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FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 07, 2008 | 74 DAYS UNTIL INAUGURATION



 

AGENDA

HEALTH CARE

### Fixing the Nation's Health Care System:

More than 19 million women are uninsured in this country, and women are more likely than men to delay or not get medical care because of high costs. Barack Obama and Joe Biden are committed to ensuring that all Americans have health care coverage by the end of their first term in office. The Obama-Biden plan will encourage insurers and providers to adopt electronic claims systems, electronic medical records, and patient safety reporting systems. These improvements will reduce administrative costs and health care inefficiencies such as duplicative testing and medical errors, which in turn will reduce costly medical malpractice lawsuits. These common sense steps will cut overall health-care costs by up to 10 percent or more.

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**SUBMIT YOUR IDEAS**

### Empowering Women to Prevent HIV/AIDS:

In the United States, the percentage of women diagnosed with AIDS has quadrupled over the last twenty years. Today, women account for more than one quarter of all new HIV/AIDS diagnoses. Women of color are especially hard hit: In 2004, HIV infection was the leading cause of death for African-American women between the ages of 25 and 34. Around the world, 7,000 women are infected with HIV every day. Barack Obama has been a leader in the global fight against AIDS. He introduced the Microbicide Development Act, which will accelerate the development of products that empower women in the battle against AIDS. Microbicides are a class of products currently under development that women apply topically to prevent transmission of HIV and other infections.

### Supporting Research into Women's Health:

Heart disease is the leading cause of death among women, accounting for nearly 39 percent of all female deaths. Studies show that after a first heart attack, women are less likely than men to receive diagnostic, therapeutic, and cardiac rehabilitation procedures, and are more likely to die or have a second heart attack. Women are also more likely than men to report having arthritis, asthma, autoimmune diseases, and depression. Health care disparities among minority and poor women are especially pervasive. Barack Obama has fought to maintain funding for the Centers of Excellence in Women's Health at the Department of Health and Human Services. He also supports legislation to encourage research that will examine gender and health disparities. The same legislation would establish community outreach programs in underserved areas to help women access health care and maintain healthy lifestyles.

### Fighting Cancer:

Ovarian cancer is the fourth-leading cause of cancer-related death among women in the United States. Because of the lack of early symptoms or a proven screening test, ovarian cancer also has the highest mortality of all cancers of the female reproductive system. Barack Obama is an original

UPCOMING EVENTS



THE AGENDA

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YOUR ADMINISTRATION

**President-Elect**  
**Barack Obama**

**Vice President-Elect**  
**Joe Biden**

TRANSITION DIRECTORY

**GSA Transition Directory**  
The Transition Directory was developed to introduce



co-sponsor of Johanna's Law. Signed into law in January 2007, the law will educate women and increase awareness of ovarian cancer. Obama has also supported efforts to combat breast cancer, another leading cause of death among women. He helped pass legislation in the Illinois State Senate to expand insurance coverage for mammograms.

### Reducing Health Risks Due to Mercury Pollution:

More than five million women of childbearing age have high levels of toxic mercury in their blood and more than 630,000 newborns are born every year at risk. The EPA estimates that every year, more than one child in six could be at risk for developmental disorders because of mercury exposure in the mother's womb. Since the primary sources of mercury in fish are power plant emissions that contaminate our water, regulation of utility emissions is essential to protecting the health of our children. Barack Obama introduced two pieces of legislation to significantly reduce the amount of mercury that is deposited in oceans, lakes, and rivers, which in turn would reduce the amount of mercury in fish.

### Supporting Stem Cell Research:

Barack Obama and Joe Biden believe that we owe it to the American public to explore the potential of stem cells to treat the millions of people suffering from debilitating and life-threatening diseases. Obama is a co-sponsor of the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act of 2007, which will allow research of human embryonic stem cells derived from embryos donated (with consent) from in vitro fertilization clinics. These embryos must be deemed in excess and created based solely for the purpose of fertility treatment.

#### REPRODUCTIVE CHOICE

### Supports a Woman's Right to Choose:

Barack Obama understands that abortion is a divisive issue, and respects those who disagree with him. However, he has been a consistent champion of reproductive choice and will make preserving women's rights under *Roe v. Wade* a priority as President. He opposes any constitutional amendment to overturn the Supreme Court's decision in that case.

### Preventing Unintended Pregnancy:

Barack Obama is an original co-sponsor of legislation to expand access to contraception, health information and preventive services to help reduce unintended pregnancies. Introduced in January 2007, the Prevention First Act will increase funding for family planning and comprehensive sex education that teaches both abstinence and safe sex methods. The Act will also end insurance discrimination against contraception, improve awareness about emergency contraception, and provide compassionate assistance to rape victims.

#### PREVENTING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

### Reducing Domestic Violence:

One in four women will experience domestic violence in her lifetime. Family violence accounted for 11 percent of all violence between 1998 and 2002. Barack Obama introduced legislation to combat domestic violence by providing \$25 million a year for partnerships between domestic violence prevention organizations and Fatherhood or Marriage programs to train staff in domestic violence services, provide services to families affected by domestic violence, and to develop best practices in domestic violence prevention.

### Strengthening Domestic Violence Laws:

Approximately 1,400 women a year – four every day – die in the United States as a result of domestic violence. And 132,000 women report that they have been victims of a rape or attempted rape, and it is estimated that an even greater number have been raped, but do not report it. Senator Obama co-sponsored and helped reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act. Signed into law in January 2006, the bill funds and helps communities, nonprofit organizations, and police combat domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking. The legislation establishes a sexual assault services program and provides education grants to prevent domestic violence.

### Fighting Gender Violence Abroad:

The genocide in Darfur has had particularly devastating consequences for women. Tens of thousands of women have been killed, raped, and displaced since the conflict began in 2003. Barack Obama has been a leading voice in Washington urging the end of genocide in Sudan. He worked with Senator Sam Brownback (R-KS) on the Darfur Peace and Accountability Act, a version of which

Presidential nominees, appointees, and members of the President-elect's Transition Team to the operation of the Federal government and to the resources available to help them begin their service in the new Administration.



was signed into law. Obama has traveled to the United Nations to meet with Sudanese officials and visited refugee camps on the Chad-Sudan border to raise international awareness of the ongoing humanitarian disaster there. He also worked with Senator Harry Reid (D-NV) to secure \$20 million for the African Union peacekeeping mission.

#### ECONOMIC ISSUES

### Fighting for Pay Equity:

Despite decades of progress, women still make only 77 cents for every dollar a man makes. Throughout their careers, Barack Obama and Joe Biden have championed the right of women to receive equal pay for equal work. In the Illinois State Senate, Obama cosponsored and voted for the Illinois Equal Pay Act, which provided 330,000 more women protection from pay discrimination. In the U.S. Senate, Obama joined a bipartisan group of Senators to introduce the Fair Pay Restoration Act, a bill to overturn the Supreme Court's recent 5-4 decision in *Ledbetter v. Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company*. The bill will restore the clear intent of Congress that workers must have a reasonable time to file a pay discrimination claim after they become victims of discriminatory compensation. Obama is also a cosponsor of Senator Tom Harkin's (D-IA) Fair Pay Act. As president, Obama will continue to promote paycheck equity and close the wage gap between men and women.

**Expanding Paid Sick Days:** Today, three-out-of-four low-wage workers have no paid sick leave. It is fundamentally unfair that a single mom playing by the rules can get fired or lose wages because her child gets sick. Barack Obama and Joe Biden support efforts to guarantee workers seven days of paid sick leave per year, a moderate proposal that should not impose too onerous a burden on employers.

### Investing in Women-Owned Small Businesses:

Women are majority owners of more than 28 percent of U.S. businesses, but head less than 4 percent of venture-capital-backed firms. Women business owners are more likely than white male business owners to have their loan applications denied. Barack Obama and Joe Biden encourage investing in women-owned businesses, providing more support to women business owners and reducing discrimination in lending.

### Protecting Social Security:

Americans are increasingly at risk of working their entire lives only to face retirement in poverty. Barack Obama and Joe Biden believe we need to preserve the character of Social Security by stopping any efforts to privatize social security. They also will work in a bipartisan way to maintain Social Security's solvency for future generations.

### Encouraging Retirement Saving:

- **Create Automatic Workplace Pensions:** The Obama-Biden retirement security plan will automatically enroll workers in a workplace pension plan. Under this plan, employers who do not currently offer a retirement plan, will be required to enroll their employees in a direct-deposit IRA account that is compatible to existing direct-deposit payroll systems. Employees may opt-out if they choose. Experts estimate that this program will increase the savings participation rate for low and middle-income workers from its current 15 percent level to around 80 percent.
- **Expand Retirement Savings Incentives for Working Families:** Obama and Biden will ensure savings incentives are fair to all workers by creating a generous savings match for low and middle-income Americans. His plan will match 50 percent of the first \$1,000 of savings for families that earn less than \$75,000. The savings match will be automatically deposited into designated personal accounts. Over 80 percent of these savings incentives will go to new savers.

#### NATIONAL SECURITY

### Ending the War in Iraq:

Obama and Biden will change our mission in Iraq and responsibly redeploy our combat brigades in consultation with our commanders and the Iraqi government. We can safely redeploy at a pace that removes our combat brigades in 16 months, with a residual force to target remnants of al Qaeda, to protect our service members and diplomats, and to train Iraq's Security Forces if the Iraqis make political progress. This change in mission will ease the burden on our troops and their families while increasing our flexibility to address more pressing challenges in Afghanistan. The Obama-Biden

Plan will also increase diplomacy in the region and act immediately to address the humanitarian crisis in Iraq.

### Caring for Women Veterans:

There are 1.7 million women veterans today, a number that is increasing every day. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) that was built to care for World War II veterans is not ready to handle the influx of women veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan. As a member of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, Barack Obama has introduced legislation to force the Pentagon and VA to better track the newest generation of veterans – including the number of women veterans – so that the VA can better plan their care. Obama also introduced legislation to fight homelessness among veterans, with a special focus on treating women who may have been victims of sexual trauma. Along with Senator Claire McCaskill, Obama has also co-sponsored legislation to provide funding for additional caseworkers and mental health counselors, a women's mental health treatment program, and a comprehensive mental health study of returning soldiers. As president, Barack Obama will fight to ensure that women can get the care they deserve at the VA.

#### POVERTY

### Fighting Poverty:

Of the 37 million Americans living below the poverty line, approximately 14.6 million are women — a staggering number equal to the combined populations of Iowa, Indiana, and Wisconsin. And nearly 13 million children are living in poverty, a rise of 1.3 million since 2000. Barack Obama and Joe Biden are committed to a renewed effort to tackle the underlying problems that cause poverty.

### Raising the Minimum Wage:

Barack Obama and Joe Biden believe that people who work full time should not live in poverty. The minimum wage hasn't been changed in nine years and has less purchasing power in real dollars than it did in 1955. Women are the largest group of beneficiaries from a minimum wage increase: 60 percent of the workers who would benefit from an increase to \$7.25 are women. As President, Barack Obama will raise the minimum wage to \$9.50 an hour by 2011, index it to inflation, and increase the Earned Income Tax Credit to make sure that full-time workers have a living wage.

### Helping Low-Income Workers:

Obama and Joe Biden will invest \$1 billion over five years in transitional jobs and career pathway programs that implement proven methods of helping low-income Americans succeed in the workforce. Obama and Biden will also create a program to directly engage disadvantaged youth in energy efficiency opportunities to strengthen their communities, while also providing them with practical skills in this important high-growth career field.

#### EDUCATION

### Protecting Title IX:

Barack Obama and Joe Biden support eliminating gender discrimination in American schools. For 35 years, Title IX has been a bulwark against sex discrimination against students and employees at all levels of education. Obama and Biden will fight to make sure women have equal opportunities and access from pre-kindergarten through graduate school.

### Expanding Early Childhood Education:

Obama has been a champion of early childhood education since his years in the Illinois legislature, where he led the effort to create the Illinois Early Learning Council. Obama has introduced a comprehensive "Zero to Five" plan to provide critical supports to young children and their parents by investing \$10 billion per year to create: Early Learning Challenge Grants to stimulate and help fund state "zero to five" efforts; quadruple the number of eligible children for Early Head Start and increase Head Start funding and improve quality for both; work to ensure all children have access to pre-school; provide affordable and high-quality child care that will promote child development and ease the burden on working families; and create a Presidential Early Learning Council to increase collaboration and program coordination across federal, state, and local levels.

### Promoting Women in Math and Science:

Women constitute 45 percent of the workforce in the U.S., but hold just 12 percent of science and engineering jobs in business and industry. Women also make up just 9 percent of the recipients of engineering-related bachelor's degrees. Barack Obama and Joe Biden believe that every student should have equal access to education in math, science, and technology in order to compete on a

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