



BARACK OBAMA AND THE ARAB AMERICAN COMMUNITY

FOREIGN POLICY: Obama will make achieving progress on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the consolidation of democracy in Lebanon, and other Middle East issues key diplomatic priorities. From the beginning of his presidency, he will make a sustained, concerted effort – working with Israelis and Palestinians – to achieve the goal of two states living side by side in peace and security. Obama will restore America’s standing in the world by respecting civil liberties, ending torture, restoring habeas corpus, and closing the detention center at Guantanamo Bay.

CIVIL LIBERTIES: Hate crimes against Arab Americans rose in the wake of the September 11 attacks. In the US Senate, Obama cosponsored legislation that would expand and strengthen hate crime laws. He also cosponsored the End Racial Profiling Act (ERPA), which defined racial profiling and prohibited law enforcement from using race or ethnicity as a basis for law enforcement activities. Barack Obama strongly supports the bipartisan efforts to restore habeas corpus. He firmly believes that those who pose a danger to this country should be swiftly brought to justice, but those who do not should have sufficient due process to ensure that they are not wrongfully denied their liberty.

END THE WAR IN IRAQ RESPONSIBLY: Obama will change our mission in Iraq and responsibly redeploy our combat troops 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. Obama will also increase diplomacy in the region and act immediately to address the humanitarian crisis in Iraq.

SMALL BUSINESS: Small businesses are the engine of job growth in our economy. They are responsible for 80 percent of net new job growth since 1990. For Arab Americans across the country, small businesses are also tool to help innovate, build wealth and achieve the American dream. Obama understands that many small business owners are struggling to succeed as health care and energy costs continue to skyrocket. That’s why he will eliminate all capital gains taxes on start-up and small businesses and help small businesses afford health coverage for their employees.

DIVERSITY IN GOVERNMENT: To ensure government’s ability to effectively represent the American people, Obama believes that the federal government should recruit federal employees as diverse as the U.S. population. As president, Obama will work to increase the diversity of the federal government with qualified individuals from all groups, including Arab Americans.

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IMMIGRATION: Obama has played a leading role in crafting comprehensive immigration reform and believes that our broken immigration system can only be fixed by putting politics aside and offering a solution that strengthens our security while reaffirming our heritage as a nation of immigrants. He believes we must secure our borders, fix our broken immigration bureaucracy, and put the 12 million undocumented on a responsible path to citizenship. They must pay a fine, learn English, and go to the back of the line for citizenship. Obama also will increase the number of people we allow in the country legally to a level that unites families and meets the demand for jobs employers cannot fill.

EDUCATION: Barack Obama knows that education is critical to our nation's future. He will reform and fund No Child Left Behind, implement early childhood education programs and develop initiatives to recruit, train, retain and reward strong, dedicated teachers. Obama will make college affordable by creating a new \$4,000 tax credit that students can get in exchange for 100 hours of community service each year.

HEALTHCARE: There are 45 million uninsured Americans across the country. Obama will enact a health care reform plan that saves the typical American family up to \$2,500 annually by lowering costs and making a new national health plan available to all Americans. Obama will expand outreach and education efforts to improve the language and cultural skills of hospitals to better care for the Arab American patients.

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