



Written by [Kurt Williamsen](#) on October 10, 2008

## How to Win My Vote for Obama

“Change, change, change!” Not only are both presidential candidates proclaiming to be candidates for meaningful change, but both of my local congressional candidates are positioning themselves as the candidates of change. Of course, all the candidates wish to impress upon me that the changes they would bring to the federal government would make me — and all the other middle class (of which I am one) and poor people in our nation — financially and bodily better off.



Even one of my neighbors and some strange girls who stopped at my house wearing faded, too-tight T-shirts gave me literature telling me whom to vote for to bring about change. My neighbor wants me to vote for Barack Obama (actually the neighbor really wants to influence my wife, who is apparently listed somewhere as an undecided voter) and said that she would gladly answer any questions I (my wife) had about the candidate. The neighbor doesn't realize that it's really me who is the undecided voter in my household, not my wife.

I thought, “What a great idea! I'll create a list of questions that I would really like to have Barack Obama answer.” If Obama, or someone intimately familiar with his positions, can sensibly answer these questions, I'll vote for Obama.

I. Obama claims that he is going to create jobs in this country through revamping and revitalizing the energy industry. But his focus is on “green energy” — mainly wind and solar energy. The energy input required to create a ton of steel (450 kW-hours)<sup>1</sup> with wind power costs \$29.52, according to the American Wind Energy Association (without the government subsidy — taxpayer money).<sup>2</sup> With solar power the cost is, per *Scientific American*, \$36.00.<sup>3</sup> With nuclear power — which apparently isn't considered sufficiently “green” enough to merit more than lip service — the cost is \$8.10 according to the Department of Energy, including fuel, depreciation, waste fuel storage, and eventual decommissioning.<sup>4</sup> (It is true that this cost of nuclear power does not take into account initial capital costs for building a nuclear power plant and the quoted wind and solar costs do take into account initial capital costs for wind towers and solar panels. But because solar and wind power are intermittent power sources and hence *must be* backed up by conventional power plants that are always running —



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generally nuclear and coal power plants, called “spinning reserves” — or not be used, wind and solar power *are reliant on capital being expended for coal and nuclear power.*) Given the extra costs our country’s businesses will incur because of wind and solar power, why does Obama believe that U.S. employment won’t go down as manufacturing costs go up?

II. According to the nonpartisan National Taxpayer’s Union, Obama plans to increase federal spending by \$343.586 billion per year. Obama doesn’t plan to cut any segment of government to offset these spending increases.<sup>5</sup> Obama claims his plan will help less-well-to-do Americans because it includes giving someone making \$37,595 tax savings of about \$892. For someone making \$66,354, the average tax savings would be \$1,118.<sup>6</sup> Because there aren’t enough rich people to tax to pay for the plan, the nonpartisan Tax Policy Center estimates that this plan would reduce tax revenues by \$2.9 trillion over 10 years,<sup>6</sup> meaning that an Obama government will need to print money (inflation) or borrow money (slightly delayed inflation) to pay its bills. Whenever new dollars are created, the buying power of each dollar in existence goes down, leading to higher prices for food, clothes, medicines, cars — most everything. Since past government printing of money and increased energy costs caused food prices alone to increase from \$706.80 to \$967.90 *per month* between August 2000 and August 2008 for a moderate-spending family of four,<sup>7</sup> how can Obama possibly imagine that his plan will make the poor and middle class better off?

III. Obama is presenting the “healthcare” problem as being one about accessing care, saying that 47 million Americans cannot get medical care. But uninsured Americans (and a hefty portion of illegal immigrants) are mainly a *symptom* of the problem — not the problem itself. In fact, almost all Americans (and illegal immigrants), insured or not, have access to needed medical care: U.S. “Hospitals are legally obligated to provide care regardless of ability to pay,” reports *Health Freedom Watch*. Its report added: “*The New England Journal of Medicine* last year found that, although far too many Americans were not receiving the appropriate standard of care, ‘health insurance status was largely unrelated to the quality of care.’”<sup>8</sup> The main medical-care *problem* in America is skyrocketing insurance and medical costs. Private healthcare costs are mainly being driven higher because insured patients have to subsidize government healthcare. Medicare and Medicaid only pay a fraction of the actual cost of care, meaning doctors and hospitals eat losses or pass costs on to people who have health insurance, driving up insurance costs.<sup>9</sup> These government-created costs grow exponentially because of government regulations. Medicare alone has over 100,000 pages of regulations and paperwork.<sup>10</sup> Interference in the healthcare market by state governments is also a main factor driving costs. State governments create lists of services that insurance companies must cover, including non-illness-related things such as in vitro fertilization. The *Washington Times* wrote: “A health policy for a single Pennsylvanian costs roughly \$1,500 annually. Cross the Delaware into New Jersey ... and a similar health plan cost about \$4,000, thanks to state regulations.”<sup>11</sup> Though insurance companies are somewhat to blame for high healthcare costs (like universal healthcare promoters claim) because they often make it difficult for doctors’ offices to collect payments, thus making it financially foolish for the doctors to try to fight discrepancies and making them “eat” or pass on to patients many small losses, they are not a main driver of healthcare costs going up. The Association of American Physicians and Surgeons states, “Most health insurance companies pay out \$1.01 in overhead and claims for every \$1.00 taken in. Their profit of 3% comes from investing the money between receipt and payout.”<sup>12</sup> Since Obama’s plan does



virtually nothing to address the factors that drive up costs<sup>13</sup> and since his plan would enroll more people in a Medicare-type plan, one which presumably would — like Medicare and Medicaid — only pay a fraction of the cost of care to hospitals and be bogged down with thousands of pages of rules, why shouldn't Americans expect medical costs to continue skyward, and how is this plan beneficial?

IV. Obama says that he will “bargain” with drug companies to bring down the price of prescription drugs for Medicare (something the Democrats promised to do in their first 100 hours in office in 2006). But according to health-policy analyst Robert Laszewski: “Recent Democratic proposals to do so do not allow Medicare to take a drug off the Medicare formulary when the manufacturer is not willing to reduce its prices. If Medicare doesn't have the power to walk away from a drug maker, its power to negotiate is a hollow one. Obama does not tell us if he would give Medicare the leverage it would need to get real results.”<sup>13</sup> And promises of savings ignore the fact that insurance companies that work with Medicare already bargain for lower drug prices with pharmaceutical companies, so there likely aren't many cost savings to be had<sup>14</sup> — at least not without negatively affecting the marketplace as a whole.

The cost to develop a new drug is estimated to be about \$800 million.<sup>15</sup> If Obama does get the power to negotiate (demand a certain price), one of two things will likely happen: either drug prices to the non-Medicare public will go up to make up for the lost revenue from Medicare recipients or new drugs will not be available to Medicare recipients and Americans in general because drug companies won't develop them. (This is simply the law of supply and demand.) Note: what Obama is proposing is different from the lauded pharmacy plan of the Veterans Administration, which achieves low drug prices mainly by basing buying decisions for drugs on the drugs' efficacy and using the most effective medications for an ailment (which are very often cheap generics) rather than the latest drugs.<sup>16</sup> Why should Americans support this?

V. Obama claims that his tax plan will help the elderly — mainly by not making senior citizens who earn \$50,000 a year or less pay taxes. But, as was noted earlier, his plan will cause the price of all goods — especially food and energy — to rise. As these prices rise, Social Security payments to seniors by the government, though ostensibly tied to inflation, will not keep up to the real rises in prices. This is because various presidents since Nixon, both Republican and Democrat, manipulated how “price inflation” is measured to help “bolster Social Security for the future” by lowering payments to seniors. It is estimated that without the changes that have been made in measuring the rise of inflation, Social Security recipients would be receiving 70 percent more than they currently receive.<sup>17</sup> Also, Obama presently has no plan to deal with the \$6 trillion in unfunded commitments to Social Security as Baby Boomers retire. How is it possible that Obama's plan will not devastate low-earning seniors?

VI. Well-paying manufacturing jobs in America are being replaced by low-paid service jobs.<sup>18, 19, 20</sup> Former Assistant Secretary of the Treasury Paul Craig Roberts explained in 2006: “Job growth over the last five years is the weakest on record. The US economy came up more than 7 million jobs short of keeping up with population growth. That's one good reason for controlling immigration. An economy that cannot keep up with population growth should not be boosting population with heavy rates of legal and illegal immigration. Over the past five years the US economy experienced a net job loss in goods producing activities. The entire job growth was in service-providing activities — primarily credit intermediation, health care and social assistance, waiters, waitresses and bartenders, and state and local government. US manufacturing lost 2.9 million jobs, almost 17% of the manufacturing work force.



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The wipeout is across the board. Not a single manufacturing payroll classification created a single new job.<sup>19</sup> And “as of April 2008, 12 of the 19 major manufacturing industries, accounting for half of manufacturing output, were in recessionary mode (declining output over [the] past year as well as during [the] past three months),” according to the National Association of Manufacturers.<sup>21</sup> A large part of the challenge for U.S. firms in competing with world competitors comes from government compliance and taxes. In 2004, it was estimated that the total *compliance burden* of environmental, workplace, and tax compliance (not the tax itself) cost manufacturers \$160 billion. The U.S. burden for pollution abatement, as a percentage of GDP, was higher than our country’s nine largest trading competitors, including France and Germany.<sup>22</sup> Why, with U.S. corporate taxes being the second-highest in the world (not including state corporate taxes) and with other countries cutting their corporate tax rates to compete internationally,<sup>23</sup> does Obama refuse to lower the corporate income tax rate as McCain is proposing?

VII. In one oft-run ad attacking McCain, Obama has disparaged McCain for voting against ending tax breaks for companies that move U.S. operations overseas (of which McCain is guilty, by the way<sup>24</sup>), yet Obama continues to support the World Bank, which has as a directive to make loan guarantees to companies that build in other countries (provide insurance to corporations that move operations overseas).<sup>25, 26</sup> How does Obama not view this as hypocritical?

VIII. Obama says that a lack of government oversight over Wall Street is to blame for the present economic crisis — which is not true.<sup>27, 28, 29</sup> — and that he is a reformer. If he is truly a reformer, why did he, along with almost all Democrats, vote along party lines to stop a bill in 2006 that would have provided more oversight for Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, and why have Democrats since the Clinton administration not only fought reining in risky loans but used federal power to ensure that such loans were made? Also why should consumers believe that more federal oversight is the answer to our country’s financial problems — rather than strictly penalizing business executives for fraud — when Congress not only created the financial mess through forcing financial institutions to make high-risk loans through the Community Reinvestment Act of 1977 but aided and abetted the corruption at Fannie and Freddie even after it was widely known?<sup>28, 29, 30, 31</sup>

IX. To combat “global climate change” (global warming, to be specific), Barack Obama wants U.S. companies to institute a “cap-and-trade program” for carbon emissions, meaning they would have to buy carbon-emission permits.<sup>32</sup> Such a program is beginning to be implemented in the European Union. The price for the right to pump one ton of carbon into the atmosphere is now at \$47.60. (Under the Obama plan, these rights would be auctioned off.) This is causing costs to skyrocket. Just one German energy company will pay \$14.2 billion for the right to create electricity — the costs will be transferred to the company’s customers. The German cement industry is looking at cost increases of \$1.4 billion — half its current annual revenues. Even though the program is just getting going and rates haven’t hit their uppermost levels yet, Germany has lost thousands of jobs as companies flee to countries not involved in the program.<sup>33</sup> How can Obama conceive that this won’t destroy American industry?

X. Voters are told that actions like cap-and-trade for carbon emissions must be instituted because if they aren’t, catastrophic events from global warming will occur. In fact, there’s no evidence of *any*



*measurable human-caused* warming<sup>34, 35</sup>: the warming trend matches well with increased Sun activity<sup>36</sup> and is consistent with warming for the past several hundred years — since the “Little Ice Age.”<sup>35</sup> The Earth’s temperatures have stabilized over the past decade,<sup>37</sup> and at the height of the recent warming, the Earth hadn’t yet reached its 3,000-year average temperature.<sup>38</sup> Further arguing against warming theory, a cooling trend seems to have begun, as evidenced by the fact that most of the world had an especially harsh winter last year<sup>39, 40, 41</sup> and the fact that the oceans have begun to cool<sup>42</sup> — which takes a very long time and runs completely contrary to all catastrophic global-warming scenarios. Hundreds of previously believing scientists have now become warming skeptics,<sup>37, 43</sup> and the IPCC, which is the political entity that initiated all of the super-scary climate scenarios, has revised its figures on sea-level rise from 11.9 feet by the year 2100 to 1.9 feet,<sup>44</sup> so why is the United States considering a cap-and-trade program?

XI. Obama is an advocate of raising the minimum wage to force companies to pay people a living wage, yet he is also a proponent of giving citizenship to the millions of (mostly uneducated) illegal immigrants who reside in this country. The law of supply and demand states unequivocally that the more there is of something, the less value it holds — in this case uneducated workers. According to the Center for Immigration Studies, a pro-immigration group that wants the United States to tailor immigration to its needs, “Between 1989 and 1999, the real wages (adjusted for inflation) of workers who lack a high school education and work full-time year-round declined by 7.2 percent ... [while] wages ... of full-time, year-round workers who have completed high school rose 9 percent.”<sup>45</sup> Immigrants also lead to higher native unemployment — especially among blacks: “Looking at adult natives with only a high school degree or less, the number of these less educated natives not in the labor force, which means they are not working or looking for work, increased by 1.5 million between 2000 and 2005. At the same time, the number of adult immigrants (legal and illegal) in the labor force with only a high school degree or less grew by 1.6 million.”<sup>46</sup> (Unemployment doesn’t reflect these job losses because when someone stops receiving unemployment benefits, he is no longer considered unemployed — the government deems him to not want work.) Why, if Obama cares about the fate of low-income Americans, does he insist on penalizing them by inundating the country with uneducated workers?

XII. Obama is against privatizing Social Security, his argument being both that enlightened countries around the world rely on government-run Social Security and that government-run Social Security is safer than the individually run free-market Social Security. But both these beliefs are based on misconceptions. Because all government-run social security programs worldwide either are unable, or soon will be unable, to make promised payments to seniors who are counting on them because governments are all poor managers of money, socialist governments around the world have been privatizing social security. (In the United States, Social Security recipients actually face yearly losses of buying power when inflation is figured in — year after year — while Chile averages over 10-percent returns compounded yearly, above inflation.) These countries include Sweden, “the cradle of the welfare state”; Denmark; Australia; India; and Mexico — 32 countries in all. Why aren’t we privatizing Social Security like countries around the world did — after they learned from their mistakes — when downturns in the market are highly unlikely to bring outlays from private investment funds as low as Social Security payments?<sup>47, 48</sup>



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XIII. Obama wants to double our annual foreign-aid payments to \$50 billion per year, largely through adhering to donation criteria of the United Nations Millennium Development Fund. Former French President Jacques Chirac, an outspoken proponent of the United Nations, admitted that only about 33 percent of money that is sent to the UN for foreign aid is disbursed to poor countries — the rest is eaten up by vague administrative fees. Various watchdog groups have noted that even that “33 percent” does not make it to the countries’ poor. It is generally used to prop up the governments that are keeping the people poor or sent by the leaders to overseas accounts for a rainy day — such as a revolt. (This is verified even by the United Nations.)<sup>49</sup> On the other hand, Americans are by far and away the most generous people on Earth, giving \$295 billion in 2006 to private charities, far outstripping other countries as a percentage of gross domestic product.<sup>50</sup> How does Obama imagine that by giving additional payments to corrupt UN programs and by driving U.S. manufacturing jobs to China and Indonesia — where the wealth gets concentrated in the hands of a few (often murderous) oligarchs — through high U.S. manufacturing costs and taxes for such things as foreign aid that he will actually end up aiding the poor?

XIV. It is said that a new day and age — and image— will begin for the United States in foreign policy, especially war policy, if Obama is elected. Considering that Obama’s main foreign policy mentor, Council on Foreign Relations member Zbigniew Brzezinski, was McCain’s foreign-policy adviser in the 2000 election and that the staff of George W. Bush is littered with high-level internationalist members of the Council on Foreign Relations, including Condoleezza Rice,<sup>51</sup> and that Obama’s running mate has seldom seen a war he didn’t support and that Obama wants to increase the scale of the war in Afghanistan (despite the fact that he doesn’t have any more of an “exit plan” than Bush did when he went into Iraq), why should Americans expect any different foreign policy under Obama than under the Bush administration?<sup>52</sup>

XV. Finally, Obama says he is Christian. Yet he is an advocate of partial-birth abortion, and he has demonstrated that his pro-choice beliefs extend to the point that when abortions fail and “fetuses” are born alive — which does happen — protecting the life of the child is of little importance and, in fact, is secondary to protecting doctors from lawsuits.<sup>53</sup> How does Obama propose to explain to God in Heaven why he ignored the Sixth Commandment: “Thou shalt not commit murder”? (In court, most childcare providers — such as parents — would be charged with murder or manslaughter if they simply allowed an innocent child to die.) Better yet, on judgment day, how should I explain to God my decision to vote for Obama?

Note that this list of questions does not take into account the huge impact that will be felt on the American populace because of the spending on the various Wall Street bailouts. The economic situation is far worse than I have made it out to be.

I suppose in the interest of fairness, I should also write a list of questions for John McCain, but truth be told, he holds most of the same positions as Obama, although there are some differences. For instance, though McCain would also run a huge federal deficit funded by inflation (McCain’s tax plans would decrease tax revenues by \$4.2 trillion over 10 years<sup>7</sup>), he is promising to cut federal spending to make up for the shortage of tax receipts. If McCain actually did massively reduce federal spending while cutting personal and corporate taxes, it would definitely bolster our economy, slow the fall of the dollar, and slow job loss; but McCain has not said where he would make these huge cuts in spending,



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indicating he is unlikely to make them. On the other hand, whoever is advising McCain on improving healthcare actually seems to know what he is doing. Several of his proposals would control costs: allowing citizens to buy healthcare plans across state lines, increased availability of Health Savings Accounts, and tax breaks for purchasing insurance.<sup>13, 54</sup> And McCain has paid some lip service to privatizing Social Security and that would benefit individuals if passed.

Knowing that it is remotely possible there are sensible answers to these questions, I'll wait patiently for a reply before I choose whom to vote for in the upcoming presidential election. But I hope no one minds if I don't hold my breath while I wait.

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