

Michigan Families for Obama

October 10, 2008

An open letter to our community:

What has happened to our country? Even the most partisan critics could not have predicted that eight years of a Republican administration would wreak such havoc on so many fronts. At this moment, the United States is facing an economic crisis of unimaginable proportion. We are still engaged in a war that continues to cost lives and sap our education and health care budgets. **If ever there was a time for real change in leadership and direction, that time is now.** We are a group of Lansing area families who are committed to seeing that change in November and we are asking each of you to join us in voting for Barack Obama and Joe Biden. Consider the candidates' positions on those issues that Americans care about the most.

The Economy

When the Republican administration took over in 2000, there was a budget surplus of \$236 billion. By the end of this year, the deficit will hit a record \$477 billion. In 2008 alone, so far, the U.S. economy lost 605,000 jobs. University of Michigan economists report that our state's job loss streak is the longest since the Great Depression.

John McCain, as one of the "Keating Five," was reprimanded by the Senate Ethics Committee for his part in the Savings and Loan scandal, a financial crisis that parallels the current mortgage crisis. He cannot be expected to fix this crisis; he has consistently supported the deregulation that caused it. McCain wants to make permanent the Bush tax cuts. For the poorest working Americans, these tax cuts mean about \$1.50 a week, but for the wealthiest 1 % of Americans, those cuts are worth \$1,000 a week. **Will John McCain help your family through these hard times?**

Barack Obama favors tax cuts for the middle class, seniors and the poor. Middle-class tax relief is a small part of a comprehensive economic plan to jumpstart the economy. That plan includes tax incentives for companies that keep jobs in the U.S. and the elimination of all capital gains tax for small businesses. His plan would not raise taxes for anyone earning less than \$250,000 a year and would actually lower taxes for 95% of workers and their families. He wants to protect, not privatize, Social Security. In 2006, two years before the current mortgage crisis, he proposed legislation aimed at ending mortgage fraud and predatory lending. **A strong middle class is essential for this country's survival and Barack Obama will help our middle class families.**

The War in Iraq

Of the more than four thousand Americans who have died in the Iraq war, one hundred sixty four were from Michigan. To date, the cost of the war is more than \$560 billion; the cost to Michigan alone is over \$14 billion.

John McCain's claim that he is a maverick who is unafraid to disagree with his party is not supported by his voting record. He has consistently supported Bush on the Iraq war. While publicly voicing his opposition to water boarding and other forms of torture, he voted against a proposed Senate bill banning water boarding. While publicly expressing his support of American troops, he joined Bush in opposing the "new G.I. bill," intended to help veterans keep up with the rising costs of a college education. (The bill passed with bipartisan support; McCain was absent for the vote.) He is opposed to any timeline for withdrawal of troops from Iraq. **Will McCain's reckless preference for military solutions over diplomacy make you feel safe?**

Barack Obama, then an Illinois state senator, opposed the invasion of Iraq in 2002, presciently calling it "an occupation of undetermined length, with undetermined costs, and undetermined consequences." Since becoming a U.S. Senator, he has voted to support the troops, including a vote for the G.I. bill. Obama plans on a phased withdrawal of troops that would begin immediately after he takes office and be completed in 16 months. **Barack Obama knows that most Americans, like us, want an end to this war.**

Health Care

This year, the uninsured will spend \$30 billion out of pocket on medical care. A bill to expand health care coverage for the nation's poorest children was passed in Congress, but vetoed by President Bush. High health care costs account for a growing number of bankruptcies. Currently, 47 million Americans are estimated to be without health insurance. In Michigan right now, there are 1,400,000 people without health care coverage.

John McCain proposes taxing workers on the health care benefits they receive from their employers. In return, he would offer an insufficient tax credit of \$2500 for individuals and \$5,000 for families. McCain voted against funding for children's health care and then supported the Bush veto of that bill when it passed with bipartisan support. He has urged deregulation of the health insurance industry and has suggested "Opening up the health insurance market to more vigorous nationwide competition, as we have done over the last decade in banking." **Can you afford McCain's tax on health insurance? Is the failing banking system really the model you want for health insurance?**

Barack Obama wants mandatory health care coverage for all of our children; but he recognizes that no coverage will be able to keep up with skyrocketing medical costs. To that end, he proposes a comprehensive approach to reducing the cost of medical care, disease management programs, reducing care that does not contribute to patient outcomes, and preventing waste and abuse in Medicare. **We agree with Barack Obama that true health care reform is neither a government-run system, nor a system in which the insurance companies act without any regulation.**

There are fundamental differences between Obama and McCain on a host of other issues important to American families: the environment, energy, foreign policy, the judiciary and poverty, to name a few. **We believe that Barack Obama is the right person at the right time. He will bring honesty, intelligence, and vision to the presidency at a time when these qualities have been shamefully lacking. He will restore our reputation in the global community and renew our confidence in our government.**

Sincerely yours,