

FAMILY

How will you cast your vote?



2008 U.S. Presidential Election Guide

Veteran Health Care
Child Development
Health Care
LGBT Rights
Family Immigration
Research & Science
Medicare
Homeownership
Domestic Violence
Education
Sex Education
Emergency Preparedness
Family & Medical Leave

For a copy of the election guide to family and health policy issues, visit
www.sph.umd.edu/fmsc/fis/documents/2008FamilyElectionGuide.pdf

The way we vote influences our opportunities,
informs our democracy,
and shapes our collective future.

Make an informed decision.

In an effort to inform voters where major presidential candidates stand on family-relevant issues, family policy doctoral students in the Department of Family Science at the University of Maryland School of Public Health compiled this family issues voting guide. We present an objective, non-partisan collection of information comparing candidates on important family and health policies. Readers will find this a useful tool in identifying candidate positions on an array of domestic, social, and health issues that affect families in the United States in order to make informed choices in the upcoming Presidential election. The information presented was taken from each candidate’s website during September 2008, from the Congressional Record, or other sources as cited.

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Acknowledgements: Campaign comparisons included in this voting guide were prepared under the direction of Dr. Elaine Anderson by students in a graduate-level family and health policy course in the Department of Family Science at the University of Maryland School of Public Health. Doctoral students Ndidiamaka N. Amutah, Laura M. Evans, Patricia L. Fanflik, April R. McDowell, and Elise M Resnick compiled the election guide for dissemination through the University of Maryland Council on Family Relations, a student chapter of the National Council on Family Relations, and the Maryland Family Policy Impact Seminar.

Early Childhood Development and Education

Patricia L. Fanflik, MS, MA

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the objective of education and early childhood development is to provide all children with a safe, nurturing, engaging, and secure learning environment; to help them gain the awareness, skills, and confidence necessary to succeed in their current environment; and to deal with later responsibilities in school and in life.¹

	 John McCain (R) www.johnmccain.com	 Barack Obama (D) www.barackobama.com
Early Child Development	John McCain focuses federal resources on ensuring that the neediest children have access to a range of high quality programs. The objective is to ensure that these children have the opportunity to begin school with a strong foundation in language and numbers, and that they have the social and emotional skills necessary to succeed.	Barack Obama's "Zero to Five" plan invests \$10 billion per year to initiate a Pre-school Agenda that Begins at Birth. The Zero to Five plan will provide a coordinated strategy based on evidenced-based early learning programs targeting infants, toddlers and their families.
Early Education	McCain's plan for establishing <i>Centers for Excellence in Head Start</i> includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head Start Centers with a demonstrated record of success in school readiness of children are eligible to be nominated by the Governor for recognition as a <i>Center of Excellence</i> • The Secretary of Health and Human Services will pick at least one Head Start Center in each state based on the qualifications and experience of the Head Start Center • Each Head Start Center identified as a <i>Center of Excellence</i> will use their funds to expand their programs to serve more children, disseminate their best practices to other Head Start agencies, and improve coordination of early childhood education in their city or state • The Secretary of Health and Human Services will provide at least \$200,000 per year to each Center of Excellence, depending on availability of funding • The goal is to build on the principles advanced in the "Centers of Excellence," that highlight effective practices 	Obama's agenda includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Learning Challenge Grants to help states create a seamless system of early learning, address gaps in services, and enhance quality programs that serve all young children • Expand Early Head Start by quadrupling the number of infants and toddlers participating in Early Head Start • Encourage all states to adopt voluntary, universal pre-school by providing funding to accelerate this trend for all children • Increase Head Start funding to provide low-income preschool children with important learning skills • Ensure that \$250 million is dedicated to create or expand regional training centers designed to help Head Start centers • Expand the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit • Increase funding for the Child Care Development Block Grant Program to support low-income families ability to pay for child care • Improve the quality of child care services and programs • Support parents with young children by expanding programs for low-income, first-time mothers • Develop an Early Learning Council to encourage necessary dialogue and disseminate up-to-date research

¹ U.S. Office of Health and Human Services. (2008, June 25). *Administration for children and families: Fact sheet*. Retrieved September 25, 2008, from http://www.acf.hhs.gov/opa/fact_sheets/headstart_factsheet.html

Emergency Preparedness

Elise M Resnick, MS

The United States has faced numerous threats and disasters in recent years. The September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks and the more recent Hurricane Katrina are examples of dangers to the nation that are inflicted by the nation’s enemies and also by nature. Responses to these threats and proactive measures to prevent further harm are the responsibility of the U.S. government on every level.¹

	 John McCain (R) www.johnmccain.com	 Barack Obama (D) www.barackobama.com
General Information	<p>McCain will work to implement a plan to help with disasters on a state and local level. Emergency responders from all necessary parts of government will be dispatched quickly to assist those in need, without being delayed by lengthy processes that may impede immediate help.</p> <p>McCain states he will ensure appointed leaders – such as Cabinet members – will be aware of the importance of responding to disasters when they occur. Appointees will be responsible for fulfilling all relevant duties.</p> <p>McCain promotes he will work to create “Government-run Emergency Operations Centers” that will include the private sector so that national businesses can contribute to disaster sites. Furthermore, McCain believes federal law should be protective of such efforts in terms of liability in disaster response situations.</p>	<p>Obama has helped pass legislation specific to assisting people with special needs who are impacted by disasters that hit the nation. He worked to create a “National Family Locator System, which helps in the location of family members following disasters. Obama stresses the need to ensure better coordination between various branches of government in response to disasters, improved evacuation plans, faster assistance to those in need following a disaster and increased availability of medical personnel when needed.</p> <p>Obama believes the FEMA director should have a fixed six-year term, report directly to the President and have experience in “emergency management.”</p> <p>Obama notes he will attempt to improve disaster planning by working with emergency responders and management to create a “National Response Plan” facilitating cooperation between various levels of government in the wake of a disaster.</p>
First Responders	McCain has a record of working towards a “wireless spectrum and funding to provide for interoperable communications between emergency responders and officials in their own city or county and with surrounding cities and counties.”	Obama has a record of dedication to Homeland Security. He states he would like to replace funding that has been cut from first responders previously and to increase support and resources for proactive emergency planning.
Water Supplies	McCain urges those who are responsible for maintaining water supplies to secure their resources to prevent potential contamination.	Obama introduced legislation to provide \$37.5 million over 5 years for drinking water systems to upgrade their monitoring and security efforts.
Chemical Plants	“McCain will insure that chemical facilities develop Security Vulnerability Assessments and adopt Site Security Plans that identify and address security vulnerabilities.”	Obama has worked on legislation to create a set of procedures regarding chemical plant security that must be adhered to. “The bill requires chemical facilities to enhance security, including improving barriers, containment, mitigation, and safety training, and, where possible, using safer technology, such as less toxic chemicals.”
Public Transportation	McCain notes a dedication to insuring that public transportation systems in the nation are safe and secure.	“Obama has consistently advocated stronger rail and transit security programs.”

¹ (Homeland Security Council. (2007). *National strategy for homeland security*. Retrieved September 26, 2008 from the Department of Homeland Security Web Site: http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/nat_strat_hls.pdf

The Family and Medical Leave Act and Paid Leave

Jocelyn R. Smith, MS, LGMFT

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)¹ of 1993 provides job protected leave and benefits coverage entitlements to employees who meet FMLA eligibility requirements. FMLA entitles eligible employees to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave in a 12-month period for specified family and medical reasons. Reasons for taking leave include: (1) birth and care of a newborn child (2) placement of a child for adoption or foster care, (3) care for an immediate family member (spouse, child, or parent) with a serious health condition, or (4) medical leave when the employee is unable to work because of a serious health condition.

 <p>John McCain (R) www.johnmccain.com</p>	 <p>Barack Obama (D) www.barackobama.com</p>
<p>Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). John McCain supported the Family Medical Leave Act in 1993. This was a needed minimum standard to ensure that parents were not penalized for making the important decision to raise a family.</p> <p>Workplace Flexibility. McCain co-sponsored the Family Friendly Workplace Act, which sought to allow employers to provide flexible work schedules to help employees balance the demands and needs of work and family, such as allowing employees to take compensatory time-off rather than be paid overtime and to work more than 40 hours in one week and correspondingly less in another week.</p> <p>McCain is calling for a National Commission on Workplace Flexibility and Choice. This Commission would bring together a bi-partisan set of leaders representing workers, small and large employers, labor, and academics. The Commission would make recommendations to the President on how modernizing our nation’s labor laws and training programs can help workers better balance the demands of their job with family life and to enable workers to more easily transition between jobs.</p> <p>McCains wants to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modernize the nation’s labor laws so they allow for more flexible scheduling arrangements • Ensure the nation’s labor laws don’t get in the way of working at home • Promote telework to decrease commuting time • Make health more portable so workers don’t lose their benefits when they switch jobs • Ensure workers can choose retirement plans that best suit their needs • Provide workers with more choice in job training assistance so they can build the skills they need for new and better jobs 	<p>Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). Barack Obama will expand the FMLA to cover businesses with 25 or more employees. He will expand the FMLA to allow workers to take leave for elder care needs; allow parents up to 24 hours of leave each year to participate in their children's academic activities at school; allow leave to be taken for purposes of caring for individuals who reside in their home for 6 months or more; and expand FMLA to cover leave for employees to address domestic violence and sexual assault.</p> <p>Workplace Flexibility. Obama proposes to create a program to inform businesses about the benefits of flexible work schedules for productivity and establish positive workplaces; helping businesses create flexible work opportunities; and increasing federal incentives for telecommuting. Obama wants to make the federal government a model employer in terms of adopting flexible work schedules and permit employees to petition to request flexible arrangements.</p> <p>Protect Against Caregiver Discrimination. Workers with family obligations often are discriminated against in the workplace. Obama will commit the government to enforce recently-enacted Equal Employment Opportunity Commission guidelines on caregiver discrimination.</p> <p>Encourage States to Adopt Paid Leave. Obama will initiate a 50 state strategy to encourage all of the states to adopt paid-leave systems. Obama will provide a \$1.5 billion fund to assist states with start-up costs and to help states offset the costs for employees and employers.</p> <p>Expand Paid Sick Days. Half of all private sector workers have no paid sick days and the problem is worse for employees in low-paying jobs, where less than a quarter receive any paid sick days. Obama will require employers provide seven paid sick days per year.</p>

¹ U.S. Department of Labor. (2008, September 17). *Family and medical leave act*. Retrieved from www.dol.gov/esa/whd/fmla/.

Family Immigration

Barbara Jones Singer, MSPH, MSW, CHES

In 2007, over one million persons became legal permanent residents of the United States. Of those, the majority (59 percent) already lived in the U.S. when they were granted lawful permanent residence. Two-thirds were granted permanent residence based on a family relationship with a U.S. citizen or legal permanent resident of the U.S.¹ One estimate is that there are 9.3 million undocumented immigrants in the country. Women make up approximately 41 percent of the adult undocumented population. About 1.6 million children under 18 in the U.S. are undocumented immigrants. Another 3 million children with undocumented parents are U.S. citizens because they were born here².

	 John McCain (R) www.johnmccain.com	 Barack Obama (D) www.barackobama.com
Undocumented Immigrants	All undocumented individuals will be required to enroll in a program to resolve their status. Remaining undocumented immigrants will learn English, pay back taxes and fines, and pass a citizenship course as part of a path to legal status. Persons here illegally will not receive a green card before those that have been legally waiting outside the country. Lastly, McCain will ensure that families are reunited and address in an expedited manner the status of individuals brought here illegally as minors through no will or intention of their own.	Barack Obama supports a system that allows undocumented immigrants who are in good standing to pay a fine, learn English, not violate the law, and go to the back of the line for the opportunity to become citizens.
Immigration System	McCain will commit to clearing out the backlog of individuals that are waiting legally outside of the country, some for up to 20 years, for their green card number to become available.	Obama has introduced the Citizenship Promotion Act, reversing application fee increases for legal immigrants seeking to become citizens and providing grants to states to help promote citizenship. He has also introduced legislation to improve the speed and accuracy of background checks of legal immigrants in order to reduce application delays. Lastly, Obama has introduced amendments to put greater emphasis on keeping immigrant families together.
Other Issues	McCain will implement temporary worker programs that reflect the labor needs of the U.S. and provide for adequate worker protection, while protecting the employment opportunities for U.S. workers.	Obama believes that legal immigrants who have fought for us overseas should have expedited procedures towards citizenship.

¹ U.S. Department of Homeland Security. (March 2008). *Annual Flow Report*. Retrieved from http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/statistics/publications/LPR_FR_2007.pdf.

² Passel J.S., Capps R., & Fix M. (January 12, 2004). *Undocumented Immigrants: Facts and Figures*. Retrieved from <http://www.urban.org/publications/1000587.html>.

Homeownership

Amanda T. Berger, MA

According to the 2000 Census, there were 69.8 million owner-occupied housing units in the United States, which accounted for about two-thirds of the 105.5 million total occupied housing units in the United States. Homeowners are considered to be those who had one or more mortgages (including home equity loans), as well as those owned “free and clear.” Since 1960, the percentage of homeowners who own “free and clear” has been declining, from 42% to only 30% in 2000. At the same time, ownership costs for those with a mortgage or lien have risen from 21.0% of total household income, to 21.7%, since 1990. Overall, for those people with a mortgage, the median monthly owner costs are over \$1,000 in more than half the states.¹

	 John McCain (R) www.johnmccain.com	 Barack Obama (D) www.barackobama.com
Financial Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Believes that taxpayer money should not be given to real estate speculators or financial market participants who failed to perform due diligence in assessing credit risks and that aid should be focused solely on homeowners on preventing systemic financial risk. • Promotes greater transparency and accountability of financial assistance policy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Believes that loan disclosure should be accurate, complete and easier to understand through the creation of the Homeowner Obligation Made Explicit (HOME) score, which will outline a standard borrower metric (similar to APR) for home mortgages and will make clear mortgage comparisons. • Plans to eliminate the federal bankruptcy law's Chapter 13 provision which prevents bankruptcy courts from modifying an individual's mortgage payments, thereby compelling individuals who seek bankruptcy protection to continue paying the full amount of their existing mortgage plans.
Mortgage Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans to support groups like Neighborworks America which provide mortgage assistance to homeowners in their communities. • Proposed the "HOME Plan," which would allow homeowners with a sub-prime mortgage (taken after 2005) on their primary residence to trade it for a loan that reflects their home's market value. The plan is applicable to those “who can prove credit-worthiness at the time of the original loan; are either delinquent, in arrears on payments, facing a reset or otherwise demonstrate that they will be unable to continue to meet their mortgage obligations; and can meet the terms of a new 30 year fixed-rate mortgage on the existing home.” • Wants to form the Mortgage and Financial Institutions Trust (MFI) in order to provide liquidity loans at reasonable interest rates, receive warrants for controlling interest in troubled institutions, supervise the sale of loan assets at market prices, and purchase and sell them to the private sector as needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposes the creation of a universal 10% mortgage credit for anyone with a mortgage, including those who do not itemize their taxes. • Supports the establishment of stiff penalties to deter mortgage fraud and subprime lending practices; introduced the STOP FRAUD Act, which would “increase funding for federal law enforcement programs, create new criminal penalties for mortgage professionals found guilty of fraud, and require industry insiders to report suspicious activity” and would provide counseling to homeowners and tenants to avoid foreclosures. • Wants to prevent bankruptcy courts from being able to modify an individual's mortgage payments.

¹ U. S. Census Bureau. (2000). *Housing Costs of Homeowners: Census 2000 Brief*. Retrieved September 20, 2008, from <http://www.census.gov/prod/2003pubs/c2kbr-27.pdf>.

LGBT Rights

Nicole M. Finkbeiner, MS

In recent years, the population of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) families in the United States has become increasingly more visible. In 2000, government reports indicated that there were 594,391 same-sex couples living in the U.S. By 2005, the number of same-sex couples increased by more than 20% to 776,943.¹ Further, the U.S. Census reported that 20% of those same-sex couples were currently raising children in the United States.¹ The increased visibility of the LGBT population, and especially openly gay families, has given rise to many divisive political issues. Recent attention has focused on issues both indirectly and directly affecting the family system including hate crime legislation, employment nondiscrimination legislation, and the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” military policy.

	 John McCain (R) www.johnmccain.com	 Barack Obama (D) www.barackobama.com
Hate Crime Statutes	John McCain voted against extending the definition of hate crimes to include sexual orientation and opposed the so-called Matthew Shepard bill on the floor of the U.S. Senate. ²	Barack Obama has co-sponsored legislation to expand federal hate crimes law to include crimes perpetrated because of sexual orientation or gender identity.
Workplace Discrimination	McCain voted against the Employment Non-Discrimination Act of 1996. ² During an interview in 2000, McCain said: “I think that the present laws that clearly prevent a discrimination of any kind certainly [apply] to gays and homosexuals as well. That’s why I voted the way I did. I think that enforcement of existing laws could work rather than passing special laws for special categories of people.”	Obama “believes the Employment Non-Discrimination Act of 1996 should be expanded to include sexual orientation and gender identity.”
The “ Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell ” military policy allows gays and lesbian individuals to serve in the military as long as they do not publicly acknowledge their sexual orientation and/or engage in homosexual behavior.	McCain opposes repealing the “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy. “I don’t think there’s any doubt that there are evolving attitudes in America about many issues, including this one, but every military leader that I talk to, I say ‘Should we change it?’ They say, ‘It’s working.’ And right now we’ve got the best military we’ve ever had -- the most professional, best trained, equipped and the bravest. And so I think it’s logical to leave this issue alone.”	Obama believes in repealing the “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy. “The key test for military service should be patriotism, a sense of duty, and a willingness to serve.”

¹ Gates, G.J. (October 2006). Same-sex couples and the gay, lesbian, bisexual population: New estimates from the American community survey. Retrieved from

<http://www.law.ucla.edu/williamsinstitute/publications/SameSexCouplesandGLBpopACS.pdf>.

² United States Senate (2008). Legislation and records. Retrieved from

http://www.senate.gov/pagelayout/legislative/a_three_sections_with_teasers/votes.htm

Medicare

Kranti Vora, MD, MPH

Medicare, the insurance program for senior citizens has received attention in this election. By 2020, 12 million older Americans will need long-term care. Most will be cared for at home; family and friends are the sole caregivers for 70 percent of the elderly. A study by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services says that people who reach age 65 will likely have a 40 percent chance of entering a nursing home.¹

	 John McCain (R) www.johnmccain.com	 Barack Obama (D) www.barackobama.com
Transparency	Make information on treatment options and doctor records more public, and require greater transparency regarding medical outcomes, quality of care, costs and prices.	Requires companies to send Medicare beneficiaries a full list of the drugs and fees they paid the previous year to help seniors determine which plans can better reduce out-of-pocket costs.
Candidates' Perspectives	Opposed to providing all seniors with a costly drug benefit under Medicare.	Plans to reduce waste in the Medicare system, including eliminating subsidies to the private insurance Medicare Advantage program.
	Plans to reform the payment systems in Medicare to compensate providers for diagnosis, prevention and care coordination	Supports closing the "doughnut hole" in the Medicare Part D prescription drug program.
	Medicare should not pay for preventable medical errors or mismanagement and will implement zero tolerance policy towards fraud.	
Voting Record	McCain voted for the budget reconciliation bill that reduced spending on Medicare by \$6.4 billion by requiring that beneficiaries purchase medical equipment and cut payments to home health care providers. ³	Obama voted to allow senior citizens to import less expensive prescription drugs from other countries, specifically Canada. ²
	McCain voted for steep increases in Medicare Part B premiums. ⁴	Obama voted against steep increases in Medicare Part B premiums. ²
	McCain voted to support provisions that would increase the age for Medicare eligibility from 65 to 67 and impose a new \$5 co-payment for home health care visits. ⁴	Obama voted to allow Medicare to negotiate with drug makers for lower prices for senior citizens. ²

¹ Retrieved on September 16, 2008 from <http://www.medicare.gov/longtermcare/static/home.asp>

² Retrieved on September 16, 2008 from http://www.aflcio.org/issues/politics/obama_healthcare.cfm

³ Retrieved on September 16, 2008 from <http://thehill.com/campaign-2008/mccain-plan-to-scale-back-drug-benefit-gets-little-attention-in-florida-2008-01-26.html>

⁴ Retrieved on September 16, 2008 from http://www.aflcio.org/issues/politics/mccain_retirement.cfm

National Health Care

April R. McDowell, MS

Today, over 46 million Americans, including over 8 million children, lack health insurance coverage and health care costs are rising annually. In fact, Americans spent \$2.3 trillion on health care costs in 2007 and this is anticipated to increase to \$3 trillion by 2011.¹ Thus, health insurance coverage and health care costs are key issues during this election cycle.

	 <p>John McCain (R) www.johnmccain.com</p>	 <p>Barack Obama (D) www.barackobama.com</p>
<p>Insurance Coverage</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health care will be reformed to make it easier for individuals and families to obtain insurance and competition will be used to improve the quality of health insurance. • The tax code will be reformed to offer more choices beyond employer-based health insurance coverage while still having the option of employer-based coverage; every family will receive a direct refundable tax credit of \$2,500 for individuals and \$5,000 for families to offset the cost of insurance. Families will be able to choose the insurance provider that suits them best. • Insurance will be made more portable to give Americans insurance that follows them from job to job. • Medicaid and Medicare will be reformed to cut costs, compensate providers for diagnosis, prevention and care coordination; should not pay for preventable medical errors or mismanagement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National health plan will be made available to all Americans to buy affordable health coverage similar to the plan available to members of Congress; features include guaranteed eligibility, comprehensive benefits, affordable premiums, co-pays and deductibles, subsidies, simplified paperwork and reined in health costs, easy enrollment, portability and choice, quality and efficiency. • National Health Insurance Exchange: will act as a watchdog group and help reform the private insurance market. • Order mandatory coverage of children and require that all children have health care coverage including allowing young people up to age 25 to continue coverage through their parents' plans. • Expansion of Medicaid and SCHIP: expand eligibility for the Medicaid and SCHIP programs.
<p>Health Care Costs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health Savings Accounts (HSAs) will be encouraged and expanded for families; the aim is to inform families about their medical choices, making them more capable of making their own decisions and able to decide against unnecessary options. • Provide quality, cheaper care for chronic disease by emphasizing prevention, early intervention, healthy habits, new treatment models, new public health infrastructure and the use of information technology. • Promote coordinated care with providers and paying a single bill for high-quality disease care. • Increase use of information technology and promote the rapid deployment of 21st century information systems and technology that allows doctors to practice across state lines. • Encourage state flexibility by allowing them to experiment with alternative forms of access, coordinated payments per episode covered under Medicaid, use of private insurance in Medicaid, alternative insurance policies and different licensing schemes for providers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce costs of catastrophic illnesses for employers and their employees by reimbursing employer health plans for a portion of the catastrophic costs they incur above a threshold if they guarantee such savings are used to reduce the cost of workers' premiums. • Support disease management programs by requiring that providers that participate in the new public plan, Medicare or the Federal Employee Health Benefits Program (FEHBP) utilize proven disease management programs, coordinate and integrate care of those with chronic conditions, and require full transparency from hospitals, providers, and insurers about quality and costs. • Ensure that providers deliver quality care with major aims to promote patient safety, align incentives for excellence, promote comparative effectiveness research, tackle health care disparities, and promote insurance reform. • Invest \$10 billion a year over the next five years to move the U.S. health care system to broad adoption of standards-based electronic health information systems; phase in requirements for full implementation of health information technology.

¹ Poisal, J.A., Truffer, C., Smith, S., Sisko, A., Cowan, C., Keehan, S., Dickensheets, B., & National Health Expenditure Accounts Projections Team. Health spending projections through 2016: Modest changes obscure part D's impact. *Health Affairs*, 21, w242-253.

Research and Science

Regina Davis Moss, MPH, CHES

Research and science have been the foundation for important advances in medicine and technology that have brought healthier lives and economic prosperity to Americans and their families. Scientific discovery has been vital to combating disease, promoting innovation, and improving the workforce. The United States is recognized as one of the world leaders in science and technology.

	 <p>John McCain (R) www.johnmccain.com</p>	 <p>Barack Obama (D) www.barackobama.com</p>
Research and Development (R&D)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports establishing a permanent Research and Development tax credit equal to 10 percent of wages spent on R&D to encourage the creation of jobs in the United States. • Co-sponsor of the Bipartisan Patients Protection Act. Introduced a Sense of the Senate Resolution expressing that individuals with life-threatening diseases have the ability to participate in federally funded or approved clinical trials. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports making the Research and Development tax credit permanent so that firms can effectively plan when making decisions to invest in domestic R&D. • Supports doubling federal funding for basic research over ten years.
Stem Cell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act of 2007. • Co-sponsor of the Human Cloning Prohibition Act of 2007 which makes it a crime to perform human cloning and any related experimentation. • Supported the Fetal Farming Bill of 2006 which prohibits the use of cells or fetal tissue from an embryo for research purposes. • Supported the Alternative Pluripotent Stem Cell Therapies Enhancement Act of 2007 which promotes developing techniques for the isolation and production of stem cells without deriving cells from human embryos. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-sponsor of the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act of 2007 which allows federally funded research on human embryonic stem cells derived from embryos donated (with consent) from in vitro fertilization clinics. Embryos must be deemed in excess and created solely for the purpose of fertility treatment. • Co-sponsor of the Human Cloning Ban Act of 2005 which makes it unlawful to perform or attempt to perform human cloning. • Supported the Fetal Farming Bill of 2006 which makes it a crime to use tissue from embryos gestated for research purposes. • Supported the Alternative Pluripotent Stem Cell Therapies Enhancement Act of 2007 which promotes research into deriving stem cell lines by methods that do not knowingly harm embryos.
HIV/AIDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has not presented a formal plan to address domestic HIV/AIDS. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary sponsor of the Microbicide Development Act of 2007 which accelerates the development of products women can apply to prevent transmission of HIV and other infections. • Supports increased funding for a HIV vaccine.
Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-sponsor of the Combating Autism Act of 2006 which increases public awareness and screening of autism spectrum disorder, promotes the use of evidence-based interventions, and creates Centers of Excellence for Autism Spectrum Disorder Research and Epidemiology. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-sponsor of the Expanding the Promise of Individuals with Autism Act which authorizes \$350 million in new federal funding for comprehensive treatments and services for children and adults with ASD. • Supports increased funding for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act which ensures children with disabilities receive a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. • Supported the Combating Autism Act of 2006.

Same-Sex Marriage and Adoption Rights

Nicole M. Finkbeiner, MS

In 1996 Congress passed the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), which allocated responsibility for determining the legality of same-sex marriage to the states. Under this legislation, states were not prohibited from allowing same-sex marriage nor were they required to recognize same-sex marriages from other states.¹ In 2006, Congress introduced a Constitutional Amendment (the Federal Marriage Amendment) that would redefine marriage in the United States as a union between one man and one woman. Although this proposed legislation stalled in the House of Representatives in 2006, it was reintroduced to the Senate in 2008 in response to court decisions in California which ruled that banning gay marriage is unconstitutional. Civil unions, legal in some states, allow many of the rights and benefits accompanying marriage.

	 John McCain (R) www.johnmccain.com	 Barack Obama (D) www.barackobama.com
Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA)	John McCain voted for the Defense of Marriage Act but voted against the Federal Marriage Amendment. ^{2,3} "I supported the Defense of Marriage Act adopted by Congress and signed into law by President Clinton in 1996," he said. "The law neither compels a state to recognize a same-sex marriage from another state, nor does it prohibit states from recognizing such marriages. It simply protects each state's right to choose how it will define marriage."	Barack Obama says he would "repeal the Defense of Marriage Act" and enact legislation that would ensure that the 1,100+ federal legal rights and benefits currently provided on the basis of marital status are extended to same-sex couples in civil unions and other legally-recognized unions." He "voted against the Federal Marriage Amendment which would have defined marriage as between a man and a woman and prevented judicial extension of marriage-like rights to same-sex or other unmarried couples."
Civil Unions	McCain does not support same-sex marriage but opposes a constitutional amendment to ban gay marriage. He believes that "the institution of marriage is a union between one man and one woman. It is only this definition that sufficiently recognizes the vital and unique role played by mothers and fathers in the raising of children, and the role of the family in shaping, stabilizing, and strengthening communities and our nation."	Obama does not support same-sex marriage but advocates for full civil unions that "give same-sex couples equal legal rights and privileges as married couples, including the right to assist their loved ones in times of emergency as well as equal health insurance, employment benefits, and property and adoption rights."
Gay and Lesbian Adoption	McCain opposes gay adoption but does not seek a federal ban on the practice. "I think that we've proven that both parents are important in the success of a family so, no, I don't believe in gay adoption."	Obama supports adoption rights for gay and lesbian couples. "I will use the bully pulpit to urge states to treat same-sex couples with full equality in their family and adoption laws."

¹Alliance Defense Fund (2008). Federal Defense of Marriage Act. Retrieved from <http://www.domawatch.org/index.php>.

² United States Senate (2008). Legislation and records. Retrieved from http://www.senate.gov/pagelayout/legislative/a_three_sections_with_teasers/votes.htm

³ On the Issues (2008). John McCain on civil rights: Voting record. Retrieved from http://www.ontheissues.org/2008/John_McCain_Civil_Rights.htm#Voting_Record.

Sexual Abuse and Domestic Violence

Laura Evans, MS

Sexual abuse and domestic violence, sometimes referred to as intimate partner violence, have serious consequences for families. It is estimated that 11% of high school aged girls and 4% of high school aged boys have experienced forced sexual intercourse¹. Each year approximately 5 million women and 3 million men experience intimate partner violence². Increasingly, sexual predators are using the Internet to approach and exploit children.

	 John McCain (R) www.johnmccain.com	 Barack Obama (D) www.barackobama.com
Sex Offender Registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports legislation that requires registered sex offenders to submit their internet information including screen names and email addresses to the registry. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helped create a national sex offender database³ • Cosponsored the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Advocates for increased penalties for those who perpetrate sexual crimes against children under 12 years of age ○ Provides grants to local law enforcement agencies ○ Creates an online National Sex Offender Public Registry
Internet Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports restricting internet access to explicit/pornographic materials in libraries and schools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Requires that registered sex offenders submit their internet information including screen names and email addresses to the registry • Supports providing funding to the Internet Crimes Against Children Task Forces⁵ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provides funds to law enforcement agencies that track those who distribute child pornography • Supports increased penalty for websites that do not report instances of identified child pornography to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports the KIDS Act³ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Requires that registered sex offenders submit their internet information including screen names and email addresses to the registry • Software Options <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provide parents with software that allows them to set parental controls regarding what their children can view online. ○ Prevents children from releasing their personal information over the internet • Wants to increase the identification and punishment of those who exploit children online
Domestic Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not discussed on candidate's website, however, candidate's voting record indicates that he: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Voted against providing increased funding to domestic violence prevention efforts (S.Amdt.1661 to H.R. 2862, 2005) ○ Voted against providing funds to limit the impact of domestic violence of children (S.Amdt.359 to S. 254, 1999) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed legislation that would allocate \$25 million to educate service providers about domestic violence, provide services to families impacted by domestic violence, and develop domestic violence prevention guidelines • Cosponsored the Violence Against Women Act <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Promotes prevention of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking ○ Provides community resources to those impacted by domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2006). Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance – United States. 2005. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report: 55, 4.

² Tjaden, P., Thoennes, N. (2000). Extent, nature, and consequences of intimate partner violence: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey. U. S. Department of Justice: Washington, DC.

³ <http://www.barackobama.com/pdf/issues/FactSheetChildAdvocacy.pdf>

Teenage Pregnancy and Sex Education

Nddiamaka N. Amutah, MPH, CHES

The preliminary birth rate for U.S. teenagers 15–19 years rose 3 percent to 41.9 births per 1,000 females in 2006, the first increase reported since 1991. The birth rate for teenagers 15–17 years rose 3 percent to 22.0 per 1,000 in 2006, whereas the birth rate for teenagers 18–19 years increased 4 percent to 73.0 per 1,000. The youngest teenagers, age 10–14 years, were the only age group under 20 years whose birth rate did not increase in 2006.¹

	 John McCain (R) www.johnmccain.com	 Barack Obama (D) www.barackobama.com
Preventive Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> John McCain opposed in 2005 the appropriation to expand access to the Preventive Health Care Services Act that would have provided \$100 million to reduce teen pregnancy by education and contraceptives, and improves access to women’s health care.² 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Barack Obama supported in 2005 the appropriation to expand access to the Preventive Health Care Services Act that would add \$100 million to reduce teen pregnancy by education and contraceptives and improves access to women’s health care.³
First Time Mothers and Pregnancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2005, McCain opposed a Senate proposal that would have spent tens of millions of dollars to pay for pregnancy prevention programs other than abstinence-only education, including education on emergency contraception such as the morning-after pill.⁴ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obama has proposed expanding the Nurse-Family Partnership to all low-income, first-time mothers. The Nurse-Family Partnership will provide home visits by trained registered nurses to low-income expectant mothers and their families.⁵ The Obama-Biden expanded Nurse-Family Partnership plan would assist approximately 570,000 first-time mothers each year.
Sex Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> McCain supported in 1996, \$75 million for abstinence education through the Maternal and Child Health Block Grant Program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obama introduced the Prevention First Act in 2007 to increase funding for family planning and comprehensive sex education that teaches both abstinence and safe-sex methods.

¹ Hamilton ,B. (2007).National Vital Statistics Report Preliminary Birth Data. Retrieved September 28th, 2008, from Washington Post article on Teen Births Web site: http://www.washingtonpost.com/wpsrv/health/includes/teen_births_2006.pdf

² Glassbooth. (2007). John McCain on Abortion and Birth Control. Retrieved September 28th, 2008, Web site: <http://glassbooth.org/explore/index/john-mccain/10/abortion-and-birth-control/16>

³ Glassbooth.(2007). Barack Obama on Abortion and Birth Control. Retrieved September 28th, 2008 Web site: <http://glassbooth.org/explore/index/barack-obama/11/abortion-and-birth-control/16>

⁴ Theimer, S. (2008). McCain fought money on teen pregnancy programs. Retrieved September 28th, 2008 from Yahoo News Web site: http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20080902/ap_on_el_pr/cvn_mccain_teen_pregnancies

⁵ Obama, B.(2008). Obama A Champion for Children. Retrieved September 28th, 2008 from Barack Obama Website <http://www.barackobama.com/pdf/issues/FactSheetChildAdvocacy.pdf>

Veteran Health Care

Katie M. Hrapczynski, MS

Over the course of history, and currently in the war overseas, the veterans of the armed services have dedicated their lives to the defense of the United States. Service men and women are returning from combat with high levels of combat stress, physical ailments¹, and psychological distress². The nation's investment in the adequate and specialized health care of veterans and their families is a primary concern in the upcoming election.

 John McCain (R) www.johnmccain.com	 Barack Obama (D) www.barackobama.com
<p>Accessibility to Health Care: John McCain proposes new standards for veterans' timely and adequate access to health care for injury or illness from military service. The Veteran's Access Card is proposed as a means to expand the access and choice of health care providers for veterans by enabling them access to private facilities.</p> <p>Serving the Special Health Care Needs of Veterans: McCain believes veteran health includes unique health conditions due to service, and supports specialized health care reflecting their unique needs, such as exposure to radiation and cancer associated with exposure to Agent Orange. McCain recognizes that women veteran's have specialized health care needs, including sexual assault victimization, and proposes the Veteran's Affairs (VA) address these needs.</p> <p>Health Care for Retired Veterans: McCain believes all retired service men and women should be provided sufficient health care, even if they are not eligible for Veteran's Affairs (VA) health care.</p> <p>Family Caregivers: McCain proposes family educational programs to enhance the abilities of families to care for injured or ill family members returning from service.</p>	<p>Improve Mental Health Treatment: Barack Obama proposes to improve mental health care at every stage of military service—recruitment, deployment, and reentry into civilian life. Recommended efforts at each stage include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recruitment: Recruit more mental health professionals; improve screening ● Deployment: Fighting the stigma of psychological injury by enhancing training; Aiding and supporting military families through counseling services ● Reentry to civilian life: Increase mental health screenings; increase the Veteran's Affairs(VA) budget to recruit and retain mental health professionals; expand veteran centers in rural areas to increase access to mental health care. <p>National Health Care Reform and Veterans: Obama proposes that the Veteran's Affairs (VA) will be a principle component of the comprehensive national health care plan in an effort to provide veterans the best care possible. Recommendations include improving electronic records, expanding research efforts, and promoting wellness programs.</p> <p>Improve Veterans Affairs (VA) Specialty Care: Obama proposes the strengthening of specialty care for service members by assembling polytrauma centers and centers of excellence for Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), vision impairment, prosthetics, spinal cord injury, aging, women's health, and other rehabilitative care.</p>

¹ United States Department of Veterans Affairs (2008). Retrieved September 27, 2008, from <http://www.va.gov>.

² Milliken, C.S., Auchterlonie, J.L., & Hoge, C.W. (2007). Longitudinal assessment of mental health problems among active and reserve component soldiers returning from the Iraq War. *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, 298, 2141-2148.