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Preamble

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

44
45
46 But even worse than the conditions we find ourselves in are the false promises that

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 have demonstrated our love of country by uniting to overcome our challenges—whether
2 ending slavery, fighting two world wars for the cause of freedom or sending a man to the
3 moon. This is the country of Abraham Lincoln, Susan B. Anthony, Martin Luther King
4 Jr., Cesar Chavez, and Rosa Parks -- people who had the audacity to believe that their
5 country could be a better place, and the courage to work to make it so. And this Party --
6 the Party of Jefferson and Jackson; of Roosevelt and Kennedy -- has always made the
7 biggest difference in the lives of the American people when we summoned the entire
8 nation to a common purpose. Today, America must unite again --to help our most
9 vulnerable residents get back on their feet and to restore the vitality of both urban centers
10 and family farms --because the success of each depends on the success of the other. And
11 America must challenge us again --to serve our country and to meet our responsibilities --
12 whether in our families or local governments; our civic organizations or places of
13 worship. We must act in the knowledge that each of us has a stake in our neighbors'
14 dreams and struggles, as well as our own, and recognize the dignity in each of us.

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

29
30 This is the essence of what it means to be a patriot: not only to declare our love of this
31 nation, but to show it --by our deeds, our priorities and the commitments we keep.

32
33 If we choose to change, just imagine what we can do. What makes America great has
34 never been its perfection, but the belief that it can be made better. And that people who
35 love this country can change it.

36
37 We have a choice to make. We can choose to stay the current failed course. Or we can
38 choose a path that builds upon the best of who and what we are, that reflects our highest
39 values. We can have more of the last eight years, or we can rise together and create a
40 new kind of government. The time for change has come, and America must seize it.

41 42 **I. Renewing the American Dream**

43
44 For months the state of our economy has dominated the headlines--and the news has not
45 been good. The sub-prime lending debacle has sent the housing market into a tailspin,

1 and many Americans have lost their homes. By early August, the economy had shed
2 463,000 jobs over seven straight months of job loss. Health, gas and food prices are rising
3 dramatically.

4
5 But the problem goes deeper than the current crisis. Families have seen their incomes go
6 down even as they have been working longer hours and as productivity has grown. At the
7 same time, health costs have risen while companies have shed health insurance coverage
8 and pensions. Worse yet, too many Americans have lost confidence in the fundamental
9 American promise that our children will have a better life than we do.

10
11 We are living through an age of fundamental economic transformation. Technology has
12 changed the way we live and the way the world does business. The collapse of the Soviet
13 Union and the advance of capitalism have vanquished old challenges to America's global
14 leadership, but new challenges have emerged. Today, jobs and industries can move to any
15 country with an Internet connection and willing workers.

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

24
25 From the mother working two jobs to pay the bills and the couple struggling to care for
26 young children and aging parents, to the tens of millions of Americans without health
27 insurance and the workers who have seen their jobs shipped overseas, too many
28 Americans have been invisible to our current President and his party for too long. The
29 people who do the work in America have never been invisible to the Democratic Party. It
30 is time to make the American Dream real for them again.

31
32 We need a government that stands up for the hopes, values, and interests of working
33 people, and gives everyone willing to work hard the chance to make the most of their
34 God-given potential.

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

45
46 **Jumpstart the Economy and Provide Middle Class Americans Immediate Relief**

1 We will provide an immediate energy rebate to American families struggling with the
2 record price of gasoline and the skyrocketing cost of other necessities. We will devote
3 \$50 billion to jumpstarting the economy, helping economic growth, and preventing
4 another 1 million jobs from being lost. This will include assistance to states and localities
5 to prevent them from having to cut their vital services like education, health care and
6 infrastructure. We will quickly implement the housing bill recently passed by Congress
7 and ensure that states and localities that have been hard-hit by the housing crisis can
8 avoid cuts in vital services. We support investments in infrastructure to replenish the
9 highway trust fund; invest in road and bridge maintenance and fund new, fast-tracked
10 projects to repair schools. We believe that it is essential to take immediate steps to stem
11 the loss of manufacturing jobs. Taking these immediate measures will provide good jobs
12 and will help the economy today—but generating truly shared prosperity is only possible if
13 we also address our most significant long run challenges like the rising cost of health
14 care, energy, and education.

15

16 **Empowering Families for a New Era**

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

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

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

32

33 **Affordable, Quality Health Care Coverage for All Americans**

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

44

1 The American people understand that good health is the foundation of individual
 2 achievement and economic prosperity. Ensuring quality, affordable health care for every
 3 single American is essential to children's educations, workers' productivity and
 4 businesses' competitiveness. We believe that covering all is not just a moral imperative,
 5 but is necessary to making our health system workable and affordable. Doing so would
 6 end cost-shifting from the uninsured, promote prevention and wellness, stop insurance
 7 discrimination, help eliminate health care disparities, and achieve savings through
 8 competition, choice, innovation and higher quality care. While there are different
 9 approaches within the Democratic Party about how best to achieve the commitment of
 10 affordable, universal coverage for all, we stand united to achieve this fundamental
 11 objective through the legislative process.

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

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

Covering all Americans and Providing Real Choices of Affordable Health Insurance Options.

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

35
 36 *Shared Responsibility.* Health care should be a shared responsibility between employers,
 37 workers, insurers, providers and government. All
 38 Americans should have coverage they can afford;
 39 employers should have incentives to provide coverage
 40 to their workers; insurers and providers should ensure
 41 high quality affordable care; and the government
 42 should ensure that health insurance is affordable and
 43 provides meaningful coverage. As affordable coverage
 44 is made available, individuals should purchase health
 45 insurance and take steps to lead healthy lives.

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

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

6
7 *Portable Insurance.* No one should have to worry about losing health coverage if they
8 change or lose jobs.

9
10 *Meaningful Benefits.* Families should have health insurance coverage similar to what
11 Members of Congress enjoy. They should not be forced to bear the burden of
12 skyrocketing premiums, unaffordable deductibles or benefit limits that leave them at
13 financial risk when they become sick. We will finally achieve long-overdue mental health
14 and addiction treatment parity.

15
16 *An Emphasis on Prevention and Wellness.* Chronic diseases account for 70 percent of the
17 nation's overall health care spending. We need to promote healthy lifestyles and disease
18 prevention and management in places of employment and in school. All Americans
19 should be empowered to promote wellness and have access to preventive services to
20 impede the development of costly chronic conditions, such as obesity, diabetes, heart
21 disease, and hypertension. Chronic-care and behavioral health management should be
22 assured for all Americans who require care coordination. This includes assistance for
23 those recovering from the traumatic life altering injuries and illnesses as well as those
24 with mental health and substance use disorders. We should promote additional tobacco
25 and substance abuse prevention.

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

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

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

6 *Public Health and Research.* Health and wellness is a shared responsibility among
7 individuals and families, school systems, employers, the medical and public health
8 workforce and government at all levels. We will ensure that Americans can benefit from
9 healthy environments that allow them to pursue healthy choices. Additionally, as
10 childhood obesity rates have more than doubled in the last 30 years, we will work to
11 ensure healthy environments in our schools.

12 We must fight HIV/AIDS in our country and around the world. We support increased
13 funding into research, care and prevention of HIV/AIDS. We support comprehensive
14 national strategic plan to combat HIV/AIDS and a Ryan White Care Act designed and
15 funded to meet today's epidemic, that ends ADAP waiting lists, that focuses on the
16 communities such as African Americans and Latino Americans who are
17 disproportionately impacted through an expanded and renewed Minority HIV/AIDS
18 initiative, and on new epicenters such as the Southern part of our nation. We support
19 providing Medicaid coverage to more low-income HIV-positive Americans.

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

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

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

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

1 *Reproductive Health Care*

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

6

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

10 **Retirement and Social Security**

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

29

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

35 **Good Jobs with Good Pay**

36 In the platform hearings, Americans expressed dismay that people who are willing to
37 study and work cannot get a job that pays enough to live on in the current economy.
38 Democrats are committed to an economic policy that produces good jobs with good pay
39 and benefits. That is why we support the right to organize. We know that when unions
40 are allowed to do their job of making sure that workers get their fair share, they pull
41 people out of poverty and create a stronger middle class. We will strengthen the ability of
42 workers to organize unions and fight to pass the Employee Free Choice Act. We will
43 restore pro-worker voices to the National Labor Relations Board and the National
44 Mediation Board and we support overturning the NLRB's and NMB's many harmful

1 decisions that undermine the collective bargaining rights of millions of workers. We will
 2 ensure that federal employees, including public safety officers who put their lives on the
 3 line every day have the right to bargain collectively, and we will fix the broken
 4 bargaining process at the Federal Aviation Administration. We will fight to ban the
 5 permanent replacement of striking workers, so that workers can stand up for themselves
 6 without worrying about losing their livelihoods. We will continue to vigorously oppose
 7 “Right-to-Work” Laws and “paycheck protection” efforts whenever they are proposed.
 8 Suspending labor protections during national emergencies compounds the devastation
 9 from the emergency. We opposed suspension of Davis-Bacon following Hurricane
 10 Katrina, and we support broad application of Davis-Bacon worker protections to all
 11 federal projects. We will stop the abuse of privatization of government jobs. We will end
 12 the exploitative practice of employers wrongly misclassifying workers as independent
 13 contractors.

14
 15 The Bush Administration Department of Labor has failed in its obligation to stand up and
 16 protect American workers. Our Department of Labor will restore and expand overtime
 17 rights for millions of Americans, and will actively enforce wage and hour laws. Our
 18 Occupational Safety and Health Administration will
 19 adopt and enforce comprehensive safety standards;
 20 the Bush Administration is the only administration
 21 that has never voluntarily issued a significant final
 22 standard for workplace safety. Right now, far too
 23 many workers-especially those in the construction and
 24 mining industries-risk their lives every day just by
 25 going to work.

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

35
 36 **Work and Family**

37 Over the last few decades, fundamental changes in the
 38 way we work and live have trapped too many
 39 American families between an economy that's gone
 40 global and a government that's gone AWOL. It's time we stop just talking about family
 41 values, and start pursuing policies that truly value families. Families are increasingly
 42 responsible for caring for children and aging relatives, and its time for the government to
 43 meet them halfway. We will expand the Family and Medical Leave Act to reach millions
 44 more workers than are currently covered, and will enable workers to take leave to care for
 45 an elderly parent, address domestic violence and sexual assault, or attend a parent-teacher

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

1 conference. Today 78 percent of the workers who are eligible for leave cannot take it
2 because it's unpaid, so we will work with states and make leave paid. We will also
3 ensure that every American worker is able earn up to seven paid sick days to care for
4 themselves or an ill family member. And we will encourage employers to provide
5 flexible work arrangements—with the federal government leading by example. We will
6 expand the childcare tax credit, provide every child access to quality, affordable early
7 childhood education, and double funding for after-school and summer learning
8 opportunities for children. We will provide assistance to those who need long-term care
9 and to the working men and women of this country who do the heroic job of providing
10 care for their aging relatives. All Americans who are working hard and taking
11 responsibility deserve the chance to do right by their loved ones. That's the America we
12 believe in.

13

14 **Poverty**

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

21

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

39 **Opportunity for Women**

40 We, the Democratic Party, are the party that has produced more women Governors,
41 Senators, and Members of Congress than any other. We have produced the first woman
42 Secretary of State, the first woman Speaker of the House of Representatives, and, in
43 2008, Hillary Rodham Clinton, the first woman in American history to win presidential
44 primaries in our nation. We believe that our daughters should have the
45 same opportunities as our sons; our party is proud that we have put 18 million cracks in

1 the highest glass ceiling. We know that when America extends its promise to women, the
2 result is increased opportunity for families, communities, and aspiring people
3 everywhere.

4
5 When women still earn 76 cents for every dollar that a man earns, it doesn't just hurt
6 women; it hurts families and children. We will pass the "Lilly Ledbetter" Act, which will
7 make it easier to combat pay discrimination; we will pass the Fair Pay Act; and we will
8 modernize the Equal Pay Act. We will invest in women-owned small businesses and
9 remove the capital gains tax on start-up small businesses. We will support women in
10 math and science, combat sex discrimination and increase American competitiveness by
11 retaining the best workers in those fields, regardless of gender. We recognize that women
12 still carry the majority of childrearing responsibilities so we have created a
13 comprehensive work and family agenda. We recognize that women are the majority of
14 adults who make the minimum wage, and are particularly hard-hit by recession and
15 poverty. We will protect Social Security, expand programs to combat poverty and
16 improve education so that parents and children can lift themselves out of poverty. We
17 will work to combat violence against women.

18
19 We believe that standing up for our country means standing up against sexism and all
20 intolerance. Demeaning portrayals of women cheapen our debates, dampen the dreams of
21 our daughters, and deny us the contributions of too many. Responsibility lies with us all.

22 23 **Investing in American Competitiveness**

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

34 35 **New American Energy**

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

1 countries like Germany, Spain and Brazil reap the benefits of economic growth from
2 clean energy. But we are decades behind in confronting this challenge.

3
4 For the sake of our security—and for every American family that is paying the price at the
5 pump—we will break our addiction to foreign oil. In platform hearings around the
6 country, Americans called for a Manhattan or Apollo Project level commitment to
7 achieve energy independence. We hear that call and we Democrats commit to fasttrack
8 investment of billions of dollars over the next ten years to establish a green energy sector
9 that will create up to five million jobs. Good jobs, like those in Pennsylvania where
10 workers manufacture wind turbines, the ones in the factory in Nevada producing
11 components for solar energy generation plants, or the jobs that will be created when plug-
12 in hybrids start rolling off the assembly line in Michigan. This transition to a clean-
13 energy industry will also benefit low-income communities: we'll create an energy-
14 focused youth job program to give disadvantaged youth job skills for this emerging
15 industry.

16
17 It will not be easy, but neither was getting to the moon. We know we can't drill our way
18 to energy independence and so we must summon all of our ingenuity and legendary hard
19 work and we must invest in research, development, and deployment of forms of
20 renewable energy—such as solar, wind, geothermal, as well as technologies to store
21 energy through advanced batteries and clean up our coal plants. And we will call on
22 businesses, government, and the American people to make America 50 percent more
23 energy efficient by 2030, because we know that the most energy efficient economy will
24 also gain the competitive edge for new manufacturing and jobs that stay here at home.
25 We will help pay for all of it by dedicating a portion of the revenues generated by an
26 economy wide cap and trade program- a step that will also dramatically reduce our
27 greenhouse gas emissions and jumpstart billions in private capital investment in a new
28 energy economy.

29
30 We'll dramatically increase the fuel efficiency of automobiles, and we'll help auto
31 manufacturers and parts suppliers convert to build the cars and trucks of the future and
32 their key components in the United States. And we will help workers learn the skills
33 they need to compete in the green economy. We are committed to getting at least 25% of
34 our electricity from renewable sources by 2025. Building on the innovative efforts of the
35 private sector, states, cities, and tribes across the country, we will create new federal-
36 local partnerships to scale the success and deployment of new energy solutions, install a
37 smarter grid, build more efficient buildings, and use the power of federal and military
38 purchasing programs to jumpstart promising new markets and technologies. We'll invest
39 in advanced biofuels like cellulosic ethanol which will provide American-grown fuel
40 and help free us from the tyranny of oil. We will use innovative measures to
41 dramatically improve the energy efficiency of buildings.

42
43 To lower the price of gasoline, we will crack down on speculators who are driving up
44 prices beyond the natural market rate. We will direct the Federal Trade Commission and
45 Department of Justice to vigorously investigate and prosecute market manipulation in oil

1 futures. And we will help those who are hit hardest by high energy prices by increasing
 2 funding for low-income heating assistance and weatherization programs and providing
 3 energy assistance to help middle-class families make ends meet in this time of inflated
 4 energy prices.

5
 6 This plan will safeguard our economy, our country, and the future of our planet. This plan
 7 will create good jobs that pay well and can't be outsourced. With these policies, we will
 8 protect our country from the national security threats created by reliance on foreign oil
 9 and global insecurity due to climate change. And this is how we'll solve the problem of
 10 four dollar a gallon gas—with a comprehensive plan and investment in clean energy.

11 12 **A World Class Education for Every Child**

13 In the 21st century, where the most valuable skill is knowledge, countries that out-
 14 educate us today will out-compete us tomorrow. In the platform hearings, Americans
 15 made it clear that it is morally and economically unacceptable that our high-schoolers
 16 continue to score lower on math and science tests than most other students in the world
 17 and continue to drop-out at higher rates than their peers in other industrialized nations.
 18 We cannot accept the persistent achievement gap between minority and white students or
 19 the harmful disparities that exist between different schools within a state or even a
 20 district. Americans know we can and should do better.

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

30 31 *Pre-school*

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

37 38 *K-12*

39 We must ensure that every student has a high-
 40 quality teacher and an effective principal. That
 41 starts with recruiting a new generation of teachers
 42 and principals by making this pledge—if you
 43 commit your life to teaching, America will commit
 44 to paying for your college education. We'll provide
 45 better preparation, mentoring and career ladders.
 46 Where there are teachers who are still struggling

“Strong public schools are the foundation of democratic community life. With the intention of helping all children to succeed, we must facilitate improved education, including vocational and special education programs”
 –*Listening to America* participants,
 Denver, CO

1 and underperforming we should provide them with individual help and support. And if
2 they're still underperforming after that, we should find a quick and fair way—consistent
3 with due process—to put another teacher in that classroom.

4
5 To reward our teachers, we will follow the lead of school districts and educators that have
6 pioneered innovative ways to increase teacher pay that are developed with teachers, not
7 imposed on them. We will make an unprecedented national investment to provide
8 teachers with better pay and better support to improve their skills, and their students'
9 learning. We'll reward effective teachers who teach in underserved areas, take on added
10 responsibilities like mentoring new teachers, or consistently excel in the classroom.

11
12 We will fix the failures and broken promises of No Child Left Behind—while holding to
13 the goal of providing every child access to a world-class education, raising standards and
14 ensuring accountability for closing the achievement gap. We will end the practice of
15 labeling a school and its students as failures and then throwing our hands up and walking
16 away from them without having provided the resources and supports these students
17 need. But this alone is not an education policy. It's just a starting point. We will work
18 with our nation's governors and educators to create and use assessments that will improve
19 student learning and success in school districts all across America by including the kinds
20 of critical thinking, communication, and problem-solving skills that our children will
21 need. We will address the dropout crisis by investing in intervention strategies in middle
22 schools and high schools and we will invest in after-school programs, summer school,
23 alternative education programs and youth jobs.

24
25 We will promote innovation within our public schools—because research shows that
26 resources alone will not create the schools that we need to help our children succeed. We
27 need to adapt curricula and the school calendar to the needs of the 21st century;
28 reform the schools of education that produce most of our teachers; promote public charter
29 schools that are accountable; and streamline the certification process for those with
30 valuable skills who want to shift careers and teach.

31
32 We will also meet our commitment to special education and to students who are English
33 Language Learners. We support full funding of the Individuals with Disabilities
34 Education Act. We also support transitional bilingual education and will help Limited
35 English Proficient students get ahead by supporting and funding English Language
36 Learner classes. We support teaching students second languages, as well as contributing
37 through education to the revitalization of American Indian languages.

38
39 We know that there is no program and no policy that can substitute for parents who are
40 involved in their children's education from day one—who make sure their children are in
41 school on time, helps them with their homework, and attends those parent-teacher
42 conferences; who are willing to turn off the TV once in awhile, put away the video
43 games, and read to their children. Responsibility for our children's education has to start
44 at home. We have to set high standards for them, and spend time with them, and love
45 them. We have to hold ourselves accountable.

1

2 Higher Education

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

8

9 At community colleges and training programs across the country, we will invest in short-
10 term accelerated training and technical certifications for the unemployed and under-
11 employed to speed their transition into careers in high-demand occupations and emerging
12 industries. We will reward successful community colleges with grants so they can
13 continue their good work. We support education delivery that makes it possible for non-
14 traditional students to receive support and encouragement to obtain a college education,
15 including Internet, distance education, and night and weekend programs. We need to
16 fully fund joint labor-management apprenticeship programs and reinvigorate our
17 industrial crafts programs to train the next generation of skilled American craft workers

18

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

25

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

29

30 Science, Technology and Innovation

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

34

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

1 to evidence-based decision-making.

2

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

6 **Invest in Manufacturing and Our Manufacturing Communities**

7 We will invest in American jobs and finally end the tax breaks that ship jobs overseas.
8 We will create an Advanced Manufacturing Fund to provide for our next generation of
9 innovators and job creators; we will expand the Manufacturing Extension Partnerships
10 and create new job training programs for clean technologies. We will bring together
11 government, private industry, workers, and academia to turn around the manufacturing
12 sector of the U.S. economy and provide assistance to automakers and parts companies to
13 encourage retooling of facilities in this country to produce advanced technology vehicles
14 and their key components. We will support efforts like the recently proposed Senate
15 Appropriations measure that gives manufacturers access to low-interest loans to help
16 convert factories to build more fuel-efficient vehicles. And we will invest in a clean
17 energy economy to create up to five million new green-collar jobs.

18

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

33 **Creating New Jobs by Rebuilding 34 American Infrastructure**

35 A century ago, Teddy Roosevelt called together leaders from business and government to
36 develop a plan for the next century's infrastructure. It falls to us to do the same. Right
37 now, we are spending less than at any time in recent history and far less than our
38 international competitors on this critical component of our nation's strength. We will start
39 a National Infrastructure Reinvestment Bank that can leverage private investment in
40 infrastructure improvements, and create nearly two million new good jobs. We will
41 undertake projects that maximize our safety and security and ability to compete, which
42 we will fund as we bring the war in Iraq to a responsible close. We will modernize our
43 power grid, which will help conservation and spur the development and distribution of
44 clean energy. We need a national transportation policy, including high-speed rail and

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

1 light rail. We can invest in our bridges, roads, and public transportation so that people
2 have choices in how they get to work. We will ensure every American has access to
3 highspeed broadband and we will take on special interests in order to unleash the power
4 of the wireless spectrum.

5 6 **A Connected America**

7 In the 21st century, our world is more intertwined than at any time in human history. This
8 new connectedness presents us with untold opportunities for innovation, but also new
9 challenges. We will protect the Internet's traditional openness to innovation and
10 creativity and ensure that it remains a dynamic platform for free speech, innovation, and
11 creativity. We will implement a national broadband strategy, especially in rural areas,
12 that enables every American household, school, library and hospital to connect to a
13 world-class communications infrastructure. We will rededicate our nation to ensuring
14 that all Americans have access to broadband and the skills to use it effectively. In an
15 increasingly technology-rich, knowledge-based economy, connectivity is a key part of the
16 solution to many of our most important challenges: job creation, economic growth,
17 energy, health care, and education. We will establish a Chief Technology Officer for the
18 nation, to ensure we use technology to enhance the functioning, transparency, and
19 expertise of government, including establishing a national interoperable public safety
20 communications network to help first responders at the local, state and national level
21 communicate with one another during a crisis.

22
23 We will toughen penalties, increase enforcement resources, and spur private sector
24 cooperation with law enforcement to identify and prosecute those who exploit the
25 Internet to try to harm children. We will encourage more educational content on the Web
26 and in our media. We will give parents the tools and information they need to manage (in
27 ways fully consistent with the First Amendment) what their children see on television and
28 the Internet. We will strengthen privacy protections in the digital age and will harness
29 the power of technology to hold government and business accountable for violations of
30 personal privacy.

31 32 **Support Small Business and Entrepreneurship**

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

42

1 **Real Leadership for Rural**
2 **America**

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

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

15
16 In return, we will provide a strong safety net for family farms, a permanent disaster relief
17 program, expansion of agriculture research and an emphasis on agricultural trade. We
18 will promote economic development in rural and tribal communities by investing in
19 renewable energy, which will transform the rural economy and create millions of new
20 jobs, by upgrading technological and physical infrastructure, by supporting higher
21 education opportunities and by attracting quality teachers, doctors and nurses through
22 loan forgiveness programs and other incentive programs.

23
24 **Economic Stewardship**

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

34
35 But the American experiment has worked in large part because we have guided the
36 market's invisible hand with a higher principle. Our free market was never meant to be a
37 free license to take whatever you can get, however you can get it. That is why we have
38 put in place rules of the road to make competition fair, open, and honest. We have done
39 this not to stifle—but rather to advance prosperity and liberty.

40
41 In this time of economic transformation and crisis, we must be stewards of this economy
42 more than ever before. We will maintain fiscal responsibility, so that we do not mortgage
43 our children's future on a mountain of debt. We can do this at the same time that we
44 invest in our future. We will restore fairness and responsibility to our tax code. We will
45 bring back balance to the housing markets, so that people do not have to lose their homes.
46 And we will encourage personal savings, so that our economy remains strong and

1 Americans can live well in their retirements.

3 **Restoring Fairness to our Tax Code**

4 We must reform our tax code. It's thousands of pages long, a monstrosity that high-priced
5 lobbyists have rigged with page after page of special interest loopholes and tax shelters.

6 We will shut down the corporate loopholes and tax havens and use the money so that we
7 can provide an immediate middle-class tax cut that will offer relief to workers and their
8 families. We'll eliminate income taxes for millions of retirees, because every senior
9 deserves to live out their life in dignity and respect. We won't increase taxes on any
10 family earning under \$250,000 and we will offer additional tax cuts for middle class
11 families. For families making more than \$250,000, we'll ask them to give back a portion
12 of the Bush tax cuts to invest in health care and other key priorities. We will expand the
13 Earned Income Tax Credit, and dramatically simplify tax filings so that millions of
14 Americans can do their taxes in less than five minutes.

16 **Housing**

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

39 **Reforming Financial Regulation and Corporate Governance**

40 We have failed to guard against practices that all too often rewarded financial
41 manipulation instead of productivity and sound business practices. We have let the
42 special interests put their thumbs on the economic scales. We do not believe that
43 government should stand in the way of innovation, or turn back the clock to an older era
44 of regulation. But we do believe that government has a role to play in advancing our
45 common prosperity: by providing stable macroeconomic and financial conditions for
46 sustained growth; by demanding transparency; and by ensuring fair competition in the

1 marketplace. We will reform and modernize our regulatory structures and will work to
2 promote a shift in the cultures of our financial institutions and our regulatory agencies.
3 We will ensure shareholders have an advisory vote on executive compensation, in order
4 to spur increased transparency and public debate over pay packages.
5

6 **Consumer Protection**

7 We will establish a Credit Card Bill of Rights to protect consumers and a Credit Card
8 Rating System to improve disclosure. Americans need to pay what they owe, but they
9 should pay what's fair. We'll reform our bankruptcy laws to give Americans in debt a
10 second chance. If people can demonstrate that they went bankrupt because of medical
11 expenses, they will be able to relieve that debt and get back on their feet. We will ban
12 executive bonuses for bankrupt companies. We will crack down on predatory lenders and
13 make it easier for low-income families to buy homes. We will require all non-home-
14 based child care facilities to be lead-safe within five years. We must guarantee that
15 consumer products coming in from other countries are truly safe, and will call on the
16 Federal Trade Commission to ensure vulnerable consumer populations, such as seniors,
17 are addressed.
18

19 **Savings**

20 The personal savings rate is at its lowest since the Great Depression. Currently, 75
21 million working Americans—roughly half the workforce—lack employer-based
22 retirement plans. That's why we will create automatic workplace pensions. People can
23 add to their pension, or can opt out at any time; the savings account will be easily
24 transferred between jobs and people can control it themselves if they become self-
25 employed. And employers will have an easy opportunity to match employee savings. We
26 believe this program will increase the savings participation rate for low and middle-
27 income workers from its current 15 percent to 80 percent. We support good pensions, and
28 will adopt measures to preserve and protect existing public and private pension plans. We
29 will require that employees who have company pensions receive annual disclosures about
30 their pension fund's investments, and will ensure savings incentives are fair to all
31 workers by matching half of the initial \$1000 of savings for families that need help. This
32 will put a secure retirement within reach for millions of working families.
33

34 **Smart, Strong, and Fair Trade Policies**

35 We believe that trade should strengthen the American economy and create more
36 American jobs, while also laying a foundation for democratic, equitable, and sustainable
37 growth around the world. Trade has been a cornerstone of our growth and global
38 development but we will not be able to sustain this growth if it favors the few rather than
39 the many. We must build on the wealth that open markets have created, and share its
40 benefits more equitably.
41

42 Trade policy must be an integral part of an overall national economic strategy that
43 delivers on the promise of good jobs at home and shared prosperity abroad. We will
44 enforce trade laws and safeguard our workers, businesses and farmers from unfair trade
45 practices—including currency manipulation, lax consumer standards, illegal subsidies, and
46 violations of workers' rights and environmental standards. We must also show leadership

1 at the World Trade Organization to improve transparency and accountability, and to
2 ensure it acts effectively to stop countries from continuing unfair government subsidies to
3 foreign exporters and non-tariff barriers on U.S. exports.

4
5 We need tougher negotiators on our side of the table—to strike bargains that are good not
6 just for Wall Street, but also for Main Street. We will negotiate free trade agreements that
7 open markets to U.S. exports and include enforceable international labor and
8 environmental standards; we pledge to enforce those standards consistently and fairly.
9 We will not negotiate free trade agreements that stop the government from protecting the
10 environment, food safety or the health of its citizens, give greater rights to foreign
11 investors than to U.S. investors, require the privatization of our vital public services, or
12 prevent developing country governments from adopting humanitarian licensing policies
13 to improve access to life-saving medications. We will stand firm against agreements that
14 fail to live up to these important benchmarks. We will work with Canada and Mexico to
15 amend the North American Free Trade Agreement so that it works better for all three
16 North American countries. We will work together with other countries to achieve a
17 successful completion of the Doha Round Agreement that would increase U.S. exports,
18 support good jobs in America, protect worker rights and the environment, benefit our
19 businesses and our farms, strengthen the rules-based multilateral system, and advance
20 development of the world's poorest countries.

21
22 Just as important, we will invest in a world-class infrastructure, skilled workforce, and
23 cutting-edge technology so that we can compete successfully on high-value-added
24 products, not sweatshop wages and conditions. We will end tax breaks for companies that
25 ship American jobs overseas, and provide incentives for companies that keep and
26 maintain good jobs here in the U.S. And, we will also provide access to affordable health
27 insurance and enhance retirement security, and we will update and expand Trade
28 Adjustment Assistance to help workers in industries vulnerable to international
29 competition, as well as service sector and public sector workers impacted by trade, and
30 we will improve TAA's health care benefits. The United States should renew its own
31 commitment to respect for workers' fundamental human rights, and at the same time
32 strengthen the ILO's ability to promote workers' rights abroad through technical
33 assistance and capacity building.

34 35 **Fiscal Responsibility and Corporate Governance**

36 Our agenda is ambitious—particularly in light of the current Administration's policies that
37 have run up the national debt to over \$4 trillion. Just as America cannot afford to
38 continue to run up huge deficits, so too can we not afford to short-change investments.
39 The key is to make the tough choices, in particular enforcing pay-as-you-go budgeting
40 rules. We will honor these rules by our plan to end the Iraq war responsibly, eliminate
41 waste in existing government programs, generate revenue by charging polluters for the
42 greenhouse gases they are releasing—and put an end to the reckless, special interest driven
43 corporate loopholes and tax cuts for the wealthy that have been the centerpiece of the
44 Bush Administration's economic policy. We will not raise taxes on people making less
45 than \$250,000, and will eliminate all income taxes for seniors making less than \$50,000.
46 We recognize that Social Security is not in crisis and we should do everything we can to

1 strengthen this vital program, including asking those making over \$250,000 to pay a bit
2 more. The real long-run fiscal challenge is rooted in the rising spending on health care,
3 but we cannot address this in a way that puts our most vulnerable families in jeopardy
4 . Instead, we must strengthen our public programs by bringing down the cost of health
5 care and reducing waste while making strategic investments that emphasize quality,
6 efficiency, and prevention. In the name of our children, we reject the proposals of those
7 who want to continue on George Bush's disastrous policies.
8

II. Renewing American Leadership

At moments of great peril in the last century, American leaders such as Franklin Roosevelt, Harry Truman, and John F. Kennedy managed both to protect the American people and to expand opportunity for the next generation. They ensured that America, by deed and example, led and lifted the world—that we stood for and fought for the freedoms sought by billions of people beyond our borders. They used our strengths to show people everywhere America at its best. Just as John Kennedy said that after Hoover we needed Franklin Roosevelt, so too after our experience of the last eight years we need Barack Obama

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

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

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

Ending the War in Iraq

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

1 prosecution of the war by civilian leaders compounded the strategic blunder of choosing
2 to wage it in the first place.

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

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

19 20 **Defeating Al Qaeda and Combating Terrorism**

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

24 25 **Win in Afghanistan**

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

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

43 44 **Seek a new partnership with Pakistan**

45 The greatest threat to the security of the Afghan people—and the American people—lies in
46 the tribal regions of Pakistan, where terrorists train, plot attacks and strike into

1 Afghanistan and move back across the border. We cannot tolerate a sanctuary for al
2 Qaeda. We need a stronger and sustained partnership between Afghanistan, Pakistan and
3 NATO—including necessary assets like satellites and predator drones—to better secure the
4 border, to take out terrorist camps, and to crack down on cross-border insurgents. We
5 must help Pakistan develop its own counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency capacity.
6 We will invest in the long-term development of the Pashtun border region, so that the
7 extremists’ program of hate is met with an agenda of hope.

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

15 16 **Combat Terrorism**

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

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

36 37 **Secure the Homeland**

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

1 our ability to confront them. And we will develop a comprehensive National
2 Infrastructure Protection Plan that draws on both local know-how and national priorities.
3 We will ensure direct coordination with state, local and tribal jurisdictions so that first
4 responders are always resourced and prepared.

6 **Pursue Intelligence Reform**

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

20 **Preventing the Spread and Use of Weapons of Mass Destruction**

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

28 **A World without Nuclear Weapons.**

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

40 **Secure Nuclear Weapons and the Materials to Make Them**

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

1 Members of the U.N. Security Council and other key countries to agree on implementing
2 many of these measures on a global basis.

3 4 **End the Production of Fissile Material**

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

12 13 **End Cold War Nuclear Postures**

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

23 24 **Prevent Iran from Acquiring Nuclear Weapons**

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

38 39 **De-Nuclearize North Korea**

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

46

1 Biological and Chemical Weapons

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

11 Stronger Cyber-Security

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

15 Revitalizing and Supporting the Military, Keeping Faith With Veterans

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

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

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

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

41 Expand the Armed Forces

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

1 Recruit and Retain

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

11 Rebuild the Military for 21st-Century Tasks

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

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

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

31 Do Right by Our Veterans and their Families

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

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

1 for injuries both physical and mental, and we will require that health professionals screen
2 all servicemembers upon their return from combat.

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

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

17 18 **Lift Burdens on Our Troops and Their Families**

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

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

29 30 **Support the Readiness of the Guard and Reserve**

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

40 41 **Allow All Americans to Serve**

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

1 wrong to deny our country the service of brave, qualified people. We support the repeal
 2 of “Don’t Ask Don’t Tell” and the implementation of policies to allow qualified men and
 3 women to serve openly regardless of sexual orientation
 4

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

6 We believe taxpayer dollars should be spent to invest in our fighting men and women, not
 7 to fatten the pockets of private companies. We will instruct the Defense and State
 8 Departments to develop a strategy for determining when contracting makes sense, and
 9 when certain functions are “inherently governmental” and should not be contracted out.
 10 We will establish the legal status of contractor personnel, making possible prosecution of
 11 any abuses committed by private military contractors, and create a system of improved
 12 oversight and management, so that government can restore honesty, openness and
 13 efficiency to the contracting and procurement.
 14

15 **Working for Our Common Security**

16 To renew American leadership in the world, we will rebuild the alliances, partnerships,
 17 and institutions necessary to confront common threats and enhance common security.
 18 Needed reform of these alliances and institutions will not come by bullying other
 19 countries to ratify American demands. It will come when we convince other governments
 20 and peoples that they, too, have a stake in effective partnerships. It is only leadership if
 21 others join America in working toward our common security.
 22

23 Too often, in recent years, we have sent the opposite
 24 signal to our international partners. In the case of Europe,
 25 we dismissed European reservations about the wisdom
 26 and necessity of the Iraq war and their concerns about
 27 climate change. In Asia, we belittled South Korean
 28 efforts to improve relations with the North. In Latin
 29 America, from Mexico to Argentina, we failed to address
 30 concerns about immigration and equity and economic
 31 growth. In Africa, we have allowed genocide to persist
 32 for over five years in Darfur and have not done nearly enough to answer the United
 33 Nation’s call for more support to stop the killing. Under Barack Obama, We will rebuild
 34 our ties to our allies in Europe and Asia and strengthen our partnerships throughout the
 35 Americas and Africa.
 36

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

37 **Support Africa’s Democratic Development**

38 U.S. engagement with Africa should reflect its vital significance to the U.S. as well as its
 39 emerging role in the global economy. We recognize Africa's promise as a trade and
 40 investment partner and the importance of policies which can contribute to sustainable
 41 economic growth, job creation and poverty alleviation. We are committed to bringing the
 42 full weight of American leadership to bear in unlocking the spirit of entrepreneurship and
 43 economic independence that is sweeping across markets of Africa.
 44

45 We believe that sustainable economic growth and development will mitigate and even
 46 help to reverse such chronic and debilitating challenges as poverty, hunger, conflict and

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

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

13 14 **Recommit to an Alliance of the Americas**

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

29 30 **Lead in Asia**

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

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“We need to be a
 ‘super smart power’
 not a ‘super power.’
 That means we need
 to be a world leader;
 not a world bully.” -
Listening to America
 participants, Lebanon,
 PA

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

1 greater respect for human rights, including freedom of speech, press, assembly, religion,
2 uncensored use of the internet, and Chinese workers' right to freedom of association, as
3 well as the rights of Tibetans.

4 **Strengthen Transatlantic Relations**

6 Europe remains America's indispensable partner. We support the historic project to build
7 a strong European Union that can be an even stronger partner for the United States.

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

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

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

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

1 there, rather than in Israel. All understand that it is unrealistic to expect the outcome of
2 final status negotiations will be a full and complete return to the armistice lines of 1949.
3 Jerusalem is and will remain the capital of Israel. The parties have agreed that Jerusalem
4 is a matter for final status negotiations. It should remain an undivided city accessible to
5 people of all faiths.

6 7 **Deepen Ties with Emerging Powers**

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

17 18 **Revitalize Global Institutions**

19 To enhance global cooperation on issues from weapons proliferation to climate change,
20 we need stronger international institutions. We believe that the United Nations is
21 indispensable but requires far-reaching reform. The U.N. Secretariat's management
22 practices remain inadequate. Peacekeeping operations are overextended. The new U.N.
23 Human Rights Council remains biased and ineffective. Yet none of these problems will
24 be solved unless America rededicates itself to the organization and its mission. We
25 support reforming key global institutions —such as the U.N. Security Council and the G-
26 8—so they will be more reflective of 21st century realities.

27 28 **Advancing Democracy, Development and Respect for Human Rights**

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

35 36 **Build Democratic Institutions**

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

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

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

8 **Invest in our Common Humanity**

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

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

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

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

45 We will modernize our foreign assistance policies, tools, and operations in an elevated,
46 empowered, consolidated, and streamlined U.S. development agency. Development and

1 diplomacy will be reinforced as key pillars of U.S. foreign policy, and our civilian
2 agencies will be staffed, resourced and equipped to address effectively new global
3 challenges.

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

19 20 **Global Health**

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

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

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

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

1

2 Human Trafficking

3 We will address human trafficking—both labor and sex trafficking—through strong
4 legislation and enforcement to ensure that trafficking victims are protected and traffickers
5 are brought to justice. We will also address the root causes of human trafficking,
6 including poverty, discrimination, and gender inequality, as well as the demand for
7 prostitution.

8

9 Protecting our Security and Saving our Planet

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

16

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

19

20 Establish Energy Security

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

26

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

30

31 “The health of our planet
32 is at risk. We believe all
33 citizens of our planet
34 require us as Americans to
35 make real changes in the
36 way we consumer our
37 planet’s limited resources,
38 produce energy, and use
39 energy.”-*Listening to
40 America* participants,
Anne Arundel, MD

41

42

43

43 Lead to Combat Climate Change

44 We will lead to defeat the epochal, man-made threat to the planet: climate change.
45 Without dramatic changes, rising sea levels will flood coastal regions around the world,
46 including much of the eastern seaboard. Warmer temperatures and declining rainfall will

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

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

1 reduce crop yields, increasing conflict, famine, disease, and poverty. By 2050, famine
2 could displace more than 250 million people worldwide. That means increased instability
3 in some of the most volatile parts of the world.

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

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

19
20 This challenge is massive, but rising to it will also bring new benefits to America. By
21 2050, global demand for low-carbon energy could create an annual market worth \$500
22 billion. Meeting that demand would open new frontiers for American entrepreneurs and
23 workers.

24 **Seizing the Opportunity**

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

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

38
39 We can be this America again. This is our moment to renew the trust and faith of our
40 people—and all people—in an America that battles immediate evils, promotes an ultimate
41 good, and leads the world once more.

III. Renewing the American Community

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

20 21 **Service**

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

35 36 **Immigration**

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

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

1 and humane immigration reform immigration reform in the first year of the next
2 administration.

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

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

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

40 **Hurricane Katrina**

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

1 The people of New Orleans and the Gulf Coast are heroes for returning and rebuilding,
 2 and they shouldn't face these challenges alone. We will partner with the people of the
 3 Gulf Coast to assist the victims of Hurricane Katrina and restore the region economically.
 4 We will create jobs and training opportunities for returning and displaced workers and
 5 contracting opportunities for local businesses to help create stronger, safer, and more
 6 equitable communities. We will increase funding for affordable housing and home
 7 ownership opportunities for returning families, workers, and residents moving out of
 8 unsafe trailers. We will reinvest in infrastructure in New Orleans: we will construct
 9 levees that work, fight crime by rebuilding local police departments and courthouses,
 10 invest and hospitals and rebuild the public school system.

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

12 **Preventing and Responding to Future Catastrophes**

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

25 We will develop a National Catastrophic Insurance Fund to
 26 offer an affordable insurance mechanism for high-risk
 27 catastrophes that no single private insurer can cover by itself for fear of bankruptcy. This
 28 will allow states to deal comprehensively with the economic dislocation of natural
 29 disasters.
 30

31 **Stewardship of Our Planet and Natural Resources**

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

1 nationwide.

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

13 *Federal Lands*

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

27 28 **Partnerships with States**

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

37 38 **Metropolitan and Urban Policy**

39 We believe that strong cities are the building blocks of strong regions, and strong regions
40 are essential for a strong America. For the past eight years, the current Administration
41 has ignored urban areas. We look forward to greater partnership with urban America. We
42 will strengthen federal commitment to cities, including by creating a new White House
43 Office on Urban Policy and fully funding the Community Development Block Grant. To
44 help regional business development we will double federal funding for basic research,
45 expand the deployment of broadband technology, increase access to capital for businesses

1 in underserved areas, create a national network of public-private business incubators; and
2 provide grants to support regional innovation clusters. Since businesses can only function
3 when workers can get to their place of employment, we will invest in public
4 transportation including rail, expand transportation options for low-income communities,
5 and strengthen core infrastructure like our roads and bridges. We will provide cities the
6 support they need to perform public safety and national security functions, reinvest in
7 Community Oriented Policing Services, and we will help keep children off the streets by
8 supporting expanded after school and summer opportunities. Finally, we will work to
9 make cities greener and more livable by training employees to work in skilled clean
10 technologies industries, improving the environmental efficiency of city buildings, and
11 taking smart growth principles into account when designing transportation.
12

13 **Firearms**

14 We recognize that the right to bear arms is an important part of the American tradition,
15 and we will preserve Americans' continued Second Amendment right to own and use
16 firearms. We believe that the right to own firearms is subject to reasonable regulation, but
17 we know that what works in Chicago may not work in Cheyenne. We can work together
18 to enact and enforce common-sense laws and improvements, like closing the gun show
19 loophole, improving our background check system and reinstating the assault weapons
20 ban, so that guns do not fall into the hands of terrorists or criminals. Acting responsibly
21 and with respect for differing views on this issue, we can both protect the constitutional
22 right to bear arms and keep our communities and our children safe.
23

24 **Faith**

25 We honor the central place of faith in our lives. Like our Founders, we believe that our
26 nation, our communities, and our lives are made vastly stronger and richer by faith and
27 the countless acts of justice and mercy it inspires. We believe that change comes not from
28 the top-down, but from the bottom-up, and that few are closer to the people than our
29 churches, synagogues, temples, and mosques. To face today's challenges—from saving
30 our planet to ending poverty—we need all hands on deck. Faith-based groups are not a
31 replacement for government or secular non-profit programs, rather, they are yet another
32 sector working to meet challenges of the 21st century. We will empower grassroots faith-
33 based and community groups to help meet challenges like poverty, ex-offender reentry,
34 and illiteracy. At the same time, we can ensure that these partnerships do not endanger
35 First Amendment protections—because there is no conflict between supporting faith-
36 based institutions and respecting our constitution, we will also ensure that public funds
37 are not used to proselytize or discriminate. We will also ensure that taxpayer dollars are
38 only used on programs that actually work.
39

40 **The Arts**

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

1

2 Americans with Disabilities

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

16

17 Children and Families

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

36

37 Fatherhood

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

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

1 that payments go directly to families instead of bureaucracies.

3 **Seniors**

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

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

21 **Choice**

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

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

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

36 **Criminal Justice**

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

45
46 We will end the dangerous cycle of violence, especially youth violence with proven

1 community-based law enforcement such as the Community Oriented Policing Services,
2 and other community programs. We will reduce recidivism in our neighborhoods by
3 supporting local prison-to-work programs. We will continue to fight inequalities in our
4 criminal justice system. We must help state, local and tribal law enforcement work
5 together to combat and prevent drug crime and drug and alcohol abuse, which are a blight
6 on our communities. We will restore funding for the Byrne Justice Assistance Grant
7 Program and expand the use of drug courts and rehabilitation programs for first-time,
8 non-violent drug offenders.

9
10 We support the rights of victims to be respected, to be heard, and to be compensated.

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

18 19 **A More Perfect Union**

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

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

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

1 confidentiality protections to ensure accurate counting of the growing Latino population.
2 We will sign the U.N. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and restore
3 the original intent of the Americans with Disabilities Act. That is the America we believe
4 in.

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

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

23 24 25 **IV. Renewing American Democracy**

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

31
32 In local platform hearings, the over 20,000 Americans who attended over 1600 hearings
33 demonstrated their commitment to reasserting government of, by and for the people. So
34 too did the millions of Americans who turned out in primaries, caucuses, and even a
35 record-breaking number of Americans abroad – including men and the women who serve
36 in our military. Democrats want to continue the momentum of the election. Only by
37 doing so can we bring the change necessary to restore the promise of America.

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

46

1 **Open, Accountable and Ethical Government**

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

8

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

16

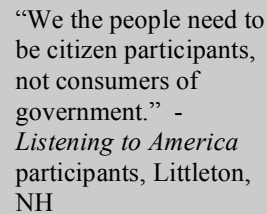
17 Implementing our Party’s agenda will require running an efficient government that gets
18 results. We will develop a comprehensive management agenda to prevent operational
19 breakdowns in government and ensure that government provides the level of service that
20 the American people deserve. Because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

26

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

38

39 Americans want real reform that will help them pay their medical bills and put the
40 country on the path to energy independence. They are tired of lobbyists standing in their
41 way. So we’ll end the abuse of no-bid contracts and tell the drug companies and the oil
42 companies and the insurance industry that, while they may get a seat at the table in
43 Washington, they don’t get to buy every chair. We will institute a gift ban so that no
44 lobbyist can curry favor with the Administration. We will close the revolving door that
45 has allowed people to use their position in the Administration as a stepping-stone to
46 further their lobbying careers. We support campaign finance reform to reduce the



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

1 influence of moneyed special interests, including public financing of campaigns
2 combined with free television and radio time. we will have the wisdom to put the public
3 interest above special interests. As a national party, we will not take any contributions
4 from Political Action Committees during this election.
5

6 **Reclaiming Our Constitution and Our Liberties**

7 As we combat terrorism, we must not sacrifice the American values we are fighting to
8 protect. In recent years, we've seen an Administration put forward a false choice between
9 the liberties we cherish and the security we demand. The Democratic Party rejects this
10 dichotomy. We will restore our constitutional traditions, and recover our nation's
11 founding commitment to liberty under law.
12

13 We support constitutional protections and judicial oversight on any surveillance program
14 involving Americans. We will review the current Administration's warrantless
15 wiretapping program. We reject illegal wire-tapping of American citizens.
16

17 We reject the use of national security letters to spy on citizens who are not suspected of a
18 crime. We reject the tracking of citizens who do nothing more than protest a misguided
19 war. We reject torture. We reject sweeping claims of "inherent" presidential power. We
20 will revisit the Patriot Act and overturn unconstitutional executive decisions issued
21 during the past eight years. We will not use signing statements to nullify or undermine
22 duly enacted law. And we will ensure that law-abiding Americans of any origin,
23 including Arab-Americans and Muslim-Americans, do not become the scapegoats of
24 national security fears.
25

26 We believe that our Constitution, our courts, our institutions, and our traditions work.
27

28 In its operations overseas, while claiming to spread freedom throughout the world, the
29 current Administration has tragically helped give rise to a new generation of potential
30 adversaries who threaten to make America less secure. We will provide our intelligence
31 and law enforcement agencies with the tools to hunt down and take out terrorists without
32 undermining our Constitution, our freedom, and our privacy.
33

34 To build a freer and safer world, we will lead in ways that reflect the decency and
35 aspirations of the American people. We will not ship away prisoners in the dead of night
36 to be tortured in far-off countries, or detain without trial or charge prisoners who can and
37 should be brought to justice for their crimes, or maintain a network of secret prisons to
38 jail people beyond the reach of the law. We will respect the time-honored principle of
39 habeas corpus, the seven century-old right of individuals to challenge the terms of their
40 own detention that was recently reaffirmed by our Supreme Court. We will close the
41 detention camp in Guantanamo Bay, the location of so many of the worst constitutional
42 abuses in recent years. With these necessary changes, the attention of the world will be
43 directed where it belongs: on what terrorists have done to us, not on how we treat
44 suspects.
45

46 We recognize what leaders on the front lines of the struggle against terrorism have long

1 known: to win this fight, we must maintain the moral high ground. When millions
2 around the world see America living up to its highest ideals, we win friends and allies in
3 this struggle for our safety and our lives, and our enemies lose ground.

4
5 For our Judiciary, we will select and confirm judges who are men and women of
6 unquestionable talent and character, who firmly respect the rule of law, and who listen to
7 and are respectful of different points of view and who represent the diversity of America.
8 We support the appointment of judges who respect our system of checks and balances
9 and the separation of power among the Executive Branch, Congress, and the Judiciary—
10 and who understand that the Constitution protects not only the powerful, but also the
11 disadvantaged and the powerless.

12
13 Our Constitution is not a nuisance. It is the foundation of our democracy. It makes
14 freedom and self-governance possible, and helps to protect our security. The Democratic
15 Party will restore our Constitution to its proper place in our government and return our
16 Nation to our best traditions—including our commitment to government by law.

17 18 **Voting Rights**

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

36 37 **Partnership with Civic Institutions**

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

44 45 **District of Columbia**

1 Our civil rights leaders sacrificed too much over the years for us to tolerate denial to the
2 nearly 600,000 residents of our nation's capital of the benefits of full citizenship,
3 especially the vote, that are accorded to citizens of every state.
4

5 **Tribal Sovereignty**

6 American Indian and Alaska Native tribes have always been sovereign, self-governing
7 communities, and we affirm their inherent right to self-government as well as the unique
8 government-to-government relationship they share with the United States. In exchange
9 for millions of acres of land, our nation pledged to provide certain services in perpetuity;
10 we will honor our nation's treaty and trust obligations by increasing resources for
11 economic development, health care, Indian education, and other important services. We
12 will respect American Indian cultural rights and sacred places. We will reexamine the
13 legal framework that allows extreme rates of violent crime in Indian countries; we will
14 create a White House advisor on Indian Affairs; and we will host an annual summit with
15 Indian leaders.
16

17 We support the efforts for self-determination and sovereignty of Native Hawaiians,
18 consistent with principles enumerated in the Native Hawaiian Sovereignty Act.
19

20 **Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the Northern Mariana Islands and the U.S. 21 Virgin Islands**

22 we recognize and honor the contributions and the sacrifices made in service of our
23 country by the people living in Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the Northern
24 Mariana Islands and the U.S. Virgin Islands. We believe that the people of Puerto Rico
25 have the right to pursue the political status of their choice, obtained through a fair, neutral
26 and democratic process of self-determination. The White House and Congress will work
27 with all groups in Puerto Rico to enable the question of Puerto Rico's status to be
28 resolved during the next four years. We also believe that economic conditions in Puerto
29 Rico call for effective and equitable programs to maximize job creation and financial
30 investment. Furthermore, in order to provide fair assistance to those in greatest need, the
31 U.S. citizens in Puerto Rico should receive treatment under federal programs that is
32 comparable to that of citizens in the States, without the current tight restrictions on
33 Medicaid funding and with equitable participation in other federal health care assistance
34 programs and programs providing refundable tax credit to working families.
35

36 We support full self-government and self-determination for the people of Guam,
37 American Samoa, the Northern Mariana Islands, and the Virgin Islands, and their right to
38 decide their future status. We will seek out input from Guam on relevant military matters
39 and we acknowledge the unique health care challenges that Pacific Island communities
40 face. For all those who live under our flag, we support strong economic development and
41 fair and equitable treatment under federal programs. We believe that U.S. citizens in
42 Guam, American Samoa, the Northern Mariana Islands and the U.S. Virgin Islands
43