East.

This just makes sense. But it won't happen without leadership. It won't happen unless we break the hold big oil has on Washington. And it won't happen unless we tap the imagination and the energy of Americans in forging our own future.

HOT QUOTE

"America's lifeblood is its energy supply, and foreign energy dependence makes American homes and businesses vulnerable. Our economy and our national security are hurt by the fact that we have grown way too dependent on foreign energy, and way too dependent on oil as our major energy source."

This is not a new problem—what the Bush Administration calls our "addiction to oil" took years to set in. But, the fact is that America's reliance on foreign oil has steadily increased to 65 percent under President Bush, not decreased. We need to declare independence from foreign oil, and we need to do it now."

GOVERNOR BILL RICHARDSON

(A plan for American energy independence, March 18, 2006)

COMEBACKS AND COUNTERATTACKS

CONSERVATIVE SPIN	PROGRESSIVE RETORT
<p>Oil production is nowhere near capacity, and new technology makes it possible to exploit new sources of supply.</p>	<p>You're missing the point. There is no spare capacity today. The world uses 84 million barrels of oil a day. If anything happens that reduces the supply of oil needed to meet that demand, there's nowhere to get more oil right now. The price of oil will skyrocket, and markets will ration the available supply to the highest bidders.</p>
<p>More big government is not the answer. Free markets will create the solutions we need.</p>	<p>Markets are important and they're going to be a big part of the solution. After all, the government is not going to start making hybrid cars. But government can lead and can help to overcome the entrenched special interests—read big oil—that stand in the way.</p>
<p>Climate change is cyclical not man-made, and any attempt to address global warming will cost millions of hard-working Americans their jobs.</p>	<p>If you can't accept the scientific evidence then maybe you should check with the insurance companies who sell policies for coastal areas to see how seriously they take climate change. The only "experts" who still discount the connection between burning fossil fuels and global warming work for institutes supported by energy companies.</p> <p>And as for costing Americans their jobs, you don't understand markets. Investing in new energy sources will generate jobs and capture markets of the future—by creating the next generation of efficient appliances and alternative energy supplies. Even Arnold Schwarzenegger understands this and California is already moving to take advantage of emerging possibilities.</p>
<p>The Apollo plan is another pie-in-the-sky scheme that's going to be a waste of the taxpayers' money.</p>	<p>Programs for a sustainable energy future aren't fantasy. They are reality in state and local governments around the nation and world. Brazil has already moved towards energy independence by adopting ethanol made from its sugar cane. We need a solution equal to the scope of the problem. Federal support can help states make the change necessary to kick our dependence on foreign oil and do something about global warming.</p> <p>We're talking about making an investment in our economy's productive capacity. About once again making America an industry leader. About creating the next generation of good jobs. A program that invests \$30 billion every year for 10 years to develop new energy technologies will spur economic growth and pay for itself over the course of its existence.</p>

MODEL PROJECTS

Fueling the Washington State Economy. In 2006, Washington enacted a “renewable fuel standards” law, which requires that automotive fuels sold in the state contain ethanol or biodiesel, displacing imported oil with cleaner, home-grown energy sources.

Today, to help meet the demand for biofuels, Seattle-based Imperium Renewables is building the largest biodiesel refinery on the West Coast. It is at Grays Harbor, in an area with major unemployment, where recent closures at a Weyerhaeuser sawmill and pulp mill cost 342 workers their jobs. The biodiesel plant, partly financed by the Seattle City Employees’ Retirement System, is creating about 300 union jobs during its construction and is expected to create 50 permanent jobs once it is up and running.

Re-Energizing Pennsylvania. In 2004, leaders in Pennsylvania enacted an “alternative energy portfolio standard,” which will require that at least 18 percent of electricity sold in the state be generated by alternative sources by 2020.

Amid the growing Pennsylvania market for renewables, and recognizing the leadership Spanish wind-energy giant Gamesa Corp. opened its U.S. headquarters in Philadelphia and is building a manufacturing plant near Johnstown, at the site of a closed steel mill. “We are most impressed with Pennsylvania’s recent initiatives in renewable energy,” said Iñaki López Gandásegui, Gamesa’s chief executive officer, in announcing the plant location. The portfolio standard, he said, “represents the kind of forward thinking that has inspired Gamesa to come to Pennsylvania.”

The headquarters, plant, and Gamesa’s wind farms in the state are expected to create up to 1,000 Pennsylvania jobs through 2010, and hundreds of long-term manufacturing and management jobs thereafter.

MORE RESOURCES

The Apollo Alliance, a energy think-tank that works to build a broad-based constituency in support of a sustainable and clean energy economy that will create millions of good jobs for the nation, reduce our dependence on foreign oil, and create cleaner and healthier communities, <http://www.apolloalliance.org/>

American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy, is a nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing energy efficiency as a means of promoting both economic prosperity and environmental protection, <http://www.aceee.org/>

National Resources Defense Council, a legal and science advocacy group that focuses on a full range of environmental issues, <http://www.nrdc.org/>

Renewable Energy Partnership Project, and organization that promotes the advancement of renewable energy technology through policy research. that seeks to define growth strategies for renewables that respond to competitive energy markets and environmental needs, <http://www.repp.org/>

Set America Free, brings together prominent individuals and non-profit organizations concerned about the security and economic implications of America's growing dependence on foreign oil, <http://www.setamericafree.org/>

Union of Concerned Scientists, science-based nonprofit working for a healthy environment and a safer world, <http://www.ucsusa.org/>

Reports

Apollo Alliance

New Energy for America: The Apollo Jobs Reports, Good Jobs & Energy Independence, http://www.apolloalliance.org/docUploads/ApolloReport_022404_122748.pdf

Redefining the Prospects for Sustainable Prosperity, Employment Expansion, and Environmental Quality in the US, <http://www.apolloalliance.org/docUploads/Part%202%20Apollo%20Perryman%20Report%5B1%5D.pdf>

National Resources Defense Council

Coal in a Changing Climate, <http://www.nrdc.org/globalWarming/coal/coalclimate.pdf>

Ethanol: Energy Well Spent, <http://www.nrdc.org/air/transportation/ethanol/ethanol.pdf>

Renewable Energy Partnership Project

Wind Energy for Electric Power, http://www.repp.org/articles/static/1/binaries/wind%20issue%20brief_FINAL.pdf

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HEALTH CARE FOR ALL

INTRODUCTION

America's health care system is broken. We devote more of our GDP to health care than any other industrialized nation, but more than 80 million Americans go without coverage over the course of a year. Our infant mortality rate is higher and our life expectancy is shorter than other developed countries. And now costs are soaring out of control.

At its best, American health care is the finest in the world. Our MRI machines, path-breaking medicines and microsurgery techniques make miracles everyday—if you can afford it. We ration care by cost—and more and more Americans are finding that they cannot afford the care they need. Rising costs already bludgeon state budgets, burden companies' competitiveness and send families scrambling. And not far off now, the retirement of the baby boom threatens to explode the federal health care budget.

THE CHALLENGE

Unlike every other industrialized country, America does not have a national system of public health insurance. Instead, intense lobbying by insurance companies over decades has ensured that we have a mixed system. Medicare, Medicaid and the Veterans Administration cover seniors, the poor and veterans. Most other Americans get employer-provided health care, with a wide range of plans, co-pays and coverage.

Insurance companies, HMOs and private providers compete with one another, supposedly providing more choice and better coverage—but the major results are soaring costs and massive waste. Private insurers spend about 8% on administrative costs or around four times the amount Medicare spends for the same purpose.¹

Private insurers have high administrative costs because they try to insure people who won't get sick and screen out people who will. In the upside-down world of private health insurance, that's how they make money. People without insurance can get health care in emergencies, but that cost is passed on to taxpayers and the insured.

Double-digit annual increases in health care costs are now taking a wrecking ball to this inefficient system. Costs are rising because people are living longer and because expensive medical advances can prolong lives and cure diseases previously beyond reach. We need to find a better way to fund health care in our country.

HOT QUOTE

"We have to stop using words like 'access to health care' when we know with certainty those words mean something less than universal care. Who are you willing to leave behind without the care he needs? Which family? Which child? We need a truly universal solution, and we need it now."

PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

JOHN EDWARDS

February, 2007

HOT QUOTE

“This is a program written by and for the insurance companies and the drug companies by Bush political appointees and GOP legislators...[It] shovels billions in subsidies to the insurance companies...[But] seniors are paying the price in confusion, catastrophic drug cutoffs and escalating drug prices. And American taxpayers pay for the costliest health system in the world, with the worst health results in the industrial world. So, when people say the stench in Washington doesn't matter, take another whiff. It is time to clean out those stables.”

REV. JESSE JACKSON

(Chicago Sun Times, Jan. 24, 2006)

THE CONSERVATIVE FAILURE

The Bush administration has expended little time or energy addressing the crisis in health care. The only exception is the \$534 billion prescription drug plan for seniors, Medicare Part D. Bush pushed through a plan written by and for drug companies and health insurers. Instead of providing a simple benefit through Medicare, the plan forces seniors to sift through a blizzard of policies offered by insurance companies. Worse, the plan fails to control costs because—unbelievably—the legislation actually **prohibits Medicare from using its bulk-buying power to negotiate a better price for seniors.** With that one measure, the administration turned the plan from a benefit for seniors into an estimated \$70 billion subsidy to the drug companies—enough to ensure full coverage for all seniors.

The Bush prescription drug bill reveals the cost of the corruption in Washington. The chair of the House committee that ushered the bill through, Billy Tauzin, resigned after its passage to take a \$2 million-a-year job as CEO of the drug manufacturers' political action committee. The point person for the administration—who suppressed the real cost of the program from Congress—got an “ethics waiver” to negotiate with the drug companies for a lobbyist job as he was pushing the bill. Drug companies hiked their political contributions to the Republican majority, focusing on the leadership and key committees. Industry got a smashing return on its investment. Americans got the shaft.

The other conservative initiative on health care is the Health Savings Account—essentially an individual insurance policy with a \$5,000-a-year deductible. It's fine if you are healthy or wealthy, but you wouldn't want to bet your future on it. In fact, for most Americans, if adopted widely, Health Savings Accounts would only add to the costs of those with regular insurance.

FACTS AT A GLANCE

- Since 2000, premiums for employer-sponsored health insurance for families have increased by 87% (compared to 12% increase in inflation and 19% increase in annual wages.)²
- As of 2005, nearly 45 million Americans were totally uninsured of whom 8.3 million were children.³
- At least \$286 billion, enough to cover all of the uninsured and to provide full health care coverage for everyone in the United States, is annually spent on paperwork by competing insurance companies.⁴
- In the first 6 months of 2005, HMOs banked profits of \$6.98 billion. This was a 21.2% increase in profits over the same period a year earlier.⁵ The health services/HMO sector spent \$32 million on lobbying between 2000 and 2006.⁶

- According to a June, 2006 article in the New England Journal of Medicine, seniors hit with a coverage gap like the Part D donut hole are 22% more likely to die than seniors who aren't forced to pay thousands in out-of-pocket expenses.⁷
- Allowing Medicare to negotiate drug prices would save \$332 billion over 7 years, enough money to eliminate the donut hole entirely with no extra cost to taxpayers.⁸

THE PROGRESSIVE SOLUTION

Universal, affordable and comprehensive health care is America's great, unfinished agenda. The Medicare program, which already covers 41 million older Americans, could serve as a model for extending affordable health insurance to everyone. Under Medicare, the federal government pays for health insurance for Americans 65 and older. Senior citizens choose their own doctors and make their own decisions without worrying about preexisting conditions or losing their insurance.

The bold new healthcare proposal authored by Yale University Professor Jacob Hacker builds on the most popular elements of Medicare and employment-based health insurance to provide good health care coverage for all Americans while controlling spiraling health care costs. This plan allows people to keep the health care coverage they have and offers Americans the choice to buy into a public plan like Medicare. The Hacker plan combines personal responsibility with choice and an employer contribution to create a new framework ensuring that everyone is covered, and that risk is spread broadly. It provides for controlled costs and quality improvement; it guarantees lifetime coverage and health security; is easy to understand; is efficient to administer; and costs no more than the nation is currently spending on health care and offers substantial cost-savings to the 50 states

The only losers under an expanded Medicare would be the drug companies and private insurance providers. That's why they shell out millions for campaign contributions, front groups, and battalions of lobbyists to prevent such a system from being adopted.

Lastly, a universal system reflects the true meaning of the common good—a collective risk pool that everyone pays into and that everyone takes out of when they need it. It doesn't divide Americans into tiny puddles of public or private plans, with the associated bickering over what payment comes out of which plan.

HOT QUOTE

"We're already paying for universal coverage. We're just not getting it. We're pouring a large portion of every health care dollar into the waste of the private insurance companies, their executive salaries and stock options, their lobbying and advertising. [Universal health care] would remove that waste by making the government the single payer for health care...It is time to take the profit out of health care coverage, time to provide for the American people, not for the insurance companies...Privately delivered health care, publicly financed—has worked well in other countries, none of which spend as much per capita on health care as the United States."

CONGRESSMAN DENNIS KUCINICH

(Universal Health Care, April 2006)

THE PUBLIC PULSE

The American people are concerned about the cost of health care and are uneasy about current delivery systems. Polls show majorities are ready to raise taxes to cover all Americans. But Americans with health insurance are often vulnerable to scare campaigns suggesting that reforms will damage their coverage. They know something must be done but are worried that any cure might be worse than the disease. With any plan facing saturation bombing by the insurance companies, progressives have a lot of educating to do.

Making sure all Americans have health insurance is widely supported

69%

- 69% of Americans say “it is the responsibility of the federal government to make sure all Americans have health care coverage.”

(Gallup Poll, November 2006)

Americans believe there is need for change in the health care system

90%

- 90% say that there is a need for fundamental changes or complete restructuring of America’s health care system.

(CBS News/New York Times Poll, February 2007)

Americans want more, and they are willing to pay for it

- If you had to choose, which do you think is more important for the country to do right now, maintain the tax cuts enacted in recent years or make sure all Americans have access to health care?

Cutting taxes	18%
Access to health insurance	76%

- Would you be willing or not willing to pay higher taxes so that all Americans have health insurance they can’t lose, no matter what?

Willing	60%
Not willing	34%

- (If “willing”) Would you be willing or not willing to pay \$500 a year more in taxes so that all Americans have health insurance they can’t lose, no matter what?

Willing	82%
Not willing	16%

(CBS News/New York Times Poll, February 2007)

The order of concerns about health care costs is:

47%

45%

39%

- Having to pay more for health care/health insurance—47%
- income not keeping up with rising prices—45%
- not being able to afford the health care services you need—39%

(Kaiser Family Foundation Survey, October 2006)

Americans support Medicare drug price negotiation

- 79% say that Medicare should be allowed to negotiate with drug companies to get better prices for prescription drugs for senior citizens.

(ABC News/Washington Post Poll, January 2007)

79%

TALKING POINTS

Universal health care is common sense but faces rough opposition. Although some drug and insurance companies have forged alliances to increase coverage, it is ultimately against their interests. And they are well-financed, well-organized, and well-equipped to oppose it. The Harry and Louise ads that sank Clinton's health care reform, which included a role for insurance companies, would look tame in comparison to the attacks that would be launched against any comprehensive reform.

In talking about health care, emphasize quality, choice and affordability. The moral argument that everyone should have health care is important, but it doesn't work on its own. People are worried about rising costs and cutbacks in the coverage they have now, and they worry that a government-financed system will provide less choice and lower quality care.

- Costs are out of control, and our current system is broken. Health care costs are increasing far faster than wages. There are already 45 million people without health insurance, and the number is rapidly rising. Millions more cannot afford comprehensive coverage. And Americans who can afford health insurance now are worried about losing it if they change jobs or if it becomes too expensive.
- The current system wastes hundreds of billions of dollars in administrative and advertising expenses, and in efforts to shift or deny payment. Medicare's administrative costs are four times cheaper than private insurance companies.
- We need to find a system that will:
 - » Provide health care to all Americans regardless of income;
 - » Allow individuals to keep their insurance when they change jobs;
 - » Ensure that no one could be denied coverage for preexisting health conditions;
 - » Allow individuals to see the doctor of their choice;
 - » Result in lower drug costs;
 - » Promote prevention and early intervention; and
 - » Help control soaring health care costs.

HOT QUOTE

"An essential part of our progressive vision is an America where no citizen of any age fears the cost of health care, and no employer refuses to create new jobs or cuts back on current jobs because of the high cost of providing health insurance...We should expand Medicare over the next decade to cover every citizen—from birth to the end of life...because it will free Americans from the fear of crippling medical expenses and enable them to seek the best possible care when illness strikes."

SENATOR EDWARD KENNEDY

(National Press Club, Jan 12, 2005)

ELEVATOR SPEECH

High-quality, affordable health care should be a right not a privilege. Yet more than 80 million Americans go without health coverage at some time in the course of a year. Soaring costs price insurance out of reach for some while others take the hit as companies shift the burden to employees or cut coverage altogether. The increasing cost of health care strains state, national, hospital, and personal budgets and poses the greatest threat to our long-term fiscal health. The United States is spending more per person yet covering fewer of its citizens than any other industrialized country.

This crisis is a clear and present danger. And what politicians offer as solutions typically just scratch the surface or make matters worse. The Bush administration's prescription drug plan will cost taxpayers billions in subsidies to the drug and insurance companies, even as it prohibits Medicare from negotiating lower prices.

There is enough money in the system to care for everyone. But to find a real solution, we will have to overcome the resistance of the HMOs, the insurance companies and the other middlemen who drive up the costs that are bankrupting the rest of us. We'll face multi-million dollar ad and lobbying blitzes. We'll have to turn around politicians who have been bought and paid for by the drug company lobby. It won't be easy. But as a nation, we will face either a broken system of rising prices and declining care or find the will to overcome the resistance and move to something that makes sense.

COMEBACKS AND COUNTERATTACKS

CONSERVATIVE SPIN	PROGRESSIVE RETORT
<p>Americans have rejected a government-run system of national health care where taxpayers pick up more of the tab.</p>	<p>In reality, polls show that by a 2 to 1 margin Americans prefer a universal health insurance system run by the government and financed by taxpayers over the current system. Medicare is too popular for conservatives to attack. It can be used as a baseline for other models. And the very right-wing politicians who spout such nonsense are themselves benefiting from generous government-run programs that work just fine.</p>
<p>Government-funded health care is socialized medicine.</p>	<p>Medicare isn't socialized medicine. The government doesn't run the hospitals or clinics. Patients choose their own doctors. They go to private hospitals. Expanding Medicare would simply increase coverage and cut costs by creating a system in which everyone contributes and everyone benefits. It would allow us to spend our money on health care rather than insurance company bureaucracy.</p>
<p>Universal care will mean government rationing of health care. There will be less innovation, longer waiting lists, and patients won't be able to see the doctors they want.</p>	<p>We already ration health care—by what you can afford, not by the care you need. In reality, as Medicare shows, a universal program would ensure that people get the care they need—without worrying about insurance companies not covering some tests or procedures. Health care delivery will speed up, not slow down, because less time and effort will be spent on overhead and administration. Patients will have the choice to see the doctors they want, and the same incentives for medical innovation will exist. In fact, with the overall savings that will be achieved, it should be possible to increase support for medical research.</p>
<p>The way to control prices is to cut out bogus lawsuits that are driving up medical insurance costs and forcing doctors to leave the profession.</p>	<p>This is simply a fraud. In fact, net claims on medical malpractice haven't been going up over the last years, while premiums charged by the companies have skyrocketed. Litigation isn't driving up insurance costs; greed is. The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office reported that there is no connection between malpractice tort reform and overall health care spending.</p>

MORE RESOURCES

Professor Jacob Hacker, Yale University, scholarship on universal coverage in America, especially around Medicare for All, <http://pantheon.yale.edu/~jhacker/>

Kaiser Family Foundation, a comprehensive source of facts and analysis on health care in America, <http://www.kff.org/>

Kaiser Family Foundation's KaiserNetwork/Healthcasts, http://www.kaisernetwork.org/health_cast/hcast_index.cfm?display=detail&hc=2121

FamiliesUSA, www.familiesusa.org

The Access Project, <http://www.accessproject.org/>

State Coverage Initiative, <http://www.statecoverage.net/>

Health Care Now!, <http://www.healthcare-now.org/>

America's Agenda—Health Care for All, <http://www.americasagenda.org/>

Americans for Health Care, <http://www.americansforhealthcare.org/>

Universal Health Care Action Network, <http://www.uhcan.org/>

Physicians for a National Health Program, an organization of 14,000 American physicians advocating for single-payer national health insurance, <http://www.pnhp.org/>

Medicare Rights Center, a source of health care information and assistance for people with Medicare, <http://www.medicarerights.org/>

America's Health Together, an organization devoted to making affordable health care available to all Americans, <http://www.healthtogether.org/>

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the nation's largest philanthropy devoted to improving health and health care, including the funding and distribution of research, <http://www.rwjf.org/>

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³Carmen DeNavas-Walt et. al. *Income, Poverty and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2005*. United States Census Bureau. August 2006. <http://www.census.gov/prod/2006pubs/p60-231.pdf>. Ku Leighton. "Census Revises Estimates of the Number of Uninsured People." *Center on Budget and Policy Priorities*. April 2007. <http://www.cbpp.org/4-5-07health.htm>.

⁴Study Shows National Health Insurance Could Save \$286 Billion on Health Care Paperwork: Authors Say Medicare Drug Bill Will Increase Bureaucratic Costs, Reward Insurers and the AARP, Public Citizen and Physicians for a National Health Program, citing research by Steffie Woolhandler and David Himmelstein in the *International Journal of Health Services*, 14 January 2004.

⁵Weiss Ratings Inc. "HMOs Earn \$7 billion in First Half of 2005." 30 January 2006. http://www.weissratings.com/News/Ins_HMO/20060130hmo.htm.

⁶Center for Responsive Politics. "Health Services/HMOs: Long-Term Contribution Trends." 2007. <http://www.opensecrets.org/industries/indus.asp?cycle=2006&ind=H03>.

⁷The Washington Post. "The High Cost of Drug Caps: Benefit Limits Mean More Hospital Visits, Study Says." 6 June 2006. Pg. F04.

⁸Dean Baker. *The Savings form an Efficient Medicare Prescription Drug Plan*. Center for Economic and Policy Research. January 2006. http://www.cepr.net/documents/efficient_medicare_2006_01.pdf.

EDUCATION FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

INTRODUCTION

America has led the world in educating its citizens. It championed universal public schooling. It was among the first to mandate kindergarten to 12th grade education. With the GI Bill and the land grant colleges, America became the first country to make college affordable and widely available. This commitment to learning is the foundation of America's democracy and of its prosperity.

In the modern global economy, learning is more important than ever—for individual and national economic success, for individual fulfillment, for responsible citizenship. Good schools are where America's future takes shape; if we want that future to remain bright, we must meet these new challenges.

College education is especially important in the modern global economy. The ability to further academic excellence will lead to more opportunities and better-paying jobs. The modern global economy has moved away from manufacturing to a technology-based economy. The skills needed to compete at the highest levels of employment require a college degree.

THE CHALLENGE

Public schools educate 90% of the nation's children. Most of the funding comes from state and local sources, but these resources are increasingly hard-pressed to keep up with growing needs. The public education system faces a growing crisis that demands a national response.

Record numbers of students will enter school over this decade. Many will go to schools that are overcrowded and in need of repair. One in three schools now use trailers for classrooms. The demand for teachers is rising, even as half of new teachers leave the profession within five years.

Approximately 6 in 10 high school graduates go on to college. But neither family incomes nor college grants have kept pace with soaring tuition costs. Students and parents take on higher levels of debt and scramble for part-time jobs. Some students take time off from school to earn money and many drop out along the way. Those that graduate are burdened with ever-higher levels of debt that take years to pay off. The large burden of college debt with high-interest loan rates prevents many graduates from entering public service careers, such as teaching, and further exacerbates the problems of the public school system.

HOT QUOTE

"Today, far too many Americans are holding off on college—or skipping it altogether—because they can't afford it. As a nation, we simply cannot allow the cost of college to prevent qualified students from going to college."

REP. GEORGE MILLER (D-CA)
Chairman of the Education and Labor Committee

(Cutting Interest Rates on Student Loans, 2007)

At a time when a good education has never been more important, we're increasingly failing to provide even the basics. More affluent families send their kids to better schools and can pay to supplement their educations. But working and poor families don't have that capacity—and increasingly their children are denied equal opportunity from the start.

THE CONSERVATIVE FAILURE

For conservatives, public schools are a red flag—bloated, bureaucratic, public institutions. Their first priority is to privatize public education, just as they would privatize Social Security. They push private school vouchers—seeking public funds for tuition to private and religious schools. They starve investment in public schools, arguing that too much is being spent already. Although they profess to believe in the market, they reject the need to pay teachers more and instead push for breaking teachers' unions.

HOT QUOTE

"If we are serious about ensuring that every child in America meets high standards, then we must develop a federal school finance policy equal to the task."

GOODWIN LIU

Assistant Professor of Law at Boalt Hall School of Law and co-director of the Chief Justice Earl Warren Institute on Race, Ethnicity and Diversity at the University of California at Berkeley

(Funding Gaps, 2006)

The Bush administration is exemplary. *The No Child Left Behind* Act mandated testing to identify failing schools, but Bush broke his promise to provide resources to remedy the problems. Despite tuition at four-year public colleges rising by 40% since he came into office, Bush broke his promise to raise the level of Pell grants, the primary federal scholarship program, and cut \$12 billion from the student loan program.

FACTS AT A GLANCE

- A quarter of students between 4th and 12th grade read below basic standards, and half of ninth graders in disadvantaged urban schools read two to three grade levels below where they should.¹
- Some 14 million 'latch key children' go to an empty house on any given afternoon. The parents of 15.3 million children say their children would participate if an afterschool program were available.²
- Public school enrollment will reach new records over the next decade; teacher shortages are growing and close to 50% of new teachers leave the profession during their first five years.³ Over the past decade wages for teachers haven't kept up with other jobs that demand similar education and skills.⁴
- Higher education tuition costs are rising far faster than inflation, while real wages have been stagnant. Between 2000 and 2005, the average cost of tuition at a public college has increased 42 percent⁵ but median household income has fallen 2 percent.⁶
- The proportion of undergraduate funding in the form of grant aid declines every year. In 1975–76 a Pell grant covered 84% of tuition at a four-year public school—now it only covers 40%.⁷

THE PROGRESSIVE SOLUTION

Education has to become a real national priority. *No Child Left Behind* was great as a slogan coined by the Children's Defense Fund. It is a disaster as a national education law. College education is exceedingly unaffordable and the cost precludes many potential students from pursuing a college degree. Progressives must unite Americans to meet the challenges facing our education system in the 21st century. We must make progress in several key areas.

- **More Learning Time:** All children should enjoy quality pre-school and kindergarten learning and socialization, and students from 1st through 12th grades should have meaningful afterschool education opportunities. The school year should move from the agricultural calendar of the 19th century to a calendar that maximizes learning.
- **Quality Teachers and Principals:** Skilled educators should teach all students. Every teachers and principal should receive high-quality training before he or she enters school, have on-the-job training opportunities, and be rewarded for excellence. If we hope to retain the best teachers, we need to pay them more and provide them with career opportunities. Our best educators should receive financial incentives to teach in those schools with the most at-risk children.
- **An Equal Education:** Every student should have an opportunity to learn. Adequate health care and nutrition, and an end to the savage inequality in school funding, are all keys to providing an equal education.
- **A Rigorous Education:** Every student should be provided a first-rate education with demanding curriculum standards in core subject areas. Voluntary national standards can help parents hold schools accountable.
- **Affordable College:** Every child must know that he or she can afford a college education. No student should be priced out of the college or advanced technical training they need to succeed in the modern economy. Tuition rates, grant aid, and loan forgiveness must be readjusted to make college affordable.

Progressives should challenge every sector of society and every level of government to make education a top priority. Doubling federal expenditures on education—from three to six percent—should be adopted as a near-term goal, even as states and localities are challenged to invest more. To guarantee the money is used well, we should require that districts are spending money wisely and investing in best practices.

HOT QUOTE

"The ideal of public education has always been at the heart of [the American dream]. From the moment the earliest Americans stepped out from the shadows of tyranny and built the first free schools in the towns of New England and across the Southern plains, it was the driving force behind Thomas Jefferson's declaration that '...talent and virtue, needed in a free society, should be educated regardless of wealth, birth or other accidental condition.'"

SENATOR BARACK OBAMA

(Teaching Our Kids in a 21st Century Economy, Oct. 25, 2005)

America's future depends on how well we educate our children. To provide every child with a world-class education we need to start sooner, set standards higher and provide opportunities for advanced training and college for all. We need to attract and retain skilled teachers. We need to restructure the school day and the school year. Money alone won't solve the problems facing our schools, but a policy of reforms without resources mocks the scope of our challenge.

THE PUBLIC PULSE

Americans believe the government should have more of a role in education.

- 67% of Americans believe the government should have more involvement in education, only 29% believe less governmental involvement is needed. (*Greenburg Quinlan Research, 2007*)

Americans confidence in education is low.

- 36% of Americans have *some* confidence in public schools, 23% have *very little* confidence in public schools. (*Gallup, 2006*)

Americans believe lack of funding a serious problem.

24%

- 24% of Americans identify a lack of financial support as one of the "biggest problems the public schools must deal with in their community."
- This problem has been among the top problems mentioned for 16 straight years and has been the top problem for seven years running. This year, it attracts almost twice the number of mentions of any other problem, including overcrowding (13%) and discipline (11%). (*Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll, 2006*)

Americans find college affordability troubling.

- A survey by the American Association of University Professors finds 81% of Americans say that the high cost of tuition is a "very serious problem" and 42% believed "the high cost of college" was the "biggest problem facing higher education. (*American Association of University Professors, 2006*)

American voters advocate after-school programs.

72%

- 72% of voters believed that "our newly elected public officials in Congress should increase funding for after-school programs.

69%

- 69% of voters said they want increased funding for after-school programs—even if it meant an increase in taxes.

65%

- 65% of voters said after-school programs are an absolute necessity for their community. (*After-school Alliance, 2006*)

TALKING POINTS

- Americans understand education. This is about their children. About our future. About how we will fare economically and as a democracy. About how we will learn to live with one another. About making sure that our children have a chance at achieving the American dream. *Invoke the future; summon the promise.*
- Americans want schools that teach values as well as math and reading. But “values” don’t just mean “abstinence” and “just say no.” Values include responsibility, problem-solving, self-discipline and working with others. *Speak to these values when talking about schools.*
- The basics—from pre-school to affordable college—aren’t controversial for most Americans. But they are worried about the price tag; they want to make certain that their investment is not being wasted. *Emphasize creating budgetary audits to make sure that every district gets the best return on its dollar.*
- Champion public school choice—magnet schools, diverse curricula as well as schedules and constant incorporation of best practices from schools, whether private or public.
- Go after conservatives for depriving our children of the basics while giving tax breaks to the wealthiest Americans. Simply rolling back the Bush tax cuts provided to the top 1% could provide the funding to more than double the education budget.

ELEVATOR SPEECH

America has long been heralded as the land of opportunity, and public education has always been essential to that promise. Among the first things settlers in a new town did was to build a school and hire a teacher. After World War II, the GI Bill helped educate a generation and fueled the prosperity that built America’s middle class. Now in the global economy, education is more important than ever. We need to keep faith with our public responsibility to educate our children so they can go as far as their talent and hard work can take them.

But we aren’t doing the basics—early child nutrition and health care, pre-school, small classes, a school year that maximizes learning, skilled teachers, after-school programs, school buildings that aren’t dangerous to your health and affordable college. We have to make investing in education a top priority at every level of government. Instead, the Bush administration and Congress have hacked education funding—while pushing tens of billions of dollars in tax breaks that will go largely to wealthy Americans and corporations. Investing in quality schools is far more important to our prosperity, our democracy and our decency than more top-end tax breaks and corporate tax dodges. Far more economic vitality will come from good schools and affordable colleges than from the scraps that fall from boardroom tables.

HOT QUOTE

“Public education is the single most important public institution in a democratic society. It is our ultimate department of defense against poverty, ignorance, hatred and intolerance.... To one degree or another, every generation of Americans has had to wrestle with the challenge of educating its youth. We know it takes qualified teachers, capable school leaders, supportive learning environments, adequate resources, a rigorous curriculum, high expectations linked to standards....But one vital ingredient has been missing in this formula for education excellence, and that ingredient is public responsibility. We as a nation cannot afford to stand by and allow our public schools to become wastelands of mediocrity.”

WENDY PURIEFOY

President, the Public Education Network

(Education: Everyone’s Responsibility, Nov. 6, 2005)

COMEBACKS AND COUNTERATTACKS

CONSERVATIVE SPIN	PROGRESSIVE RETORT
<p>Public schools have failed our children.</p>	<p>We know how to build public schools that work—we do it in communities across America. But it takes resources, reforms, accountability, and skilled teachers. We need to provide the basics to every child. That will take more investment not less.</p>
<p>We've increased funding in the <i>No Child Left Behind</i> program.</p>	<p>Bush and Congress broke the president's promise to fund the <i>No Child Left Behind</i> law, leaving it short by more than \$13 billion for 2006 alone, with more than \$55 billion in broken promises since the law was enacted. Given this failure it should be no surprise that so many schools are being labeled "in need of improvement." The testing involved in the NCLB program deters teachers from actually teaching, instead public school teachers are spending increasing amounts of time teaching to the test and promoting "rote memorization and a drill and grill" learning, not intellectual development.</p>
<p>Spending more money is not the answer. Some of the schools with the highest per student spending ratios are among the worst performers.</p>	<p>Sure, there are bad schools that waste money. But too often schools are the scapegoat, serving as the front line in dealing with problems outside the classroom. Kids who go hungry, or who don't have decent access to health care, or who come from a troubled family background have a harder time learning. A child who is sick and lacks medical attention has a hard time concentrating. Schools in poor neighborhoods do worse in large part because of what happens outside the classroom not what happens inside.</p>
<p>We can't improve what we don't measure. Performance testing allows teachers and principals to identify the problems.</p>	<p>We all want kids to learn and get a good education. Standards and testing are important, but we need move beyond snapshots on a standardized test. We must evaluate portfolios of work over time, graduation and dropout rates and teacher retention and training. In the end, however, it isn't enough to measure the problem—we've got to support the reforms and invest the necessary resources to enact a solution.</p>
<p>Teachers don't need to be paid more. The big education unions are looking to raise teacher salaries so that there is more money for their labor agenda.</p>	<p>Everyone knows teachers aren't paid well, especially in comparison to their importance. The reality is that teacher pay has decreased by more than 3% over the past 10 years when adjusted for inflation. We will soon face the largest wave of teacher retirements ever, and younger teachers are leaving the classroom at alarming rates. This is a market-based society. Salaries have to be competitive. Surveys show that teachers are less likely to leave schools with competitive pay.</p>
<p>Spending on higher education is primarily a state responsibility; the federal government is doing enough.</p>	<p>The federal government has never met the pledge to fund the costs of educating the disabled. And now it's failing its part in keeping college affordable. In 1975–76 a Pell grant covered 84% of tuition at a four-year public school—now it only covers 40%.</p>

MORE RESOURCES

Afterschool Alliance, Get the most up to date polling and analysis on after-school issues, <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/>

Campaign for America's Future: Revitalizing Education, Analysis and development of progressive and education issues in primary and higher education, http://www.ourfuture.org/issues_and_campaigns/education/index.cfm

Campaign for College Affordability, A coalition of concerned organizations that promote grassroots organizing and provide legislative summaries on college affordability, <http://collegeaffordabilitynow.org>

Center for American Progress—Campus Progress, An organization that connects student leaders with progressive voices, <http://www.campusprogress.org>

Children's Defense Fund, State-by-state analysis of education, poverty, and other child issues, <http://www.childrensdefense.org>

National Education Association, Stay current with legislation and reports that inform parents and educators about public education, www.nea.org

Pre-K Now, Great state data and analysis on early education, <http://www.preknow.org/resource/index.cfm>

Public Education Network, Get up-to-date data research and polling on public education, <http://www.publiceducation.org/>

State PIRGs' Higher Education Project, Read the latest news in college affordability and accessibility, <http://www.uspirg.org/higher-education>

United States Student Association, Learn about the newest legislative bills and grassroots activism by the nation's oldest organization representing college students, <http://www.usstudents.org>

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Campaign for America's Future, *Higher Education: Soaring Out of Reach for America's Families*, <http://home.ourfuture.org/education/soaring-out-of-reach.html>

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⁵U.S. Department of Education. National Center for Education Statistics. Higher Education General Information Survey (HEGIS). *Average Undergraduate Tuition and Fees and Room and Board Rates Charged for Full-Time Students in Degree-Granting Institutions, by Type and Control of Institution: 1964-65 through 2004-05*. August 2005. http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d05/tables/dt05_312.asp.

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RETIREMENT SECURITY

INTRODUCTION

Every worker yearns for a dignified retirement after decades of labor. But for too many, this hope is a fading dream. Low wages and high costs make it difficult to save, corporate pensions are being eliminated and Social Security is under attack. Backed by Wall Street financial houses, President Bush started his second term by trying to privatize Social Security. Privatization is the centerpiece of the conservative “ownership society,” which essentially shifts risk from society as a whole to single individuals.

Americans took a good look at the program—and rejected it. A broad coalition formed to dig for the facts, crystallize the message and carry it to the American people. The attack on Social Security was turned back. But we have a long way to go before all Americans can count on dignified rest after years of hard work.

THE CHALLENGE

Retirement security should be like a sturdy stool supported by three strong legs—Social Security, personal savings and employee retirement benefits. But all of these legs are now shaky.

Social Security is designed as the bedrock—a minimum payment, adjusted for inflation, which lasts as long as you live. Half of all workers now have no pension at all other than Social Security. The program is currently in surplus but it is projected—under very cautious estimates—to fall short around the year 2052. The situation is not as dire as conservatives sometimes pretend. The Congressional Budget Office calculates that applying the payroll tax to all income—it now only applies to the first \$90,000 earned—would entirely eliminate any shortfall.

The other legs of the retirement stool are in far worse shape. Few companies provide pensions anymore. Among those that do, many have failed to set aside sufficient funds to pay what they owe. Nowadays, instead of pensions, companies that offer retirement plans use 401(k) plans, in which the company matches a portion of funds that workers take out of their paychecks. These plans are good as far as they go, but they provide a smaller benefit and shift investment risk to the worker.

At the same time, personal savings are way down. Stagnant wages, rising gas and home heating prices, higher health insurance premiums, increased tuition costs and rising debt have left more families

HOT QUOTE

“Today’s middle-class families are struggling to pay for exploding health care costs, rising college tuitions, and higher gas prices at the pump. Many Americans are also facing the dismal prospect of finding their pensions increasingly at risk as companies such as United Airlines enter bankruptcy. These realities make saving for retirement an even greater challenge.

REP. NANCY PELOSI

(“Retirement Security,” 2007)

HOT QUOTE

"The impact of simply wiping out traditional pensions resonates far beyond corporate boardrooms and company shareholders. It's a unilateral move to cut out a main clause of our social contract, the model that a majority of Americans and their families have relied on for nearly three-quarters of a century. Are we really ready as a society to declare the end of retirement as we know it? In order to retire, must employees now bear all the costs and take all the risks?...We deserve a truthful conversation about the options that will provide a decent retirement for all Americans."

BETH SHULMAN

("Retirement Insecurity," April 26, 2006)

living paycheck to paycheck. In 2005, Americans actually spent more than they earned—something that last occurred during the Great Depression. Needless to say, few Americans are saving enough to provide for a secure retirement.

THE CONSERVATIVE FAILURE

On this already shaky foundation, the right wants to increase individual risk and decrease shared security. Under a privatized Social Security, there would be no guaranteed income, no protection against inflation and no guarantee of payment for as long as you live. Instead of everyone contributing to a program that secures benefits for all, each would be on their own. Conservatives argue that Social Security provides a low return, and individuals should take responsibility over their own savings. Some will win; some will lose. But two things are certain if Social Security is privatized: everyone will pay more management fees to Wall Street firms, and more senior citizens will live in poverty. The projected Social Security shortfall will even increase. The most secure leg of retirement will be sawed off.

For conservatives, the very success of Social Security makes it a target. They hope to create more "investors" and more conservatives. They want people focused on the health of Wall Street not the strength of our economy and our government.

At the same time, conservatives have done nothing to counter the corporate rollback of pensions. They've refused to crack down on executives who provide themselves with luxurious pension plans even while plundering those of their workers.

Converting guaranteed pension benefits into 401(k) matches allows corporations to slip workers a backdoor pay cut. In the end, the ownership society turns retirement policy on its head—corporations get the security and individuals are left with the risk.

FACTS AT A GLANCE

- According to the Congressional Budget Office estimates, extending Social Security taxes to incomes over \$90,000 would eliminate the program's projected long-range deficit.¹
- Experts suggest a replacement rate of 75-80% of pre-retirement income is considered adequate, but less than 40% of households near retirement meet this standard.²
- Corporate pension plans are underfunded by as much as \$450 billion while the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation—which provides a partial guarantee of worker pensions for bankrupt companies—continues to show about a \$23 billion deficit.³
- In 2005, Americans spent more than they saved for the first time since the Great Depression.⁴

- Upon retirement in January 2006, the former CEO of Exxon-Mobil walked away with an \$8 million annual pension.⁵
- Social Security benefits lift nearly 13 million seniors age 65 and older above the poverty line⁶ and lifted one million children under 18 above the poverty line in 2002.⁷

THE PROGRESSIVE SOLUTION

Progressives need to take a broad and bold approach to helping Americans establish a solid three-legged stool of retirement security.

Make the economy work. Most importantly, progressives must champion economic policies that benefit the many and not simply the few. With full employment and rising wages, Americans can save better, workers can demand better retirement benefits from employers and Social Security's projected shortfall can be reduced. Universal health care would reduce what families have to spend on health care costs and protect seniors against soaring drug and medical costs. Improved energy policies can help Americans save better by sparing them from rapidly-rising gas and home heating prices.

Strengthen Social Security. Progressives must work to strengthen Social Security and protect it from future assaults.

Hold companies accountable for pensions. Progressives must hold companies to their existing pension obligations. At the very least, progressives should require the following.

- Every company must provide a retirement program for its workers, supplemented with an employer contribution.
- The shop floor must be treated the same as the top floor. If the CEO has a defined benefit pension, workers should get the same; if the CEO has retirement stock options, workers should also. If worker pensions are cut back for a company in distress, CEO pensions should be as well.
- Congress must require companies to fund the pension commitments they make. Congress must shore up the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation's balance sheet to help workers whose companies go belly-up. At the same time, worker pension commitments should be at the front of the line, not the back of the line, in corporate bankruptcy proceedings.

Help Americans save. Progressives should also champion new ideas to help with personal savings. Congress has tried to help with tax deductions for retirement accounts, but this mostly helps the affluent at the top of the pay scale. These benefits should be consolidated into one tax-free savings account, in which the government provides a partial match for the savings of low-income workers (who don't benefit from the Bush tax breaks).

HOT QUOTE

"We're fighting to strengthen and safeguard Social Security's guaranteed benefit, but more must [be] done so that every American has the opportunity to build a secure retirement. [We want to] build retirement security by expanding opportunities to save and guaranteeing workers receive the benefits that they have been promised."

REP. NANCY PELOSI

(House Dems offer Retirement Security Proposal July 26, 2006)

Start investment accounts. Every American should be provided with an investment account at birth—a small sum that will expand tax-free over time and could be tapped to pay for higher education, housing, or retirement. Conservatives will like creating a new generation of investors; progressives will like giving poor and working people a chance to build up assets from birth.

THE PUBLIC PULSE

Americans believe Social Security is extremely important.

- 45% of Americans believe Social Security is extremely important, and 35% believe it is very important. (*Gallup/USA Today, 2007*)

Retirement insecurity is a widely shared concern among Americans

The overwhelming majority of Americans—95%—have financial worries when it comes to retirement.

42%

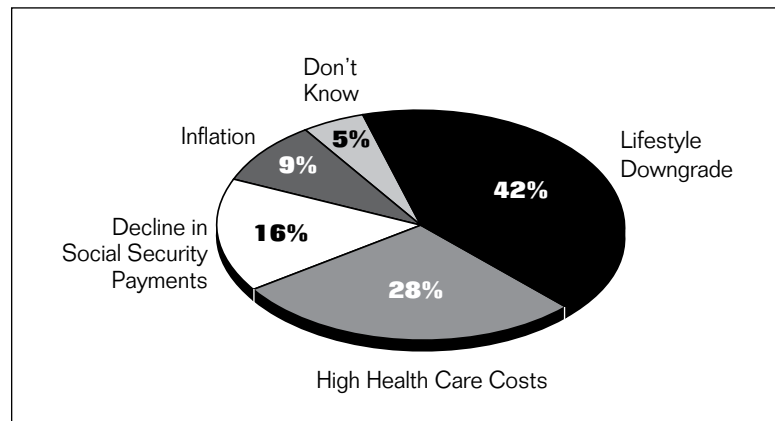
- 42% of Americans worry that they will run out of money prematurely or that they will have to downgrade their lifestyle in retirement.

28%

- 28% fear that the high cost of health care will drain their retirement savings.

16%

- 16% are worried about their future Social Security payments (which, given conservative scare tactics about the Social Security “crisis,” is a surprisingly small percentage).
- 9% fear inflation and 5% didn’t know or had no retirement fears. (*National Association for Variable Annuities, March 2005 Survey*)



- Only 24% of baby boomers believe they are financially well prepared for retirement, and 52% of Americans (including one-third of baby boomers) have \$50,000 or less set aside for retirement. (*Quinnipiac University Poll, March 2004*)

Americans believe Social Security Must be Fixed Now!

71%

- 71% of Americans believe the problems with Social Security are so serious that they must be fixed now. (*CBS News, 2007*)

TALKING POINTS

- We need to make it possible for all Americans to retire with dignity at the end of a lifetime of work. That means protecting Social Security and mandating corporations treat their employees the same as their executives when it comes to health and retirement benefits.
- The effort to privatize Social Security is an open scandal. It would increase risk, decrease security; cut benefits to people disabled at work and leave more seniors in poverty. We must strengthen this basic retirement guarantee.
- Americans need to save more for their retirement. That requires personal responsibility in a culture of consumerism. We can help by running an economy that rewards work and not just wealth. In a full-employment economy, wages go up and workers are better able to demand decent benefits from employers. The best way to help Americans save is to ensure that their wages are going up faster than their basic costs.

ELEVATOR SPEECH

Americans want and deserve a dignified retirement at the end of a lifetime of work. FDR created Social Security as a guaranteed program that we all pay into during our working years and we all withdraw from when we retire. George Bush's ownership society would end that deal by creating private risk accounts. That may suit the rich who can afford the risk, but it breaks the historic bargain we've had in this country that if you work hard during your productive years you can retire in dignity.

We can strengthen Social Security. Just require that all workers pay the same rate on their income and lift the cap that protects income over \$90,000 a year and that solves any projected shortfall. We can require companies to keep the promises they make to employees on pensions—and mandate that the shop floor be treated like the top floor when it comes to health care and retirement benefits. We can and should encourage working people to save.

America is a rich country. There simply is no reason for American workers to live their final years in poverty. Surely the measure of a country is how they treat the vulnerable in the dawn of life and the elderly in the dusk of life. We should hold ourselves to that measure. We need to make sure people earn enough to save.

HOT QUOTE

"There is no imminent crisis facing Social Security and it is not going bankrupt, no matter how many times Bush tries to paint that grim picture. Social Security will pay full benefits for the next forty to fifty years and almost 80 percent of all benefits after that. Instead of a radical privatization scheme, we have time to make adjustments to strengthen and guarantee Social Security for all generations."

CONGRESSWOMAN JAN SCHAKOWSKY

(Illinois Democrats Resist Social Security Privatization, We The People Media)

COMEBACKS AND COUNTERATTACKS

CONSERVATIVE SPIN	PROGRESSIVE RETORT
<p>Social Security will go broke as baby boomers retire. We need a new system that allows workers to invest their own money and earn higher returns in the stock market.</p>	<p>Social Security is in surplus now and faces no problems for four decades. Any long-term projected shortfall can be eliminated simply by requiring everyone to pay payroll taxes on their entire income. The winners under privatization will be Wall Street brokers showered with management fees. For seniors, privatization will simply increase individual risk and leave more people in poverty.</p>
<p>The economy has changed since the days when people worked for one company all their life and retired with a company pension. IRAs give employees control over their own retirement income. People concerned about market risk can choose low-risk investments.</p>	<p>The economy hasn't changed so much that corporations should cheat their employees by walking away from their obligations. Corporations need to honor the commitments they made and fund their pension plans. You never hear about corporate executives losing their pensions. Workers deserve the same protection that executives give themselves.</p>
<p>The ownership society is about giving people the ability to make their own decisions about how to save for their retirement. Liberals don't trust people to make their own decisions.</p>	<p>The ownership society says you are on your own. In fact, when it comes to Social Security, we're in it together. Workers support their parents' generation and are in turn supported by their children's generation. The new economy places ever-increasing risk on workers—less job security and fewer guaranteed pensions. Social security provides a secure floor—we cannot put that at risk as well.</p>

MORE RESOURCES

AARP, the leading nonprofit, nonpartisan membership organization for people age 50 and over in the United States, <http://www.aarp.org/>

AFL-CIO: Retirement Security, a voluntary federation of 55 national and international labor unions representing 10 million workers and provides research on a broad range of labor issues, <http://www.aflcio.org/issues/retirementsecurity/>

Campaign for America's Future: Protecting Social Security, a center of progressive strategy, organizing and issue campaigns, <http://socialsecurity.ourfuture.org/>

Center for Economic and Policy Research: Social Security, promote democratic debate on the most important economic and social issues that affect people's lives, http://www.cepr.net/index.php?option=com_issues&task=view_issue&issue=19&Itemid=22

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, is one of the nation's premier policy organizations working at the federal and state levels on fiscal policy and public programs that affect low- and moderate-income families and individuals, <http://www.cbpp.org/>

Economic Policy Institute, a nonprofit, nonpartisan think tank that seeks to broaden the public debate about strategies to achieve a prosperous and fair economy, <http://www.epinet.org/>

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HOT QUOTE

"Congress should act quickly on pension reform because hard-working Americans are suffering daily threats to their retirement security. Any pension reform plan must insist that employees have accurate, up-to-date information on the health of their employer's pension plan. It must provide flexibility to the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation to turn struggling plans around as an alternative to termination where possible. It must ensure that companies that convert to cash balance plans do not penalize older and longer-tenured employees. And it must ensure that companies do not have a double standard in their treatment of executive pensions versus employee pensions when the employee plan is in distress."

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REAL SECURITY AFTER IRAQ

INTRODUCTION

September 11th etched the threat posed by jihadist terrorists into our collective memory. It was not the first act of terror aimed at Americans nor is it likely to be the last. Its zealous perpetrators, though, may not be the most destructive threat we face. Global pandemics will take more victims. As Katrina demonstrated, catastrophic climate change is likely to wreak far more destruction. Our unprecedented global indebtedness and growing manufacturing deficit are a far greater threat to our economic security. Yet September 11th proved that the threat posed by the violent extremists is real and present—and must be met. But rather than focus on that problem, the United States is mired in an occupation of Iraq that is worsening the terrorist threat and damaging our ability to respond to the other security concerns we face.

THE CHALLENGE

On that terrible day, the world stood united with us. Americans rallied to support their president. The pursuit of bin Laden and al Qaeda and the invasion in Afghanistan received international support. We toppled the Taliban in Afghanistan and Saddam Hussein's brutal dictatorship in Iraq. Potential terrorists have been hunted, detained and killed in countries across the world. But Americans are less secure.

The president's war of "choice" in Iraq has been a costly debacle. Allies have been alienated. Hatred of America in the Muslim world has reached an unprecedented height. Bin Laden is still loose, and terrorist networks have metastasized, recruiting over the web and building adherents among Muslims inflamed by the U.S. occupation in Iraq. We have traduced our own principles in the torture of prisoners at Abu Ghraib and elsewhere. Pentagon studies warn that our military is stretched thin, with recruitment difficult and retirements of key veterans rising. Generals on the ground report there is no military strategy for victory in Iraq. The bipartisan 9/11 Commission gives the administration failing grades on vital areas of homeland security. Corruption and cronyism sabotage reconstruction in Iraq as much as it affects emergency response at home. The American people and the Iraqi people both want the U.S. to leave Iraq, but the President refuses to go.

In the midst of this debacle, other emerging, real security concerns are recklessly slighted—the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, loose nukes, catastrophic climate change, global pandemics, unsustainable trade and financial imbalances, the growing divide of rich and poor in a world of global communications. The United States needs a new approach to our national security.

HOT QUOTE

"The president took us into this war recklessly. He disregarded warnings from the national security adviser during the first Gulf War, the chief of staff of the army, two former commanding generals of the Central Command, whose jurisdiction includes Iraq, the director of operations on the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and many, many others with great integrity and long experience in national security affairs. We are now, as a nation, held hostage to the predictable—and predicted—disarray that has followed."

SENATOR JIM WEBB

Response to the President's State of the Union, January 2007

HOT QUOTE

“What’s gone wrong? In the last five years we have seen leadership without vision or foresight, a backwards look to tough talk and excessive unfair tax cuts, and a misguided idea from the 1990’s that uncooperative Middle East regimes could be ‘cleaned up’ by American military action. At the same time we’ve seen such partisanship that many believe that this administration lacks the basic decency to respect its political opponents, and the fundamental integrity to adhere to common standards of transparency, honesty, and ethics in government. Enough is enough! ...We cannot and must not stay that course.”

GENERAL WESLEY CLARK

(“The Real State Of The Union 2006,”
Jan. 30, 2006)

THE CONSERVATIVE FAILURE

President Bush says that 9/11 changed everything and gave him a new mission. The administration announced a new national security strategy of military unilateralism and proclaimed a doctrine of preventive war. From now on, the United States would attack “before the threat has formed.” The thousands of stateless terrorists, with their grim, extremist ideology, were inflated to a global threat equivalent to communism at the height of the Cold War. The test case of this doctrine was Iraq—even though Saddam Hussein had nothing to do with 9/11 and was a target of bin Laden’s. Iraq was weak and strategically located. In a “shock and awe” display of overwhelming force, the United States would topple the dictator and quickly make way for a democratic, secular government that would be a catalytic force for political change in the region.

This doctrine—elaborated even before September 11th by the neo-conservative ideologues that populated the Bush national security team—got it wrong. Schooled in the Cold War, Bush’s men—Cheney, Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz, even Powell—focused on rogue states instead of the actual threat posed by decentralized, stateless terrorists. They assumed that military power was the answer and scorned the alliances, intelligence cooperation, political diplomatic initiatives and economic assistance vital to stopping terrorists and isolating them from the larger circles of Muslims. At home, the president’s political advisors turned the war on terror into a partisan club—rolling out the Iraq vote in time for the off-year election. And rather than calling on the nation to sacrifice, the president pushed more tax breaks for the wealthy, while literally calling on Americans to go shopping.

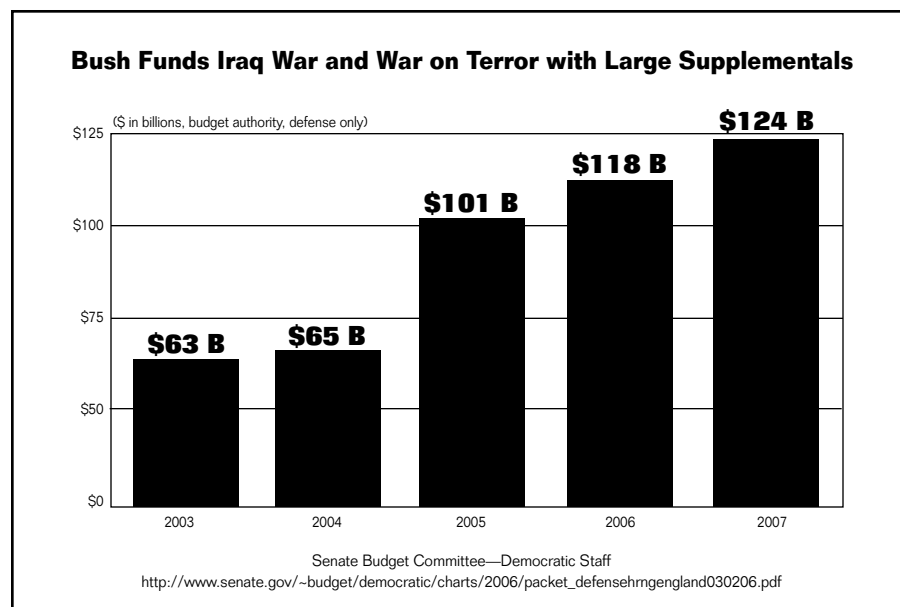
In campaigning as a wartime president, Bush simply failed to address broader real security needs. He displayed remarkable passivity on the question of loose nukes and proliferation. There was no action on the need for energy independence and no leadership in correcting the unsustainable global trading imbalances that threaten worldwide depression. Global warming was met with purblind denial, and the threat of global pandemics received only belated recognition.

The Iraq Debacle. The centerpiece of the Bush doctrine—and the expression of its failure—was the invasion of Iraq. Everything the administration told us about the war turned out to be wrong. There were no weapons of mass destruction. Hussein was not allied to al Qaeda. We were not greeted as liberators. Iraqi oil would not pay for the reconstruction. The administration invaded without a plan for the occupation, scorning military advice that more troops on the ground were vital to securing the peace.

There are now no good options in Iraq. If we stay, we sacrifice more lives and billions of dollars more in occupying a country in the midst of sectarian civil war—with the most likely outcome a sectarian Shiite government allied with the mullahs in Iran. If we leave, the ensuing violence could create a failed state in the midst of the Persian Gulf.

FACTS AT A GLANCE

- The cost of the Iraq war is more than \$430 billion and counting. The average weekly cost runs nearly \$2 billion, making it the most expensive war, per-week, since WWII.¹
- In 2004, the number of “significant” international terrorist attacks across the world reached 655, more than three times the previous record of 175 in 2003. It’s not true that we’re fighting them there to keep from fighting them here; they are striking across the world.²
- A February 2007 bipartisan survey of America’s leading foreign-policy experts reports that the world is becoming more dangerous for Americans and that the Iraq war is the principal reason. Seventy-five percent said that the United States is losing the war on terror, and 81% said that the world is becoming more dangerous for Americans.³
- The official U.S. National Intelligence Estimate of April 2006 concluded that the American invasion and occupation of Iraq helped spawn a new generation of Islamic radicalism and that the overall terrorist threat has grown since the Sept. 11 attacks.⁴
- The army is falling off its recruitment goals, even as it offers \$10,000 cash bonuses and \$70,000 college scholarships.⁵ Recruits ranked as “high quality” dropped to 47% in 2006.⁶ Fewer new recruits have high school diplomas and more have criminal histories.⁷
- In the countries of the former Soviet Union there is currently enough unsecured radioactive material to build 40,000 nuclear weapons.
- Only 6% of the 11 million cargo containers that enter the United States each year are opened and inspected.



HOT QUOTE

“New international security requires a foreign policy based on principled engagement, internationalism based on historic American principles of liberal democracy, tolerance of diversity, respect for difference of culture and viewpoint, and acknowledgment of an expanding global common. Principled engagement depends on shared security duties and rejection of unilateralism. It depends on expanded trade based on international rules for worker and environmental protection. It fundamentally depends not on America selling its values and ideals but living them.”

SENATOR GARY HART

(“Restoration of the Republic” Feb. 26 2003)

HOT QUOTE

"The war in Iraq is not going as advertised. It is a flawed policy wrapped in illusion. The American public is way ahead of us. The United States and coalition troops have done all they can in Iraq, but it is time for a change in direction. Our military is suffering. The future of our country is at risk. We cannot continue on the present course. It is evident that continued military action in Iraq is not in the best interest of the United States of America, the Iraqi people or the Persian Gulf Region.

...The threat posed by terrorism is real, but we have other threats that cannot be ignored. We must be prepared to face all threats. The future of our military is at risk. Our military and their families are stretched thin. Many say that the Army is broken. Some of our troops are on their third deployment. Recruitment is down, even as our military has lowered its standards...

The key to progress in Iraq is to Iraqitize, Internationalize and Energize...The presence of U.S. troops in Iraq is impeding this progress. Our military has done everything that has been asked of them, the U.S. cannot accomplish anything further in Iraq militarily. It is time to bring them home!"

CONGRESSMAN JACK MURTHA

(War in Iraq, Nov. 17, 2005)

THE PROGRESSIVE SOLUTION

Progressives champion an America that leads collective efforts rather than going it alone. We are a global power with global interests. We have the strongest military in the world. But we have depleted our treasury, undermined our values and wasted the lives of thousands of young men and women trying to police the world ourselves. We need to return to the fundamental belief that military force is a last, not a first resort. We will defend ourselves when attack is imminent, but our security is best served by using the full range of U.S. influence proactively. We need to return to building alliances and investing in international law and institutions. We need to change course. First steps include the following.

End the occupation and let the new government take authority in Iraq. We have been in Iraq for longer than we fought World War II. Amid a civil war of increasing violence, the Bush administration has no plan for victory. The president vows to keep troops there throughout his term in office. His only hope is that Iraqi forces will take over eventually, but those forces are torn into factions and are becoming drawn into the sectarian violence ripping the country apart.

Ironically, the vast majority of Iraqis, American soldiers and the American people all agree that the United States should begin to withdraw its forces and turn over authority to the Iraqis. We have rid them of a brutal dictator. We've helped develop an elected government and a new constitution. Now Iraqis must decide what kind of country they will build.

Revive the coalition against al Qaeda. We must aggressively face the threat posed by stateless terrorists, but to do that we have to revive the broad international consensus against terrorism. This is more a war of legitimacy and ideas than of battalions and regiments. We need to isolate terrorists and separate them from the disaffected millions in the Muslim world. We should re-engage moderate Muslim leadership in condemning the fanatics. The hunt for bin Laden should be stepped up. Our focus must be on stateless networks and cells—as likely to be located among the embittered in Spain, Germany or Britain as in Muslim countries. This requires intelligence cooperation and police work much more than military force. We need an aggressive alliance aimed at isolating terrorists and discrediting their tactics.

Make domestic security a mission not a morass. Provision for homeland security must not be business as usual. The era of cronies and corruption must end. We must invest the resources necessary to secure our borders and our ports. Homeland security funds should be distributed according to national priorities, not congressional pork and privilege. We have to stop catering to the industrial lobbies and require nuclear, chemical and other high-risk plants to implement comprehensive security programs. The 9/11 Commission

recommendations should be adopted, and we should establish a new independent investigation of priority needs. We need effective leaders in charge of key intelligence and security agencies and a permanent investigative committee to ferret out waste, fraud and abuse and end the sweetheart contracts of crony companies like Halliburton.

Refocus on curbing weapon proliferation. We must curb the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and eliminate current stockpiles. We need to sustain cooperation with Russia to ensure that the “loose nukes” strewn through the states of the former Soviet Union are dismantled and protected. We need to maintain a global alliance against proliferation with Iran as an essential first test case. The United States and other nuclear powers should include themselves in the drive for nuclear disarmament as part of building the global consensus against these weapons.

Launch a concerted drive for energy independence. The drive for energy independence is an opportunity to mobilize U.S. science and technology, to invest in alternative energy and efficiency, and to create good jobs and new industries. It is also a national security imperative—we need to reduce our dependence on Persian Gulf oil, turn around our trade imbalance, and seriously address global warming. See New Energy for America in this report.

Address emerging real security threats. We need to adjust our security budget to decrease funds wasted on Cold War weaponry and increase resources devoted to diplomacy, emergency relief, and disease prevention. And we should give emerging threats the attention they merit—from global warming to economic imbalances.

Make the United States a source of hope again. Progressives should reclaim the cause of human rights and democracy. We have both a moral and a strategic interest in making the United States a source of hope in the world. We should be leading the international community to respond to genocidal violence, as in Darfur. We should be leading the effort to eliminate preventable diseases. We should champion democracy but lead by the strength of our ideas not the force of our arms.

Recommit the U.S. to building international law and effective international alliances. Our military is unrivalled, but we have neither the resources nor the desire to police the world. As a global power, with allies, markets, investments and commitments in regions across the world, the United States has the largest interest in forging a world of law depending on legitimate international institutions, strong alliances and enduring cooperation. The United States will always defend itself, but our central goal should be to build a legitimate world order with expanding zones of peace. We grow more secure when we provide an example to the world of the blessings of democracy, liberty and law.

HOT QUOTE

“So what is to be done? We need fresh ideas and fresh faces. That means, as a first step, replacing Rumsfeld and many others unwilling to fundamentally change their approach. The troops in the Middle East have performed their duty. Now we need people in Washington who can construct a unified strategy worthy of them. It is time to send a signal to our nation, our forces and the world that we are uncompromising on our security but are prepared to rethink how we achieve it. It is time for senior military leaders to discard caution in expressing their views and ensure that the President hears them clearly. And that we won’t be fooled again.”

GENERAL GREG NEWBOLD

(Time Magazine Apr. 9, 2006)

HOT QUOTE

“There are six principles in the war on terrorism; and they go something like this: Cooperate, cooperate, cooperate, communicate, communicate, communicate”

AMBASSADOR

FRANCIS X. TAYLOR

(“A Global Perspective on Terrorism and Organized Crime,” April 12, 2004)

THE PUBLIC PULSE

- 61% percent of Americans say the United States should have stayed out of Iraq and 76% say things are going badly there, including 47% percent who say things are going very badly.⁸
- 67% of Americans believe the U.S. should emphasize diplomatic and economic efforts over military efforts in fighting terrorism.
- Asked by the Foreign Policy Index to rate strategies for strengthening the nation’s security, the top-ranking approaches were “Improving the effectiveness of our intelligence operations” (with 63 percent saying it would enhance our security a great deal), and “Becoming less dependent on other countries for our supply of energy (55 percent). Only 17 percent said “Attacking countries that develop weapons of mass destruction” would enhance our security a great deal, the lowest-scoring strategy in the group.

TALKING POINTS

Real national security depends on protecting our interests, advancing our goals and values and prudent and realistic engagement with the threats we face. Military force is most important as a deterrent; we have the strongest fighting force in the world but our national interests are best secured when we lead the world toward greater cooperation not when we engage in conflict. But while it is important to stress the wider aspects of real national security, when American troops are engaged overseas discussions of national security will focus on prevailing against threats and securing the peace.

In discussing the Iraq war, the issue is U.S. security not Bush’s lies. Americans remain conflicted over whether withdrawing from Iraq will serve our security or erode it. Don’t hesitate to remind people that Bush got everything wrong, but the case for withdrawal cannot be made because Bush lied us into the war, or that it is costly, or even that it isn’t going well. The case must be about our future security—why getting out of Iraq serves our security and why staying only weakens it.

- **Be strong and speak with conviction.** Americans are looking for and deserve leaders who will level with them, tell them what they believe and state their case with conviction—not politicians who put their finger in the wind to see where the polls are then duck and dodge for fear that ideologues on the right will hammer them. Stand up. Level with Americans. Indict the administration that has driven us to a place where only bad choices remain, and make your case clearly.

- **Indict the policy and support the troops.** American soldiers have performed valiantly in Iraq in an occupation that their leaders did not plan for. We should honor and applaud their service, even as we indict the leaders that so misused them. This is an administration—led by men who have never served in the military—that has failed to provide the forces and equipment needed and failed to provide a plan for victory.
- **Invoke the brass; reclaim the flag.** Retired generals are criticizing the civilian leadership that has led the United States into this mess. For Americans, they have enormous credibility as nonpartisan, patriotic experts.

ELEVATOR SPEECH

On Iraq, we have done what we could. Our soldiers rid Iraq of Saddam Hussein. The administration's lethal incompetence and cronyism undermined any hope of a quick transition, but four years later, we've finally helped organize two elections and a constitution. Now Iraqis need to take control of their own destiny. A majority of Iraqis want us to begin withdrawing troops, as does their new prime minister. It is time for us to go.

Our security is best served by getting out. In Iraq, our troops are caught up in civil strife between rival Iraqi factions. Our decision to invade Iraq has divided us from our allies, and our presence in the country is fueling hatred of the United States in the Muslim world. We need to work with the international community to support stability in Iraq, but it is time for us to refocus on building a global alliance against al Qaeda and the fanatics committed to international terror.

Let's come together on a common strategy. We have to end the partisan politics around the war with al Qaeda. And we have to get serious about security at home. Let's stop letting cronyism and corruption cripple this central task and invest the resources needed to secure our borders and our ports, to bolster our public health and first responder capacities and to ensure that nuclear, chemical and other prime targets have adequate defense plans.

HOT QUOTE

"Security must include not only protection from violence, but also the security of our livelihood and, therefore, shelter, nutrition, and health care for our families. It must include the stability of our communities and, therefore, protection from terrorist attacks, as well as protection from the massive dislocation of a bankrupt or relocated major employer. It includes the security of a clean environment and, therefore, freedom from man-made poisoning of our air, water, and land. And it has to include the security of all our children's futures and, therefore, protection from disease, ignorance, pollution, and poverty.

This new security is central to our common good. Its foundation is found in imaginative programs for public investment in our people, our public structures, and our private productivity. It is found in a foreign policy based on America's highest and best principles. It is found in a new defense policy that incorporates military-reform ideas and fourth-generation warfare capabilities with an understanding of the changing nature of conflict."

SENATOR GARY HART

("Restoration of the Republic," Feb. 26 2003)

COMEBACKS AND COUNTERATTACKS

CONSERVATIVE SPIN	PROGRESSIVE RETORT
<p>The president has a post-9/11 mindset; liberals don't get it. 9/11 showed us the threat, and our decisive action in Afghanistan and Iraq responded to it by toppling tyrants and disrupting terrorist networks. It is no coincidence that we haven't had another attack on our soil since we overthrew the Taliban.</p>	<p>International terrorist attacks are up across the world. Iraq is sinking into a civil war, after we've suffered more than 20,000 casualties and spent more than \$430 billion. The administration has alienated Muslim opinion across the world. The bipartisan 9/11 Commission gives the administration failing grades on homeland security. This country is less secure not more. It is hard to imagine a more complete failure of leadership.</p>
<p>Everyone believed Saddam had weapons of mass destruction. Our intelligence was faulty, but toppling his regime removed a dangerous tyrant and brought freedom to the Iraqi people. Building democracy in Iraq will change the political dynamics of the Middle East and provide a beacon of freedom for the region.</p>	<p>The facts are clear: Bush's team was bent on going to war and distorted the intelligence to mislead the American people into supporting an ill-conceived invasion. The question now is how to deal with this terrible mess. There aren't any easy answers, but our troops cannot be left as targets in the midst of a growing Iraqi civil war. We need to redeploy our troops over the next year, support the Iraqis in their effort to govern themselves and encourage our allies in the region to provide assistance.</p>
<p>Rogue nations such as North Korea and Iran are real threats to the world and we must recognize that negotiations and economic sanctions may not be sufficient to control them. The United States must be prepared and able to act when its interests are jeopardized; we cannot rely on the United Nations to ensure peace, and we don't need Blame-America-First liberals hurting the nation's morale.</p>	<p>The Bush administration has demonstrated clearly how to tear down the nation's morale. Use September 11 and the war in Iraq as partisan clubs. Ignore your generals and rush into a war with the deluded belief that we would be greeted as liberators, and that Iraq oil revenues would pay for the costs of our involvement there. Shred the president's credibility by fixing the intelligence to fit the policy. Then mire our forces in an extended and bloody occupation with no plan to get out. For the United States, military force should always be a last resort, not a first response.</p> <p>We face a range of threats to our national security, but we cannot ask our military to face them alone. Smart bombs won't stop global warming or the spread of pandemic diseases. Our reliance on foreign oil makes us vulnerable to turmoil within oil-producing nations, but we cannot seize and hold every oilfield. Diplomacy, alliances, international cooperation, intelligence sharing and police work are the essential tools for heading off the emergence of real threats to our national security. They are the real means of preemption.</p>

MORE RESOURCES

Center for American Progress, a progressive think tank dedicated to improving the lives of Americans through ideas and action, <http://www.americanprogress.org/>

CNN—War in Iraq, a day-by-day look at the war in Iraq, archived after President Bush declared on May 1 that “major combat operations in Iraq have ended.” <http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/2003/iraq/>

Foreign Policy in Focus, a think tank for research, analysis, and action that brings together scholars, advocates, and activists who strive to make the United States a more responsible global partner, <http://www.fpiif.org>

Francis Fukuyama. *America at the Crossroads: Democracy, Power, and the Neoconservative Legacy*. New York: Yale University Press, 2007.

National Priorities Project—Cost of War, research organization that analyzes and clarifies federal data so that people can understand and influence how their tax dollars are spent, <http://nationalpriorities.org>, <http://costofwar.com/>

United States Institute of Peace, an independent, nonpartisan, national institution established and funded by Congress that works to prevent and resolve violent conflicts, promote post-conflict stability and development, and increase peace-building capacity, tools, and intellectual capital worldwide, <http://www.usip.org/>

Reports

Center for American Progress, *Strategic Redeployment 2.0: A Progressive Strategy for Iraq*, http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2006/05/strategic_redeployment.html

National Priorities Project, *Local Costs of the Iraq War*, http://www.nationalpriorities.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=31&Itemid=28

National Intelligence Estimate, *Trends in Global Terrorism: Implications for the United States*, http://hosted.ap.org/specials/interactives/wdc/documents/terrorism/keyjudgments_092606.pdf

United States Institute of Peace, *The Iraq Study Group Report*, http://www.usip.org/isg/iraq_study_group_report/report/1206/iraq_study_group_report.pdf

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⁶National Priorities Project. "Military Recruiting 2006." 22 December 2006. http://www.nationalpriorities.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=263&Itemid=28.

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IMMIGRATION: VALUES AND SENSE

INTRODUCTION

Senator Robert F. Kennedy once said, “Our attitude toward immigration reflects our faith in the American ideal. We have always believed it possible for men and women who start at the bottom to rise as far as their talent and energy allow. Neither race nor place of birth should affect their chances.”

Our current immigration system is a mass of contradictions. The global trade policies we champion uproot peasants from their villages, yet we object when the desperate come across the border hoping to survive. We seek security in an age of terror but we’ve lost control of our borders. Immigrants provide new energy for the economy, but the new wave of immigration rouses fear and resentment. Our system of legal immigration is broken—too limited, too clumsy and too chaotic. We need a rational immigration system that adds vibrant new citizens to our country rather than exploited laborers hiding in the shadows.

THE CHALLENGE

Each year, 750,000 to 1 million immigrants are admitted legally into the United States through a hodgepodge of programs with confusing quotas and categories, resulting in a massive backlog of eligible applicants. At the same time, as many as half a million immigrants come without documents. In 2006, there were an estimated 11.5 and 12 million unauthorized migrants in the United States.¹ Unsurprisingly, more come from Mexico than any other nation. Since the passage of NAFTA, Mexican workers’ wages have plunged, and traditional Mexican village agriculture has been disrupted. Millions leave their villages to find a way to support their families.

We have only begun to have a debate about what our immigration policy should be. Traditionally, America’s acceptance of migrants has always followed the ebbs and flows of our need for cheap labor. Now, however, corporate-led globalization is undermining workers at home and abroad. More and more people are desperate to come here to make a living—even as more American workers fear that a flood of immigrants will drag down wages that are already under pressure.

Current U.S. immigration policy was developed in the 1960s during a very different economic era. Today, the doors of legal immigration are too narrow—and the policing of employers who hire undocumented

HOT QUOTE

“...What we need is to have the immigrants, 11 million that are in the United States already, come out of the shadows...so we know who they are. [We need to] find a way that you give the 11 million that are here a realistic way to come out of the shadows, earn their legalization, and that they pay fines for being here illegally.”

GOVERNOR BILL RICHARDSON

(Remarks on ABC’s This Week, Aug 21, 2005)

HOT QUOTE

"America has a proud tradition as a nation of immigrants and a nation of laws. But our current immigration laws have failed us on both counts. Much of the nation's economy today depends on the hard work and the many contributions of immigrants. The agricultural industry would grind to a halt without immigrant farm workers. Yet, the overwhelming majority of these workers are illegal—and are therefore easily exploited by unscrupulous employers who can get away with paying shamefully low wages and forcing them to work in unacceptably dangerous conditions. By bringing illegal workers out of the shadows, it will enable law enforcement officials to focus their efforts on terrorists and criminals. It will reduce the chaotic, illegal, and all-too-deadly flows of immigrants at our borders by providing safe and legal avenues for [immigrant] workers and their families."

SENATOR EDWARD KENNEDY

(Press Release, Feb 10, 2005)

workers are too weak. In addition, employers using the guest worker program have manipulated the system into a form of indentured servitude. Workers are continuously abused, malnourished, housed in squalid condition, and cheated out of pay. We must adapt to the new realities of the global economy and the age of terror. It is past time we strike a common sense solution on migration.

THE CONSERVATIVE FAILURE

On the right, the immigration debate has been driven by faux populists seeking to play on our divisions and our fears. Their vow to deport the 11 million undocumented workers in our country would require a police state alien to our traditions. Their fascination with building a wall across our southern border would raise the cost and casualties of undocumented immigration but do little to stem its flow. Their catering to exploitative businesses gives the lie to their populist posturing.

Conservatives try to straddle a widening divide between the interests of the business community and the anger of the zealots who want to deport the foreigners. Caught in word games over the meaning of amnesty, political calculation drives the Bush administration's policy response. The compromise "guest worker" proposal would invite workers to come to the United States without hope of citizenship and with the promise that they will return home after several years. But guest workers would be neither integrated into the society nor likely to leave it. At the same time, the administration has failed to enforce the laws or manage the system that we have.

FACTS AT A GLANCE

- In 2004 the Department of Homeland Security cited only three employers for possible undocumented worker violations.²
- In 2006, there are an estimated 11.5 to 12 million undocumented migrants in the United States.³
- Undocumented immigrants make up almost 5% of the U.S. labor force⁴ and represent about one-fourth of the total foreign-born population.⁵ The cost of deporting millions of undocumented immigrants would be at least \$206 billion over 5 years.⁶
- In 2005 the Border Patrol stopped almost 1.2 million people trying to enter the United States illegally.⁷ Legal immigration totals 750,000 to 1 million people annually.⁸
- Roughly 400 people die annually trying to cross the 1,951-mile US-Mexican border.⁹
- In 2003 alone, undocumented immigrants paid \$7 billion in taxes for Social Security, for which they see no return.¹⁰

THE PROGRESSIVE SOLUTION

America is largely a nation of immigrants. The Statue of Liberty extends the promise of America: “Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free.” Our society has been created and energized by successive waves of immigrants who are eager to work and excited about becoming part of America. But each wave of immigration rouses racial fears. Each new group is accused of being dissolute and a source of crime. Each is accused of undermining our economy. Each is accused of refusing to assimilate. And yet each wave—be they voluntary or enslaved, sanctioned or illegal—ends up contributing to our economy and enriching our society.

America must have clear laws for legal immigration—even as we develop a comprehensive policy to address illegal immigration. Immigration must be safe, legal and orderly. A comprehensive immigration policy would do the following:

- Establish a policy based on our economic needs that supports the interests of all workers—American born and immigrant—and simplifies the system to make it more efficient and comprehensible.
- Increase security at our borders and ports. No wall, no amount of police enforcement will totally eliminate the flow of immigrants into this country. But in an age of terror, the United States must take greater control of its borders. We need increased penalties for human trafficking and a larger border guard presence.
- Provide undocumented workers with a path to citizenship. We do not want to sustain millions living in the shadows, alienated and exploited. We cannot and will not track down and deport 11 million people—separating parents from children who have citizenship rights. If undocumented immigrants work, pay taxes, obey the law and receive no preferential treatment over legal migrants, they should be able to earn citizenship.
- Crack down on businesses addicted to cheap labor that routinely hire and exploit undocumented workers. Give workers the right to join a union. Raise the minimum wage and enforce it. If there were a decent minimum wage, and if fair labor standards and health and safety regulations were enforced, businesses would be less able to exploit undocumented workers to undermine wages and working conditions.
- Provide a comprehensive aid and development package—a new Alliance for Progress—to lift up workers in Mexico and Latin America who are the source of 80% of our undocumented workers. Most people prefer to stay in their own countries if they can hope to support their families. Helping those economies to grow and provide opportunities for workers is less expensive and more effective than attempting to build even higher walls or deporting millions of hardworking families.

HOT QUOTE

“We need to enforce the rule of law. We need to enforce our nation’s laws, but in order to do so we have to have laws that we can enforce.”

CONGRESSMAN JEFF FLAKE

(“Immigration Reform” Sept. 26, 2005)

THE PUBLIC PULSE

Americans want a policy that reflects citizenship.

59%

- 59% of Americans believe the government's policy toward illegal immigrants should allow current illegal immigrants to remain in the United States and become U.S. citizens. (*Gallup/U.S.A Today, 2007*)

Americans believe Illegal Immigrants that are here should get legal status.

62%

- 62% of Americans illegal immigrants who are living and working in the United States should be offered a chance to keep their jobs and eventually apply for legal status.

35%

- Only 35% of Americans believed they should be deported back to their native countries. (*Washington Post/ABC News, 2007*)

Americans believe leadership must do more to deal with illegal immigration.

71%

- 71% of Americans believe additional measures are needed besides building a 700 mile fence and an increase in security along the Mexican-U.S. border.

TALKING POINTS

America has been built by waves of immigrants. We benefit from their energy and their desire to succeed. Now, however, our system is in disrepair. The process for legal immigration is too confusing; the response to undocumented immigration is too chaotic. Guest workers are routinely abused. We need a comprehensive plan that is consistent with our values and our security.

- In an age of terror, we must control our borders. We have to increase our border guard presence and make better use of surveillance technology, and we've got to increase penalties for human trafficking.
- Current guest worker programs must be revamped and restructured. Immigrants who obtain guest worker privileges are routinely abused, underpaid, malnourished, and denied medical benefits for on-the-job injuries. We must fulfill the promise of a safe, livable workplace with a guest worker program that works to protect the immigrant workers as well as their employers.
- We can't condemn the millions of undocumented workers in the United States to live in fear. Those who work hard, obey the laws, and pay their taxes should be given a road to citizenship. We do not want a resentful, frightened population locked out of hope in America.

HOT QUOTE

"This guest worker program is the closest thing I've ever seen to slavery."

CHARLES RANGEL (D-NY)
House Ways and Means Committee
Chairman

- We can slow the rate of illegal immigration by making it harder for undocumented workers to enter the country, by making it harder for them to find employment here, and by helping to increase economic opportunities in their home countries. That means beefing up border controls, enforcing tough penalties on the businesses that hire undocumented workers and boosting growth opportunities in the countries near our southern border. A global economy requires global rules, and if we can't help workers abroad see a chance for succeeding in their home country, we will not see an end to the drive of the desperate to come north.

ELEVATOR SPEECH

Our current immigration system is broken and demands a comprehensive overhaul. We need to revise the process for legal immigration into our country. We need to take back control of our borders and ports. And we should crack down on employers who systematically hire and exploit the undocumented and guest workers. We must also face up to the fact that there is an ostracized underclass of 11.5 to 12 million people, lured to America by businesses addicted to cheap labor, living in fear among us. Their presence challenges our democratic values and our history of welcoming immigrants to our land. These undocumented workers need to be integrated into our system so they aren't afraid to help law enforcement keep us safe and so they aren't exploited by low-wage employers. For those who have worked, paid taxes and obeyed the law, we need to create a fair and orderly system that gives them a shot at the American dream—without disadvantaging those who have followed the rules. We also need guest workers protected from unscrupulous employment practices.

In every era of immigration, Americans worried that the newcomers wouldn't learn the language and would undermine our culture. In each case, America was renewed by their energy and enriched by their culture. We must see beyond our fears to stay true to our values and our history.

HOT QUOTE

"I support more technology at the border. A fence or wall has been proposed. For anybody that actually knows the topography of the border, very expensive, very illogical and as I said, all the time, you show me a 50-foot wall, I'll show you a 51-foot ladder. I think that takes us down the wrong road."

GOVERNOR JANET NAPOLITANO

(Remarks on Lou Dobbs tonight, Feb 26, 2006)

COMEBACKS AND COUNTERATTACKS

CONSERVATIVE SPIN	PROGRESSIVE RETORT
<p>Illegal immigrants are a burden on hard-working Americans. They lower wages, take away jobs and are a drain on social services.</p>	<p>It's interesting to hear your concerns about foreign competition lowering wages for Americans. That doesn't seem to be a problem when you are promoting free trade. No doubt undocumented workers compete with America's most vulnerable workers but the effect on wages is very small. The real answer is to raise the minimum wage, crack down on employment off the books and empower unions to organize. We shouldn't forget that millions of undocumented workers pay taxes and contribute to Social Security without being able to benefit from it.</p>
<p>A "path to citizenship" is just a codeword for amnesty and that is unacceptable. Amnesty only rewards and encourages illegal behavior.</p>	<p>The reality is millions of people already have sufficient incentive to take great risks to get into this country. The question is whether millions are left in limbo, easily exploited and constantly alienated, or, if they have worked hard, paid taxes and obeyed the law, we find a way to integrate them into our society. Some 11 million people live here outside of the legal system. We can't round them up and deport them. We need to create a system that gives them the opportunity to become citizens. At the same time, we need to crack down on employers who hire undocumented workers, police our borders more effectively, and help generate economic growth in the countries that the immigrants are leaving.</p>
<p>We've got to make English the only official language and get control of our country before we lose our cultural identity.</p>	<p>These same fears were roused about the Irish, the Slavs, the Italians and the Germans. Latinos are no different—the children of immigrants are desperate to learn English. We should have more faith in the strength of our culture and more pride in the richness of its diversity. If we are to protect American culture, it cannot be by hiding behind walls. We need to remain a country where those who work, pay taxes, and enrich American culture have a shot at achieving their dreams.</p>
<p>We can't punish business for illegal immigration. They hire immigrant labor because they need to compete in the global economy. They take jobs that Americans won't do.</p>	<p>These businesses are violating the law and providing the demand for undocumented workers. We want business to compete by being more efficient not more exploitative. We need a sensible program to lift wages in America—raise the minimum wage, empower workers to organize and crack down on off-the-books employment. Then immigrants will compete above the floor not in the cellar.</p>

<p>Immigrants come here to take welfare, social security and free public services. They rest on the system to take care of them and have contributed to the depletion of social welfare programs.</p>	<p>In fact, immigrants earn about \$240 billion a year, pay about \$90 billion a year in taxes, and use about \$5 billion in public benefits.¹¹</p>
<p>A guest worker program would import poverty, takes jobs from Americans, and legalize the vast flow of illegal immigration into the United States.</p>	<p>The United States already operates a guest worker program that allows employers to import unskilled labor for temporary or seasonal work lasting less than a year. In addition, guest worker programs only account for about 121,000 foreign workers annually. The guest worker program is not the problem—employers cheating workers out of wages, seizing their documentation, and providing squalid living conditions are its true malfunctions.</p>

MORE RESOURCES

Center for Immigration Studies, an independent, non-partisan, non-profit research organization that provides comprehensive data and analysis on immigration, <http://www.cis.org/>

Economic Policy Institute, a Shared Prosperity, a nonprofit, non-partisan think tank that focuses on the economic condition of low- and middle-income Americans and their families, <http://www.sharedprosperity.org/>

National Immigration Forum, an organization that advocates and builds support for public policies that welcome immigrants and refugees, and that are fair and supportive to newcomers in the United States, <http://www.immigrationforum.org/>

National Immigration Law Center, conducts policy analysis and provides technical advice and training to a broad constituency dedicated to promoting the rights and opportunities of low-income immigrants and their family members, <http://www.nilc.org/>

Pew Hispanic Center, a nonpartisan “fact tank” that provides information on the issues, attitudes and trends shaping America and the world, <http://pewhispanic.org/>

Southern Poverty Law Center, a nonprofit organization that uses litigation to fight injustice and intolerance, <http://www.splcenter.org/news/item.jsp?aid=247>

The Fair Immigration Reform Movement, an organization founded by low-income immigrant and non-immigrant grassroots community organizations working for immigration reform and immigrant rights with an anti-poverty focus, <http://fairimmigration.org/>

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Economic Policy Institute—A Shared Prosperity, Getting Immigration Reform Right, <http://www.sharedprosperity.org/bp186.html>

Outsourcing America's Technology and Knowledge Jobs,
<http://www.sharedprosperity.org/bp187/bp187.pdf>

National Immigration Law Center, 2005 Annual Report,
http://www.nilc.org/nilcinfo/2005_nilc_annual_report.pdf

Pew Hispanic Center, Modes of Entry for the Unauthorized Migrant Population, <http://pewhispanic.org/files/factsheets/19.pdf>

Southern Poverty Law Center, Close to Slavery: Guestworker Programs in the United States, <http://www.splcenter.org/pdf/static/SPLCguestworker.pdf>.

Audio-Video Content

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Fair Immigration Reform Movement, National Civil Rights, Labor, Immigration Rights, Faith Groups Speak Out as Immigration Debate Begins, <http://www.fairimmigration.org/press-room/releases/2007/national-civil-rights-labor.html>

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RECLAIMING DEMOCRACY

INTRODUCTION

The dramatic fall of Jack Abramoff pulled back the curtain on the corruption that corrodes American democracy. Special interest lobbies have turned Congress into a bawdy auction house open for sale to the highest bidder. The stories are salacious—prostitutes in hotel rooms, bribery by yacht and cash in the freezer—but the real scandals in Washington don't make the press and aren't even against the law. Washington has been taken over by lobbyists and campaign contributors who get paid back in special interest favors. And the common good simply is ignored in the process.

THE CHALLENGE

Big money dominates our politics. Incumbent members of the House of Representatives build up million-dollar war chests, gerrymander safe districts and win reelection as much as 98% of the time. Presidential and congressional campaigns cost \$4 billion in 2004. The average cost of winning a 2006 House race was about \$966,000 and \$7.8 million for a Senate seat.¹

Candidates have to raise that money from somewhere, and donors that make contributions generally want—and get—something in return.

Americans pay the cost of this corruption. Oil companies get their way on an energy bill that provides billions in subsidies even as profits reach record levels; Americans pay at the pump. Drug companies succeed at prohibiting Medicare from negotiating better prices; seniors and taxpayers pay in soaring drug prices. Banks get protected against student loan default; students and parents pay higher interest rates. It is time to clean out the stables and cut off the influence of big money in Washington.

Big corporations and lobbyists have permeated the democratic process. They now control the methods as to which representatives vote, address policy, and change the political landscape of America. Big oil got its way,

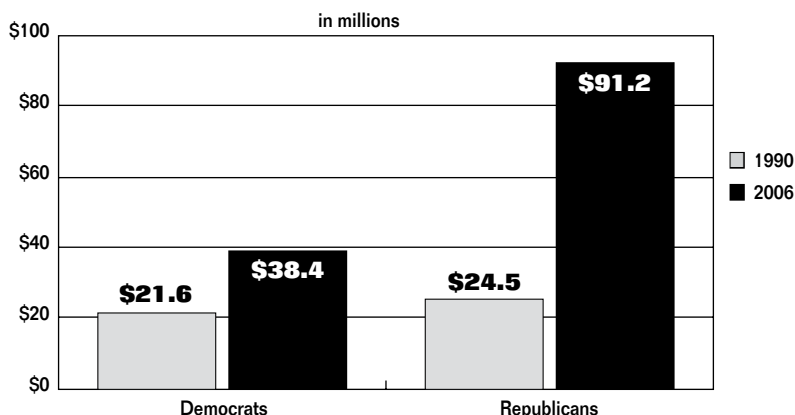
HOT QUOTE

"We've created a culture that just breeds corruption."

CONGRESSMAN JEFF FLAKE

(Financial Times, Jan. 11, 2006)

Industry Contributions Rise and Tilt Right
Totals for Energy, Banking, Pharmaceuticals and Transportation



HOT QUOTE

THE REPUBLICAN CONTRACT WITH AMERICA, 1994:

"In this era of official evasion and posturing, we offer instead a detailed agenda for national renewal....To restore accountability to Congress. To end its cycle of scandal and disgrace. To make us all proud again of the way free people govern themselves."

"IF WE BREAK THIS CONTRACT, THROW US OUT."

367 Republican candidates for office (September 27, 1994)

pharmaceutical companies got their way—isn't it time the voters get a say in their future? Such a political voice would require voting on large scale; however, voting—the cornerstone of democracy—has been tainted with voting fraud and abuse. Voting irregularities, electronic voting machines, felon disenfranchisement, voter intimidation, and fraudulent identification card programs and other tactics threaten democracy in America.

THE CONSERVATIVE FAILURE

With one-party rule and no checks and balances, the conservative majority made corruption central to its hold on power. The essence of the corruption is the outright sale of public policy to the well-connected and well-heeled.

Conservatives in Congress run a revolving door. Spinning one way, the revolving door rewards former government officials with lucrative private sector jobs for policy choices that make industry happy. Spinning the other way, industry lobbyists are appointed to positions of public authority and responsibility—and put in charge of regulating the very companies that they once represented.

And the conservatives sell public policy to the highest bidder. Tom Delay's notorious K Street Project had one simple rule: pay to play. Lobbying firms that hired Republican staffers and directed contributions to Republican candidates could write their own favors into law. Firms who strayed might not get so much as an office visit. Privately financed campaigns reach record levels every year, and conservatives obstruct real reforms.

FACTS AT A GLANCE

Lobbying

- The number of registered lobbyists in Washington more than doubled in the first term of George Bush, to more than 34,750, while the amount that lobbyists charge their new clients has increased by as much as 100 percent.²
- In 2006, the federal lobbying industry brought in \$2.5 billion, more than \$7 million every business day.³
- Federally registered lobbyists have served as the treasurers of at least 868 political committees since 1998. These committees have spent more than \$525 million to influence the political process.⁴

Pay to Play

- Presidential and congressional campaigns cost \$4 billion in 2004.⁵
- To finance their race for reelection, incumbents in the House of Representatives need to raise roughly \$1,000 every day. Senators

need to raise \$3,000 every day during the years when they are supposed to be working for the people⁶

- Roughly \$1 billion in industry contributions have been linked to \$160 billion in subsidies and tax breaks.⁷

Voting

- Nationwide, in 2004, as many as 1 million ballots were spoiled by faulty voting equipment—roughly one for every 100 cast.⁸
- The disenfranchisement of people with criminal convictions has resulted in over 5 million American citizens who lack the right to vote.⁹
- In Florida, the 2000 presidential election was decided by just 537 votes, but 827,207 people lost their right to vote as a result of a felony conviction.¹⁰
- The voter purges in Florida during the 2000 election purged potential voters if their names shared 80 percent of the letters with a name in a nationwide felon database.¹¹
- The Diebold Election Systems is the main supplier of electronic-voting machines. Its chief executive, Walden W. O'Dell, held a Republican Party fundraiser at his suburban Columbus, OH home in 2003, declaring, "I am committed to helping Ohio deliver its electoral votes to the president next year."¹²

He who pays the piper calls the tune.

PROVERB

How corruption hurts you.

- Pharmaceutical manufacturers designed the new Medicare prescription drug benefit so Medicare is prohibited from using its bulk-buying power to negotiate lower prices. Now you pay more for drugs.
- Commercial banks lobbied for a higher education bill that cuts money for student aid and raises interest rates. Now you pay more for college.
- Even as they registered record profits, oil and gas industries scored new legislation that hands out \$6 billion in federal subsidies. You pay more at the pump.
- Bush appointed industry lobbyists to positions of authority at the Department of the Interior and EPA. Now you pay more to visit national parks and you worry about the taste of your water.

HOT QUOTE

“Comprehensive campaign finance reform should aim to create a system that reduces special interest influence and creates a level playing field so qualified candidates without access to wealth can run viable campaigns...[V]oters will get an end to special interest influence and a level playing field so that...policy will no longer be polluted by campaign contributions.”

PUBLIC CAMPAIGN

(Green vs. Gold—Money, Politics, and the Environment)

THE PROGRESSIVE SOLUTION

Americans need to take back their government. Americans want legislators who represent their voters, not their contributors; they want legislators who will fight for the common good, not finagle to pay off a special interest. People in positions of public responsibility should be working for the American people. That requires a range of reforms.

Limit Special Interest Lobbies

While the Republican majority of the 109th Congress watered down the most trivial lobbying reforms, the Democrat majority of the 110th Congress set a goal to clean up government. A range of clean government groups have developed a number of basic reform measures. The goal is to break up the cozy relationship between lobbyists and congressional leadership that Tom Delay’s K Street Project formed by:

- Banning lobbyists from giving gifts such as travel perks to public officials and their staffs;
- Expanding disclosure—including gifts, client fees, and lobbyist campaign contributions and fundraising;
- Requiring disclosure by public officials negotiating private sector jobs;
- Closing the revolving door, prohibiting lobbying by former public officials for at least two years; and
- Establishing an independent commission to monitor compliance with ethics laws.

Election Financing

If government is to truly represent the people, then elections will need to be paid for by the people. The cost of publicly financing elections would be more than recovered by what’s saved in special interest giveaways and corporate handouts. Roughly \$1 billion in industry contributions have been linked to \$160 billion in subsidies and tax breaks.

States are already leading the way. “Clean Money, Clean Elections” laws in Arizona; Connecticut; Maine; New Jersey; New Mexico; North Carolina; Vermont; Albuquerque, New Mexico; and Portland, Oregon provide public financing to candidates who reject private money.² Other jurisdictions, such as New York City, provide public matching funds for small-dollar private contributions in exchange for candidates agreeing to observe spending limits. Candidates who rely on public financing have more time to connect with the voters during campaigns and, once in office, can concentrate on policy instead of fundraising for the next election. Clean Money, Clean Elections laws are having an effect: 10 of the 11 statewide officeholders in Arizona and approximately 80% of the Maine state legislature were elected under such systems.

Voting

Voting in the United States must be democratized again. Purging the voter rolls under the guise of cleaning house must end. Electronic voting machines must produce voter-verified paper trails that provide confidence that there were no shenanigans and that can be recounted in case of need. Voter ID requirements should not burden or exclude the poor or disadvantaged. People convicted of crimes should be allowed to vote as part of their reintegration into the community. These are all ways to open the process and create a government of the people and by the people.

THE PUBLIC PULSE

The American people are hungry for change. They feel betrayed by their leaders and have the sense that their votes don't carry much weight.

Americans believe the power of influence is not in the hands of the American people.

- 85% of Americans believe Political Action Committees (which give money to political candidates) have too much power.
- 84% of Americans believe big companies have too much power.
- 79% of Americans believe political lobbyists have too much power.

(The Harris Poll, 2007)

Americans believe Congress has a low level of ethics and honesty.

- 36% of Americans believe the level of ethics and honesty of members of Congress is "not so good" and 30% believe it is "poor."
- Only 1% of Americans believe the level of ethics and honesty of members of Congress is "excellent."

(ABC News Poll, 2006)

Americans believe corruption in government is a serious problem.

- 44% of Americans believe corruption in government is a "somewhat serious" problem; and 39% of Americans believe it is a "very serious" party.
- Only 15% of Americans believe it is "not too serious."

(USA Today/Gallup Poll, 2006)

Americans want stricter laws against lobbyist gifts that are believed to be common practice in Congress.

- 76% of Americans favor stricter laws against lobbyist gift giving.
- 81% of Americans believe bribery is a common practice in Congress.
- Only 13% of Americans believe bribery is an isolated incident.

(Pew Research Center for the People and the Press Survey, 2006)

HOT QUOTES

The Republican Congress has washed away "the walls between the public servants and the private lobbyists."

DAVID BROOKS,
conservative columnist

(New York Times, Nov. 20, 2004)

85%

84%

79%

1%

15%

76%

81%

13%

HOT QUOTE

"The difference between being able to go out and spend your time with voters, meeting with groups, doing things like traveling to communities that have been under-represented in the past as opposed to being on the phone selling tickets to a \$250 a plate fundraiser—that's the real difference."

GOV. JANET NAPOLITANO

(*"The Road to Clean Elections,"* 2003 video)

"In a healthy democracy, citizens have more influence on public policy than special interests. This is not the case in American politics today. Across the country, voters are crying out for reforms that would reduce special-interest influence in government decision-making while opening the political process to ordinary citizens. By working to reform campaign finance laws at the national, state and local levels, we will restore public confidence in government as an instrument of the people, by the people and for the people."

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

(*Campaign Finance*, Nov. 28, 2005)

TALKING POINTS

When it comes to corruption, the key themes are pay-to-play, cronyism and a government that works for the few. But don't just talk about problems of process. Progressives need to show how corruption affects people personally. Show the corruption and then show the *results*. Emphasize that progressives want to put the people first and restore America to its proud history as a democracy and a land of opportunity. See the examples in "How corruption hurts *you*."

- Cronyism is rampant, connections are a golden ticket and incompetence is the fruit of corruption. Halliburton got billions of dollars' worth of contracts to rebuild Iraq but cut corners and supplied U.S. troops with contaminated water. Michael "heckuva job Brownie" Brown had no emergency management experience and abandoned the people of New Orleans to Katrina's aftermath.
- The 2006 election that changed parties in Congress helped restore some checks and balances on executive power. However, campaign money and lobbying interests still hold undue influence. Progressives want to restore America's promise. Government should work for all of us. We want to loosen the grip of the corporate special interests and return power to the American people.
- Voter purges, electronic voting machines and questionable state wide tactics are a threat to every citizen. The vote should be a choice of freedom for every citizen.

ELEVATOR SPEECH

Conservatives came to power in 1994 to make a revolution. They stayed to run a racket. Government is working for the privileged few and not the American people as a whole. The scheme is unraveling, player by player—Cunningham, Abramoff and DeLay—but we need fundamental change. We must clean out the stables. Take big money out of campaigns. Force lobbyists and legislators to disclose the meetings, junkets and gifts. Disclose earmarks in legislation, including who benefits. Stop the revolving door by prohibiting political appointees, legislators and staff from lobbying for two years after they leave office. It's time to return power to the people. It's time to restore America's promise.

COMEBACKS AND COUNTERATTACKS

CONSERVATIVE SPIN	PROGRESSIVE RETORT
<p>Public financing? That's just giving tax dollars to politicians. Why should politicians be on welfare?</p>	<p>Americans have a choice. More corruption that rewards special interests and costs us more in higher prices for gas and prescription drugs—or cut the cord between wealthy interests who fund campaigns and the elected officials who are supposed to represent us. The clean elections-style public financing laws in states all over the country actually work and cost very little. For roughly six dollars a year, Americans can take back their government from the big money interests and have a Congress that works for all of us, not just the few.</p>
<p>Corruption isn't a Republican problem. Democrats have scandals of their own. The key is to clean out the few bad apples.</p>	<p>It's not just the apples; the barrel itself is rotting. There's an iron triangle of corruption—a revolving door among legislators, corporate lobbies and the executive branch—in which money talks, and the public interest is ignored. It takes a whole system to bring us so many stories of foul play: DeLay, Cunningham, Abramoff, Tauzin, Scully, Ney and all the rest.</p>

MORE RESOURCES

Brennan Center for Justice, is a non-partisan public policy and law institute that focuses on the fundamental issues of democracy and justice, <http://www.brennancenter.org>

Center for Public Integrity, a non-partisan and non-advocacy organization committed to transparent and comprehensive reporting both in the United States and around the World, www.publicintegrity.org

Center for Responsive Politics—Opensecrets.org, a nonpartisan, nonprofit research group based in Washington, D.C. that tracks money in politics, and its effect on elections and public policy, www.opensecrets.org

Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, a nonprofit organization that promotes ethics in government by targeting public officials that are against public good, www.citizensforethics.org

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Micah Sifry and Nancy Watzman. *Is That a Politician in Your Pocket?* New York: Wiley, 2004.

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