

# SENATOR JOE BIDEN ON MEDICARE

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*“Politicians need to understand what it’s like for people on Medicare, who are lying in bed staring at a ceiling wondering if they are going to be able to pay the bills. We need to understand their concerns and aspirations if we are going to reshape Medicare in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.” -- Senator Joe Biden*

## THE BIDEN PLAN: RESHAPING MEDICARE FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

- **Strengthening the Medicare Part D Prescription Drug Program:** Senator Biden fought for years to expand the Medicare program to cover prescription drugs with a plan that would provide valuable coverage, be easy to use, and be affordable to most seniors. The present plan is complicated and has not done enough to keep drug costs down. Senator Biden is working to improve the plan by:
  - ✓ Having the federal government directly negotiate for better drug prices from the pharmaceutical companies, as it does for other federal health programs. This should lower costs to consumers.
  - ✓ Closing the gap in benefits – often called the “doughnut hole” -- that occurs once a retiree hits \$2,400 in coverage.
- **Stabilizing Medicare Reimbursement Formulas:** Senator Biden wants to stabilize the way Medicare determines reimbursement rates for physicians and other providers. As such, the Senator wants the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission to study and report to Congress on replacing the use of the sustainable growth rate as a factor in determining the update for such payments with a factor that more fully accounts for changes in the unit costs of providing physicians' services.
- **Ensuring Equitable Cost Sharing of Mental Health Services:** Senator Biden supports treating mental health services the same as other health services and increasing the amount the government pays from 50 percent to 80 for outpatient psychiatric services under the Medicare program.

## THE BIDEN RECORD: PROTECTION AND PREVENTION

- **Promoting Breast Cancer Screening:** Senator Biden helped lead the effort to require Medicare to cover annual mammograms for women over the age of 65, and to exempt these procedures from the annual Medicare Part B deductible.

- **Ensuring Providers Are Available to Medicare Patients:** Senator Biden has consistently fought to ensure an adequate supply of physicians and other Medicare providers for our nation's seniors by opposing arbitrary caps on reimbursement and working to reform the provider payment system. He also has worked to preserve Medicare indirect medical education payments to teaching hospitals, as many of these facilities provide crucial care to Medicare beneficiaries.
- **Allowing Medicare Patients to Participate in Clinical Trials:** Senator Biden worked hard to ensure Medicare recipients are able to participate in groundbreaking medical studies on new treatments and medications.
- **Opposing Arbitrary Limits on Services:** To ensure Medicare beneficiaries received proper treatment, Senator Biden fought to prevent arbitrary monetary limits on Medicare coverage of physical, occupational, and speech therapy services.
- **Protecting Against Genetic Non-Discrimination:** Senator Biden has fought to prohibit an issuer of a Medicare supplemental policy, on the basis of genetic information, from denying or conditioning coverage, or discriminating in the pricing of the policy, including the adjustment rates, for an eligible individual.
- **Preserving Medicare for Retirees:** When the future of Medicare came under attack and was threatened with its gradual demise, Senator Biden stood steadfast in defense of Medicare.

# SENATOR JOE BIDEN ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

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*“This Administration has dug us into a very deep hole internationally. We need to end the war in Iraq and to restore our place in the world.” -- Senator Joe Biden*

## THE BIDEN PLAN: ENDING THE WAR IN IRAQ

**The Way Forward:** Senator Biden believes it is important to bring home our troops without leaving chaos behind in Iraq. The Senator and Les Gelb, of the Council on Foreign Relations, have a five-point plan that offers a political solution to ending the war:

### 1. Establish One Iraq, With Three Regions

- Federalize Iraq in accordance with its constitution and give its warring factions -- Shiite, Sunni, and Kurd – breathing room in regions, with a limited government in Baghdad
- Put Baghdad in charge of common interests, like border defense, oil production, and revenues; and put the regional governments in charge of the fabric of daily life, such as security, schools, marriage, and jobs.

### 2. Share Oil Revenues

- Gain agreement for the federal solution from Sunni Arabs by guaranteeing them 20 percent of all oil revenues – an amount roughly proportional to their size.

### 3. Make Iraq the World’s Problem and Solution

- Convene with the United Nations a regional security conference, where Iraq’s neighbors, including Iran, pledge their support for a political settlement and respect for Iraq’s borders

### 4. Responsibly Draw Down America’s Troops

- Direct U.S. military commanders to develop a plan to withdraw most U.S. forces in 2008.

### 5. Increase Reconstruction Assistance and Create a Jobs Program

- Provide more reconstruction assistance, and insist other countries take the lead in funding reconstruction, especially the oil-rich Arab Gulf countries.

## THE BIDEN PLAN: RESTORING OUR PLACE IN THE WORLD

**The Totality of America’s Strength:** Having spent his entire career on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and now serving as its Chairman, Senator Biden understands today’s significant global challenges. We have the rise of Russia and the

use of oil as a weapon; the ascendancy of China, not only economically, but militarily; Iran and North Korea trying to get nuclear weapons or increase their nuclear arsenal; a genocide in Darfur; the deterioration of democracy in Latin America; and an axis of oil around the world where dictators would be of no consequence were they not swimming in a sea of high priced oil. He wants a foreign policy using the totality of America's strength -- built on diplomacy, and our ideals and ideas, as well as our military might. Here's what he would do:

- **Prevent Threats:** Senator Biden believes we need to intercept threats like weapons of mass destruction from abroad with prevention – not military preemption. He would expand programs to secure and destroy loose weapons in the former Soviet Union, help partner countries build the capacity to disrupt extremist networks, and improve systems that can detect materials of mass destruction.
- **Restore Partnerships:** Senator Biden thinks that taking on radical fundamentalists alone is not smart and won't work. He wants America to rebuild effective alliances in law enforcement, intelligence, and financial circles with other countries.
- **Advance Democracy:** Believing democracy cannot be imposed by force, he would work to help fledging democracies, particularly in the Middle East, build institutions of democracy -- such as political parties, effective governments, independent media, judicial systems, and labor unions – and bolster failing states, which can become breeding grounds for extremists.

## THE BIDEN RECORD: MAKING THE WORLD BETTER

- **Stopping Genocide In Darfur:** For three years, Senator Biden has been a leader in the effort to stop the tragedy in Darfur. He has pushed for a No Fly Zone, an international peacekeeping force, tougher sanctions and a peace process; he has traveled to the region and led a Congressional Delegation to the United Nations to make the urgency of the situation known to the international community.
- **Leading the Way on Arms Control:** For three decades, Senator Biden has been a forceful advocate for arms control agreements. He advocated for the SALT II treaty in the 1970s and the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty in the 1980s. He secured Senate passage of the convention banning chemical weapons. He has been a constant voice in favor of deeper reductions in nuclear arsenals, and of securing the stockpiles of dangerous weapons in the former Soviet Union.
- **Bringing Peace to the Balkans:** Senator Biden was the Senate voice championing U.S. intervention in the Balkans in the 1990s. First Bosnia, then Kosovo were being torn apart by ethnic cleansing, which threatened to engulf the Balkans. The United States stepped in and since then Bosnians and Kosovars have lived in peace.

- **Helping Emerging Democracies of Eastern Europe:** When democracies emerged in Eastern Europe in the 1990s, it was Senator Biden who led the successful effort to approve expansion of NATO to include Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic. He also helped expand U.S. assistance to Eastern Europe and has been a firm supporter of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty.
- **Fighting Fundamentalist Terror:** On the eve of 9/11, Senator Biden warned that the Bush Administration was too focused on missile defense and not on other potential terrorist threats, which he predicted would more likely come “in the belly of a plane” among other methods. Since 9/11, he has introduced major legislation to protect American ports, rails, chemical plants, and major infrastructure from terrorist threats.
- **Supporting the United Nations:** He continues to fight for legislation to keep the U.S. financial commitment to the United Nations, building on the landmark Helms-Biden legislation that provided for payment of U.N. arrears conditioned on organizational reform.
- **Stopping Drug Trafficking At The Border:** Senator Biden has pushed for counter-narcotic efforts to be a high priority of American foreign policy.

# SENATOR JOE BIDEN ON HEALTH CARE

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*“The 21<sup>st</sup> century starts with the promise of even greater advances in health care and the treatment of diseases. If we take the right steps now, we will be able to live fuller and longer lives.” -- Senator Joe Biden*

## THE BIDEN PLAN: A HEALTHIER AMERICA

- **Getting More Americans Health Insurance:** Senator Biden is committed to reducing the ranks of the uninsured -- especially the 9 million children without health insurance -- and improving American’s access to essential health care services. He is working to provide health insurance to more Americans by:
  - Expanding the SCHIP program to allow more children to participate, and increasing outreach efforts to enroll every child eligible for SCHIP and Medicaid.
  - Encouraging and supporting state efforts to experiment with measures and programs to reduce the number of uninsured in their states.
  - Providing federal coverage for catastrophic cases so patients are not overly burdened with astronomical health care costs and to help lower premiums to make insurance more affordable for businesses and individuals.
  
- **Strengthening the Medicare Part D Prescription Drug Program:** Senator Biden fought for years to expand the Medicare program to cover prescription drugs with a plan that would provide valuable coverage, be easy to use, and affordable to most seniors. The present plan is complicated and has not done enough to keep drug costs down. Senator Biden supports improving the plan by:
  - ✓ Having the federal government directly negotiate for better drug prices from the pharmaceutical companies, as it does for other federal health programs. This should lower costs to consumers.
  - ✓ Closing the gap in benefits – often called the “doughnut hole” -- that occurs once a retiree hits \$2,250 in coverage.
  
- **Funding Biomedical Research:** Senator Biden understands the important role the federal government plays in finding cures for cancer and other diseases by supporting important biomedical research. He is working to strengthen these efforts by:
  - ✓ Continuing robust funding for the National Institutes of Health, building on the successful effort that doubled NIH funding over five years.
  - ✓ Permitting federal funding to support stem cell research.

- ✓ Investigating the link between environmental factors and breast cancer.
  - ✓ Developing vaccines and other effective responses to potential biological weapons.
- **Offering Americans Greater Access to Health Care:** Senator Biden wants to improve Americans' access to the health care system, as well as provide a better choice of providers and treatment settings through:
    - ✓ Allowing disabled patients, especially those covered by Medicaid, to receive care in the least restrictive settings and to direct their own treatment plan.
    - ✓ Pursuing efforts to help small business owners and their employees join larger insurance pools to share risk and reduce the cost of insurance.
    - ✓ Increasing funding for community health centers that are a vital component to the health care safety net.
    - ✓ Working to ensure health insurance coverage of mental illness is comparable to that of other medical and surgical services.
  - **Protecting the Privacy of Medical Records:** Senator Biden knows how important it is to patients that their personal medical information be kept private. He supports:
    - ✓ Making sure individuals' medical information is not used against them or unknowingly sold for commercial profit.
    - ✓ Ensuring that as we move toward more efficient, cost-saving electronic medical records, privacy interests remain a priority.
    - ✓ Preventing the use of predictive genetic information, such as whether someone carries the gene for breast cancer, from being used to discriminate against persons in decision-making related to employment or health insurance.

## THE BIDEN RECORD: PROTECTION AND PREVENTION

- **Safeguarding Medicare and Medicaid:** Senator Biden has consistently fought efforts to undermine these important programs for our nation's seniors and low-income citizens, and has worked to enhance their effectiveness through:
  - ✓ Ensuring an adequate supply of physicians by opposing arbitrary caps on reimbursements and reforming the provider payment system.
  - ✓ Strengthening Medicare anti-fraud efforts.
  - ✓ Supporting increased federal Medicaid funding when states are faced with a fiscal crisis.
- **Fighting Breast Cancer:** Senator Biden has been a leader in efforts to detect, treat and prevent breast cancer, including:

- ✓ Helping to enact the breast and cervical cancer prevention program to ensure mammograms are available to low-income women and women without health insurance, and then expanding the program to offer treatment.
  - ✓ Originating legislation passed in the Senate each year since 1993 recognizing National Mammography Day every October to encourage women to have mammograms.
  - ✓ Sponsoring legislation to expand Medicare to include coverage of mammograms.
  - ✓ Fighting to guarantee insurance companies do not deprive breast cancer survivors of reconstructive surgery.
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- **Increasing the Supply of Nurses:** Recognizing the problems a nursing shortage presents, Senator Biden was an early supporter of the Nurse Reinvestment Act, providing scholarship and loan repayment programs for nursing students, awarding grants to nursing schools and health organizations, and promoting public information programs to encourage people to enter the nursing profession.
  - **Ensuring Proper Health Care for America's Veterans:** Senator Biden has consistently fought for increased funding for VA health services to ensure proper care and administrative processing without imposing new fees and co-payments. He has also supported medical research of diseases and injuries that disproportionately affect veterans.
  - **Providing Comprehensive Health Services for People with HIV/AIDS:** A co-sponsor of the original Ryan White CARE Act, Senator Biden has maintained his commitment to funding research and treatment for people with HIV/AIDS in the U.S., while also supporting international efforts to reduce the scourge of HIV/AIDS in Africa and developing countries around the world.
  - **Improving Living Conditions for Disabled Citizens:** Senator Biden has long championed efforts to allow Medicaid to provide home- and community-based support services needed by disabled individuals to remain out of institutions. He also fought to allow low-income families with disabled children to buy into the Medicaid program.



# SENATOR JOE BIDEN ON STANDING WITH AMERICA'S WORKERS

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*"Every day we see more evidence this economy is not working for middle-class Americans. If we honor work, we have to reward it." -- Senator Joe Biden*

## THE BIDEN PLAN: VALUING WORK IN AMERICA

- **Raising the Minimum Wage:** Senator Biden supported increasing the federal minimum wage to \$7.25 an hour from \$5.15, where it had been stuck for 10 years. No American should work a full-time job and come home too poor to meet basic needs. Raising the minimum wage for those on the lowest rung of our economic ladder in 2007 is a first step toward better pay for all working Americans.
- **Protecting Worker Rights to Bargain Collectively:** Senator Biden is a co-sponsor of the Employee Free Choice Act, a bill to ensure workers can form, join, or assist labor unions without interference from employers.
- **Representing Workers In Trade Negotiations:** When done right, expanding international trade – and expanding markets for American products – can be good for the United States. However, with the rise of new economies the global workforce has doubled, and we compete directly with countries like China that can be simultaneously low-wage and high-tech. Unless our trade policies protect basic labor standards, we risk the loss of jobs in this new global economy. That is why Senator Biden voted against trade agreements negotiated by the Bush Administration, such as CAFTA, that rolled back standards for labor protections. It failed to guarantee American workers the security they deserve and Central American workers the promise of improved working conditions.
- **Preserving Retirement Security:** Senator Biden understands that after working hard your whole life, you should not have to worry about losing your retirement income.
  - ✓ He opposes plans to privatize Social Security that would shift risks to workers and cut benefits to all future retirees.
  - ✓ He has authored tough new criminal penalties to prevent the kind of fraud that cost 15,000 Enron employees their retirement savings.
  - ✓ He supports strengthening the government backstop against pension bankruptcies.
  - ✓ He backs efforts to make it easier for workers to save for retirement years.
- **Creating Green-Collar Jobs:** As the country moves to new energy technologies, Senator Biden is a strong supporter of efforts to help attract and train workers for

new green-collar jobs that make homes and businesses more energy efficient. Senator Biden is a co-sponsor of a worker training program that would help U.S. workers get good jobs in an industry that could employ 3 million people if the U.S. launches an ambitious program to build a new energy future.

- **Training More Nurses:** As we face the challenge of providing health care for all Americans, we need to prepare new workers. Senator Biden wants to attract more students to the nursing profession by expanding access to loans and scholarship opportunities. He also recognizes the need to increase the number of nurse faculty to teach the next generation of nurses. In addition, he supports legislation that gives laid off workers the chance to train for employment as nurses and other health care professionals.

## THE BIDEN RECORD: THREE DECADES OF HONORING WORK

- **Making Workplaces Safer:** Since his earliest days in Washington, Senator Biden has advocated making the American workplace the safest in the world. Time and again he has voted to extend OSHA regulations, and vigorously opposed efforts to restrict the application of OSHA coverage.
- **Defending Overtime Rules:** Senator Biden fought to block new federal regulations that undermine the basic employee safeguards and threaten to deny overtime rights to broad categories of American workers such as teachers, nurses, and salespeople.
- **Saving Davis-Bacon Wages:** Senator Biden joined the successful protest against the Bush Administration's shameless plan to waive prevailing wage requirements for workers hired to help rebuild the Gulf Coast after Hurricane Katrina.
- **Helping Workers Whose Jobs Have Moved Overseas:** Senator Biden always has been a strong supporter of the Trade Adjustment Assistance programs that help communities where plants have closed and jobs have moved overseas. He wants to increase training funds and health care subsidies to workers in hard-hit communities.
- **Balancing Work and Family:** As a father whose children faced difficult medical challenges, Senator Biden knows first-hand the problems of balancing work and family. He was a strong supporter of the Family and Medical Leave Act that has given 50 million workers up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave to take care of a sick family member. Knowing there are many more workers who cannot afford unpaid leave, he is co-sponsoring the Healthy Families Act, which would require employers with 15 or more workers to provide seven paid sick days to care for their own or their families' medical needs.
- **Caring for America's Children:** Senator Biden has been a long and strong supporter of affordable child care. He pushed to expand the Head Start program, that now serves 900,000 children; and he voted to expand many successful

childhood programs such as the Child Care and Development Block Grant, Title I preschool, and the Early Learning Fund. He also has advocated for more resources for the Women, Infants, and Children program that provides food, nutrition counseling, and access to health services to pregnant women, new mothers, and their infants.

- **Caring for America's Seniors:** As a son who has helped care for his parents, Senator Biden also knows first-hand the importance of having a stable, experienced home care workforce to help the growing number of senior citizens. Home care is often the best and most comfortable option for people. He supports expanding access to home health and hospice services and is a co-sponsor of the Community Choices Act, designed to help disabled Americans get Medicaid coverage for community-based attendant services at home.

# SENATOR JOE BIDEN ON CRIME

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*“Fighting crime is like cutting grass. In the summer I cut my grass on a Saturday and it looks great. I let it go for a week, it looks a little shaggy. Let it go for two weeks, I notice it. Let it go for a month, I have the weeds back.” -- Senator Joe Biden*

## THE BIDEN PLAN: \$10 BILLION TO MAKE AMERICA SAFER

**Hometown and Homeland Security:** Believing nothing is of value to Americans if our borders are unprotected, our streets are unsafe, and we cannot walk in our neighborhoods, Senator Biden has made fighting crime a top priority. He has worked to restore billions of dollars in funding cuts President Bush made to local law enforcement officials. And he has his own plan -- to invest \$10 billion a year for five years -- to make America safer: Here's what he wants to do:

- **Hire 50,000 Cops and 1,000 FBI Agents:** In the 1990s, the Biden Crime Bill added 100,000 cops to America's streets, helping to bring down murder and violent crime rates eight years in a row. But with President Bush making cuts to the program crime is on the rise again, as are threats of terrorism, so the Senator wants to put an additional 50,000 cops on America's streets and add 1,000 FBI agents. His legislation is now successfully working its way through Congress.
- **Reducing the Number of Repeat Offenders:** Two-thirds of people released from state prisons are re-arrested for a felony or serious misdemeanor within three years of release. These offenders are re-entering our communities with insufficient monitoring, little or no job skills, inadequate drug treatment, insufficient housing, limited health services, and few positive influences. Senator Biden has authored the Second Chance Act, to provide ex-offenders with housing, drug and alcohol treatment, job training and other life skills they need to rejoin their families and communities.
- **Scan 100 Percent of Cargo Containers Entering Our Ports:** Today, only 5 percent of cargo entering our seaports is scanned, even though our ports are among America's most vulnerable targets. Should a terrorist attack and we have to suspend operations at every port, as we did after 9/11 at every airport, it would cost this economy \$58 billion in 12 days. Senator Biden wants 100 percent of containers to be scanned to prevent radiological and other dangerous materials from being smuggled into America and has offered a plan to do so.
- **Implement the 9/11 Commission Recommendations:** After the tragedy of 9/11, a bi-partisan Commission looked at where America is most vulnerable and

recommend how to make our ports, chemical plants, railways, and other critical infrastructure more secure. Senator Biden wants to act on their recommendations.

- **Help First Responders Communicate:** America's first responders still cannot easily communicate with each other in the event of an emergency or natural disaster. Why? The communications equipment between a unit of the National Guard, the local fire fighter or cop, or other first responders is not all interoperable. Senator Biden wants to give first responders the equipment they need, so if there is a Katrina or a 9/11, the dedicated professionals or volunteers can do their jobs.

## THE BIDEN RECORD: A LIFETIME OF SUPPORT

- **Stopping Violence Against Women:** Senator Biden often says the Biden Violence Against Women Act is his proudest accomplishment. It set up the system of national shelters so battered women, who are being abused by husbands and boyfriends have a place to go. Before the law, it was easier to find a shelter for a dog than a battered wife. It also established a national hotline that 1.5 million abused women have called. As a result, domestic violence is down by 50 percent and rape by 60 percent. He is continuing his efforts, now establishing a program to get legal help to needy women.
- **Passing the Biden Crime Law:** The landmark law the Senator wrote in 1994 that put 100,000 cops on the street and reduced crime eight years in a row also built drug courts, where non-violent offenders are forced into mandatory drug treatment and testing; and helped communities establish safe havens to keep children off the streets, through programs like Boys and Girls Clubs and the Police Athletic Leagues.
- **Protecting America's Kids:** A series of laws the Senator authored in the last two decades have increasingly protected kids against sexual predators. In 1994, he required every state to establish a registry for convicted sexual offenders; in 1996, he helped create the national registry of sexual predators, so these criminals could not move from state to state to avoid being tracked. In 2003, he authored the Victims of Child Abuse Act, increasing funding for Child Advocacy Centers. And in 2006, he authored the Adam Walsh Act that establishes registration requirements to ensure convicted sex offenders can't slip through the cracks and harm our children.
- **Curbing Drug Use:** Senator Biden is well known for his work to curb drug use in America. He created the Drug Czar's office in the White House to coordinate federal programs in the war against drugs; he wrote the Biden Drug Free Schools Zone law, imposing special penalties for dealing drugs within 1,000 feet of a school, and enabling schools to provide drug education and prevention programs, like DARE; and he was instrumental in classifying steroids a drug and funding programs to deter its use by students.
- **Restoring Corporate Integrity:** In light of high-profile crimes by CEOs of corporations like Enron, Senator Biden sponsored legislation requiring top

executives of public companies to certify the accuracy of their financial statements, and to lock them up if their certifications are false.

- **Keeping Criminals Behind Bars:** Legislation the Senator wrote provides funds so states can build prisons, if they agree to keep their violent offenders behind bars for at least 85 percent of their sentence. Previously, state prisoners averaged only 40 percent of their sentence behind bars.

# SENATOR JOE BIDEN ON EDUCATION

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*“My mother has an expression I never fully understood until I was a parent: ‘children tend to become that which you expect of them.’ In the 21<sup>st</sup> century global economy, when our brains and our skills determine America’s competitiveness, we need to expect more of our children. I am working toward the day every American child has 16 years of public education.” -- Senator Joe Biden*

## THE BIDEN PLAN: 16 YEARS IN THE CLASS ROOM

- **Start Early:** Education starts at birth. If there is one thing we know, a child who goes to preschool with books, structure, and activities starts school better prepared. She has a better shot of making it to middle-school with grade-level reading and math skills, graduating high school, and going to college. Senator Biden wants to make two years of high quality pre-school available to all parents and expand early childhood development programs. He supports doubling the number of students in Head Start and quadrupling the number in Early Head Start.
- **A Vigorous Middle -- With Great K-12 Teachers:** With a wife who has taught for almost 30 years and a part-time professor himself, Senator Biden knows: teachers are the single most important factor in a child’s education. Attracting and retaining great teachers has become a national problem. We lose 250,000 teachers every year, half are leaving within five years of entering the profession, and we have difficulty keeping teachers in high-poverty schools. The Senator would provide mentoring to all beginning teachers, and give those who commit to teaching in high-needs schools scholarships to defray their college costs. He also believes reducing class size and paying teachers more – as they do in many countries – are steps America should be taking.
- **Finish Strong With College Access for All:** The importance of a college degree has never been greater, yet over the next decade 2 million students will not attend college because of costs. Not wanting college to become a luxury good – unmanageable for middle-class families -- in 2007, Senator Biden introduced his College ACCESS legislation. It would provide a \$3,000 refundable tax credit – equivalent to a \$12,000 deduction -- that would:
  - Fully cover the average cost of tuition and fees at a two-year college
  - Cover more than half the cost of tuition and fees at a public four-year college.

It achieves this by consolidating two existing incentives – the Hope Scholarship Credit and the tuition and fees deduction – and makes the credit available to families regardless of tax liability. It would make it easier for families to understand the maze

of existing incentives, and make 4 million more families eligible by increasing current income limits.

Senator Biden's ACCESS plan would also increase Pell Grants to \$6,300 – guaranteeing that, together with the ACCESS credit, low-income students could receive up to \$9,300 toward tuition each year.

## THE BIDEN RECORD: THREE DECADES OF PROMISES KEPT

- **Fixing No Child Left Behind:** A long-time proponent of education reform, Senator Biden wants to see the No Child Left Behind law improved by giving schools greater flexibility in evaluating student performance and by fully funding education. President Bush has under funded the program by \$70 billion.
- **Curbing Steroid and Drug Use:** Senator Biden has a long history of sponsoring bills to combat drug use. His legislation has enabled schools to provide drug education and prevention programs, like DARE; and he was instrumental in classifying steroids a drug and funding programs to deter its use by students.
- **Making Schools Safer:** Senator Biden has been a leading voice in making our schools safer, and helped secure funding for school resource officers, who work in and around public schools to combat school-related crime, deal with gangs, and fight illegal drug and alcohol use.
- **Combating Sexual Crimes on Campus:** As the father of the Violence Against Women Act, he helped fund grants for colleges to combat sexual assaults, rape, and stalking on campuses.
- **Bringing Technology Into Schools:** Recognizing the role technology plays in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Senator Biden pushed legislation to close the digital divide. He was a major force behind KIDS 2000, establishing a public/private partnership to provide computer centers, teachers, and Internet access to young people.
- **Educating All Children:** Senator Biden co-sponsored the original Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, which has enabled millions of children with disabilities to have equal educational opportunities.
- **Supporting School Construction:** He has worked to get more federal resources to help states and local communities repair existing schools and build new ones.
- **Making Classrooms Smaller:** He has advocated for reducing the size of classrooms, and was a strong supporter of the Class Size Reduction Initiative, with the goal of hiring 100,000 new teachers.



- **Improving Our Writing:** Senator Biden co-sponsored legislation for the National Writing Project, a professional development program for teachers of all ages – from kindergarten through college. The program trains teachers over the summer on writing instruction.
- **After-School Programs:** Senator Biden's on-gong membership in the After School Caucus speaks to the vital importance of these programs to children and working families. He has continually supported programs that provide safe, supervised after-school activities.

# SENATOR JOE BIDEN ON THE ENVIRONMENT

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*"We should not have to worry when grandfathers take their grandkids to a favorite fishing hole the streams are contaminated with dioxin; or when students turn on a faucet at school, they swallow arsenic; or that acid rain is showering us -- especially when corporate responsibility could prevent it." -- Senator Joe Biden*

## THE BIDEN PLAN: MAKING A BETTER WORLD FOR OUR CHILDREN

- **Addressing Climate Change:** Senator Biden is continuing his strong environmental record by co-sponsoring the most aggressive bill in the Senate to reverse global warming -- the Global Warming Pollution Reduction Act. The Act would implement aggressive policies to limit greenhouse gas emissions and help avert the major problems warming of our planet could cause – such as altering growing seasons; redistributing natural resources; and lifting sea levels.
- **Leading The World:** Global warming requires a global solution. As Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, Senator Biden has made returning the US to a leadership role in international climate treaty negotiations a top priority. He co-authored a bipartisan resolution directing the President to return to international negotiations and reclaim a leadership role for the United States in the fight against global warming.
- **Reducing Power Plant Emissions:** Senator Biden supports the Clean Power Act, directing the Environmental Protection Agency to require power plants to achieve specific reductions in emissions of sulfur dioxide, carbon dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, and mercury.
- **Improving Fuel Efficiency In Cars And Trucks:** Senator Biden wants to advance fuel economy by upgrading to a better system that combines protection for U.S. automobile manufacturing jobs with predictable increases in fuel efficiency standards for cars, SUVs, and light trucks. The new system would set fuel economy standards based on the attributes of a vehicle (such as its size and weight), with individualized fuel economy targets that increase by about one mile per gallon each year.
- **Building Our Future With Environmentally-Friendly Energy:** Senator Biden has proposed legislation directing automakers to gradually increase the number of flex-fuel vehicles -- those able to use both regular gasoline and blends of up to 85 percent ethanol (E85). This bill also requires major oil companies to install E85 pumps at gas stations, and would boost the use of homegrown fuels in our national fuel supply by raising the renewable fuel standard benchmarks. Senator Biden is also a strong supporter of increasing use of renewable energy – like wind, solar and geothermal – and using energy more efficiently.

## THE BIDEN RECORD: PROTECTING PRECIOUS RESOURCES

- **Protecting Alaska's Wildlife:** For many years, Senator Biden has co-sponsored legislation to permanently protect from oil and gas drilling one of the world's last great wilderness areas -- the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska. The uncertain oil recovery does not justify the risk of potentially great harm to this rich environment.
- **Making Polluters Pay:** Senator Biden has been an ardent supporter of efforts to reinstate the Superfund fees so that polluters pay for the cleanup of toxic sites, not taxpayers. Restoring these funds will speed up clean-ups.
- **Exchanging Debt-for-Nature:** Senator Biden co-authored the plan that provides debt relief to developing nations in exchange for protecting tropical rainforests that are critical to the global climate.
- **Defending Clean Air and Water:** Senator Biden has opposed those determined to roll back environmental safeguards and threaten the quality of our air and water. He fought the Administration's plan to gut the New Source Review standards by allowing power plants to avoid their obligations to install modern pollution controls.
- **Safeguarding Delaware's Natural Treasures:** Senator Biden has been at the forefront of successful efforts to:
  - ✓ Secure White Clay Creek for future generations as a federally-protected Wild & Scenic River
  - ✓ Transfer from the U.S. military nearly 1,200 acres of the most beautiful beach on the east coast to Cape Henlopen State Park
  - ✓ Protect Pea Patch Island and Fort Delaware from devastating coastal erosion

# SENATOR JOE BIDEN ON FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

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*“My dad had an expression, ‘show me your budget, and I’ll show you what you value.’ We need to end the War in Iraq that costs more than \$100 billion a year, and end \$85 billion a year in tax breaks for the wealthiest among us, and start valuing the middle class who built this country” -- Senator Joe Biden*

## THE BIDEN PLAN: RE-INVEGORATE THE MIDDLE CLASS

- **Common Sense Budget:** Senator Biden grew up in a middle-class neighborhood, where families sometimes struggle, but if something is really important, they find a way to pay for it. He wants government to do the same and adopt a Pay-As-You Go budget. If government wants to spend more in one area, it has to pay for it by reducing spending elsewhere or raising new revenue.
- **New American Priorities:** Senator Biden would cut spending by putting an end to the War in Iraq that costs Americans more than \$100 billion a year. He would raise \$85 billion a year in revenues by taking back the tax cuts President Bush gave to the top one percent of Americans, those that make an average of \$1.4 million a year. Here is how he would use some of the funds to help the middle-class:

**College Affordability** – A college education is increasingly valuable. Senator Biden’s College ACCESS legislation would provide a \$3,000 refundable tax credit to fully cover tuition at a two-year public college, or half the tuition at a four-year college. The Senator’s program would help ensure college does not become a luxury item out of reach to middle-class families. Estimates are that during the next decade more than 2 million students who qualify for college may not be able to afford it.

**Health Care** – He would provide health care insurance to America’s 9 million children who have no coverage.

**Energy** -- He would double our investment in alternative and renewable energy technology, so America would not be so dependent on foreign oil.

**Education** – He wants every American child to attend two years of pre-school and would double the number of children now served by Head Start. With a quarter of a million teachers leaving the profession, he also would provide funds to attract and retain teachers and reduce class sizes.

**Homeland Security** – In 2007, Senator Biden introduced bills to put 50,000 more police officers on the street, to buy fire fighters needed equipment, to scan cargo containers entering America's ports, to implement security recommendations from the 9/11 Commission, and to provide resources so emergency workers can respond to a health-crisis like a biological attack or pandemic flu.

## THE BIDEN RECORD: A RESPONSILBE BUDGET

- **Stop the Runaway Deficits:** Senator Biden voted against President Bush's tax breaks for the wealthiest Americans, but the Republicans in charge of Congress pushed them through, year after year, along with increased spending. As a result, record amounts have been added to our federal debt. We have seen President Bush and the Republicans take a budget surplus when President Bush took office and turn it, six years in a row, into some of the largest deficits in history.
- **Strengthen Our Economy:** Senator Biden voted to end a decade of rising deficits. He supported President Clinton's historic deficit reduction program. Not only did it create a government budget surplus for the first time since Lyndon Johnson, it spurred the longest period of economic growth in our history and helped create more than 20 million new jobs.
- **Protect Social Security** – Senator Biden believes we have a moral obligation to protect Social Security, particularly as baby boomers retire, and opposed the Bush Administration's efforts to privatize the system.
- **Reform Tax Laws:** Senator Biden voted for tax changes that make sense:
  - **Expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit** -- it has lifted millions of Americans from poverty.
  - **Fixing the Alternative Minimum Tax** – so millions of middle-income Americans are not hurt by a tax intended to stop the wealthiest, who through deductions and exemptions, were paying little in taxes.
  - **Extending the Research and Development Tax Credit** – so businesses will invest in innovations that make America competitive and create jobs.
- **No More Tax Breaks for Oil Companies:** When oil company executives testified at a Senate hearing in 2006, just as they were making unprecedented profits and consumers were being saddled with high prices, Senator Biden confronted them and asked if they needed any part of the billions in tax giveaways included in the 2005 energy bill. When they acknowledged they did not, he worked to repeal those special subsidies.

# SENATOR JOE BIDEN STANDS UP FOR WOMEN

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*“What I’m most proud of in my entire career is the Violence Against Women Act. It showed we can change people’s lives, but the change is always one person at a time. There are many more laws and attitudes that need changing so women are treated with equal opportunities at work, in the classroom, and in our health care system.” – Senator Joe Biden*

## HELPING WOMEN TAKE CHARGE

**Ending Violence Against Women:** Senator Biden wrote the ground-breaking Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) in the 1990s that set the national agenda on criminalizing violence against women and holding batterers truly accountable. It encouraged states to set up coordinated community responses to domestic violence and rape; was the catalyst for passage of hundreds of state laws prohibiting family violence; and provided resources to set up shelters so battered women abused by husbands and boyfriends had a place to go. The law also established the national hotline that over 1.5 million abused women have called for help. By empowering women to make changes in their lives, and by training police and prosecutors to arrest and convict abusive husbands instead of telling them to take a walk around the block, domestic violence is down 50 percent and rape is down 60 percent nationwide. But sadly more work remains. In 2007, the Senator introduced the National Domestic Violence Volunteer Attorney Network Act, an innovative initiative that would recruit volunteer lawyers and match them with domestic violence victims.

**Fairness in the Workplace:** Throughout his career Senator Biden has supported efforts to level the playing field for women at work whether it is through legislation punishing sexual harassment or deterring pay inequity. Today, with women still earning 77 cents for every dollar a man makes doing the same work, the Senator is a strong supporter of the Paycheck Fairness Act and the Fair Pay Restoration Act. This legislation helps prevent pay discrimination by strengthening penalties should it occur and fixing a Supreme Court decision that makes it more difficult for women to bring pay discrimination cases. Senator Biden also supported increasing the federal minimum wage to \$7.25 an hour from \$5.15, where it had been stuck for 10 years. This gave more than 7 million women a pay raise in 2007.

**Balancing Work and Family:** As a father who parented small children on his own, Senator Biden knows first-hand the problems of balancing work and family. He recognizes that it can be especially challenging for women, who often make the health-care decisions, take the kids or elderly parents to see the doctor, or stay at home when someone is sick. Senator Biden was a strong supporter of the Family and Medical Leave Act that has given 50 million workers up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave to look out for a sick family member. Knowing there are many more workers who cannot afford

unpaid leave, he is co-sponsoring the Healthy Families Act, which would require employers with 15 or more workers to provide seven paid sick days to care for their own or their families' medical needs.

**Attracting More Teachers and Nurses:** About seven million women serve in two professions – teaching and nursing – and both are facing shortages. We lose 250,000 teachers every year, half are leaving within five years of entering the profession. The Senator would provide mentoring to all beginning teachers, and give those who commit to teaching in high-needs schools scholarships to defray their college costs. He believes reducing class size and paying teachers more – as they do in many countries – are steps America should be taking. Senator Biden also was an early supporter of the Nurse Reinvestment Act, to provide scholarships for nursing students, and promote public information programs to encourage people to enter the nursing profession.

**Creating Opportunities for Girls In Sports:** Today 150,000 women participate in intercollegiate sports teams, thanks to Title IX, which guarantees that women have equal opportunities in college athletics. Senator Biden has been a strong defender of recent efforts to chip away at Title IX protections, and remains committed to fairness on the sports field.

**Ending the War In Iraq:** Today 10,000 women are serving in Iraq, and Senator Biden has a plan to honorably bring home the troops, without leaving chaos behind. He wants to bring most forces home by 2008.

**Judging the Judges:** Senator Biden has been a major voice of opposition to the Reagan and two Bush Administrations' attempts to pack the federal courts with judges committed to a narrow view of the Constitution that denies women equal protection under the law.

## MOMS AND KIDS COME FIRST

**Helping New Moms:** Senator Biden knows raising healthy and happy children takes help. He wants to make two years of pre-school available to all parents. Currently, 900,000 students are served by Head Start, and he would double that to 2 million; currently, 60,000 toddlers are served by Early Head Start, and he would quadruple that to nearly a quarter of a million. He has advocated for more resources for the Women, Infants, and Children program that provides food, nutrition counseling, and access to health services to pregnant women, new mothers, and their infants.

**Stopping Deadbeat Dads:** For two decades, Senator Biden has fought to crack-down on deadbeat dads. The federal government cannot ensure that children have a father at home, but it can help ensure those children have their father's financial support. As Chairman of the Judiciary Committee, he helped steer two major child support initiatives into law – one, makes it a federal crime to cross state lines to avoid paying child support; the other ensures state courts honor the child support order of other states.

**Helping Parents Keep Their Kids Safe:** A series of laws the Senator authored in the last two decades have increasingly helped America's parents protect their kids from sexual predators. In 1994, he required every state to establish a registry for convicted sexual offenders; in 1996, he helped create the national registry of sexual predators, so these criminals could not move from state to state to avoid being tracked. In 2003, he authored the Victims of Child Abuse Act, increasing funding for Child Advocacy Centers. And in 2006, he authored the Adam Walsh Act, which establishes registration requirements to ensure convicted sex offenders can't slip through the cracks and harm our children.

## PROTECTING WOMEN'S HEALTH

**Fighting Breast Cancer:** Senator Biden has been a leader in efforts to detect, treat, and prevent breast cancer that afflicts more than 200,000 women every year. This has included:

- ✓ Helping to enact and continue breast and cervical cancer prevention programs to ensure mammograms are available to low-income women and those without health insurance and then expanding the program beyond screening to one that also offers reliable treatment.
- ✓ Originating legislation passed in the Senate each year since 1993 recognizing National Mammography Day every October to encourage women to have mammograms.
- ✓ Supporting authorization of a special postage stamp to raise additional money for breast cancer research.
- ✓ Sponsoring legislation to expand Medicare to include coverage of mammograms.
- ✓ Fighting to guarantee insurance companies do not deprive breast cancer survivors of reconstructive surgery.

**Protecting Roe v Wade:** Senator Biden supports the Supreme Court's decision in Roe v. Wade that protects a woman's right to choose to terminate a pregnancy. Believing family planning could help prevent many unwanted pregnancies, Senator Biden has consistently supported Title X – the nation's family planning program -- that provides information, services, support, and research for family planning.



# Senator Joe Biden on Energy Issues

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*“There is no question our oil dependence is threatening our national security. It helps fuel the fundamentalism we’re fighting. Our oil dependence limits our options and our influence around the world, because oil rich countries pursuing policies we oppose can stand up to us, while oil dependent allies may be afraid to stand with us. If we don’t change our policy, oil will further empower the countries that produce it, restrict our options, and undermine our economic and physical security. Where we can have the most impact is stopping our demand for oil from increasing as our economy grows. We know where to start: expand alternative fuels and improve vehicle efficiency. We can do this. We can absolutely do this.”*

Senator Joe Biden

## THE BIDEN PLAN: ENERGY SECURITY FOR AMERICA

Senator Biden believes that in the near term, our energy policy should focus on energy security -- which we can start to strengthen right now by reducing our own oil consumption and leading other major consumers to follow suit. He would:

### **Increase Fuel Efficiency of Vehicles**

- **Raise Fuel Economy Standards By 1 Mile Per Gallon More Each Year:** Instead of focusing on a fleetwide average, Senator Biden would advance fuel economy by upgrading to a better system that combines protection for U.S. automobile manufacturing jobs with predictable increases in fuel efficiency standards for cars, SUVs and light trucks. The new system would set fuel economy standards based on the attributes of a vehicle (such as its size and weight), with individualized fuel economy targets that increase by 4 percent per year (or approximately 1 mile per gallon each year) reaching a 40 mpg average by 2017 which will save approximately the amount of oil we import from Saudi Arabia.
- **Invest in New Super-Efficient Technology:** The market for lithium ion batteries – those needed for super-efficient plug-in hybrids which can get 100 mpg – is dominated by foreign competitors like the Japanese, Koreans and Chinese. That is because these countries have invested hundreds of millions of dollars in developing and supporting the technology. Senator Biden believes the United States needs to make an equal investment in new technology like lithium ion batteries. He has proposed legislation that would double investment in the development of advanced lithium ion batteries needed for plug-in hybrids and electric vehicles – increasing it from \$42 million to \$100 million a year for five years.

### **Increase Use of Renewable Fuels**

- **Require New Vehicles Be Flex-Fuel Vehicles:** Senator Biden would require all cars marketed in the US be capable of running on E85/flex fuel by 2017 (cost estimated to be \$100/car). Together with Senators Lugar and Harkin, Senator Biden has proposed legislation which directs automakers to gradually increase flex-fuel vehicle (FFV) production, increasing ten percentage-point increments annually, until nearly all vehicles sold in the U.S. are flex fuel vehicles within 10 years. At this rate half of all vehicles sold in the US would be flex fuel vehicles in five years. Currently, flex-fuel vehicles -- those able to use both regular gasoline and blends of up to 85 percent ethanol (E85) -- make up only about ten percent of vehicles on the road today (7 million).
- **Require Major Gas Stations To Sell Alternative Fuels:** Only around 700 gas stations nationwide offer E85 to customers. Major oil companies (those that own 4,500 stations or more) should offer alternative refueling capability at 50 percent of stations they own by 2016. The Lugar-Harkin-Biden biofuel legislation would require large oil companies to install E85 pumps at their stations, increasing by five percent annually over the next 10 years.
- **Increase The Amount of Farm-Grown Fuel In Our Fuel Supply:** We should increase the amount of ethanol and biodiesel included in the nation's fuel supply by extending and increasing the current renewable fuel standard and setting standards for biodiesel. Currently the renewable fuel standards set a benchmark of 7.5 billion gallons by 2012. (U.S. gasoline consumption is 140 billion gallons per year). Senator Biden would increase the benchmarks to: 10 billion gallons by 2010; 30 billion gallons by 2020; 60 billion gallons by 2030.

### **Invest in New Technology**

- **Create Incentives For Research:** Senator Biden supports more than \$5 billion in new incentives for research into: alternative fuel and energy sources, renewable energy and carbon capture and sequestration technologies that will allow us to use coal cleanly.

### **Increase Use Of Renewable Energy**

- **Set a National Renewable Portfolio Standard.** Senator Biden would set a national renewable portfolio standard of 20 percent to require that at least 20 percent of the country's electricity comes from clean, renewable sources like wind, solar, biomass and geothermal -- just 2.3 percent of our power comes from these sources today.

### **Require the Federal Government To Be More Energy Efficient**

- **Set Renewable Energy Requirements.** Senator Biden would require the federal government to purchase 10 percent renewable electricity by 2010 and 20 percent by the end of the next decade.

- **Make Federal Buildings More Efficient.** Senator Biden would increase federal building energy efficiency by requiring a 30 percent reduction in energy use over the next ten years.
- **Save Money.** Becoming more efficient will save taxpayers money – almost \$4 billion dollars – and reduce carbon dioxide emissions by millions of tons.

### **Encourage Americans To Use Energy Efficiently**

- **Flip To Efficient Technologies.** Senator Biden has introduced legislation creating the Flip-to-Save program to provide \$50 million in funding to states to administer programs to educate consumers on efficient technology and distribute highly efficient compact florescent light bulbs which use a quarter of the energy of regular bulbs. If every family across the US replaces just one regular incandescent bulb with a CFL, we can reduce carbon dioxide emissions by nearly 7 million tons per year.
- **Increase Use of Energy Efficient Appliances.** Senator Biden would expand the “Energy Star Program” to include standards for more appliances and commercial systems.
- **Support Green Building Codes.** Senator Biden would support local updates to building codes to capture cost-effective energy efficiency opportunities in new residential/commercial construction
- **Create Incentives To Go Green.** Senator Biden supports increasing incentives for energy efficient commercial buildings and manufacturing sector

## **THE BIDEN RECORD: BALANCED AND PROGRESSIVE**

- **Oil Company Record Profits:** When a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing highlighted the unprecedented profits enjoyed by the oil industry - the highest by any business in history - at a time when consumers are saddled with high prices, Senator Biden confronted the executives of six major energy companies, and asked them if they needed any part of the billions in tax giveaways they got in the 2005 energy bill. When they acknowledged that they did not, he worked to repeal those special subsidies.
- **Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP):** Since his early days in the Senate, Senator Biden has championed funding for this vital program that has allowed low income families, disabled individuals and senior citizens living on fixed incomes to offset some of their high heating bills.
- **Gasoline Price Gouging:** Senator Biden cosponsored and pushed legislation to combat inflated gas prices by both integrated oil companies and retailers. This measure would crack down on abuses by giving federal and state regulators new authority to prosecute price gouging in the wake of national energy emergencies, as

well as put in place measures to ban price manipulation and enhance the transparency of our nation's fuel markets.

- **Hybrid and Highly Efficient Diesel Cars:** In an effort to spur advances in the design and manufacture of hybrid vehicles and highly efficient diesel vehicles, Senator Biden worked to help keep purchase costs competitive by giving tax breaks to consumers who bought them.
- **Renewable Energy:** Senator Biden has long been a strong advocate for the growth of renewable and alternative energy sources such as hydropower, wind energy, ethanol, biodiesel, solar and geothermal, and has supported the scientific research and policies needed to develop these sources, help stabilize energy prices, and to do so in an environmentally sensitive way.

# SENATOR JOE BIDEN ON FIRE FIGHTERS

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*“The image I have of September 11th is of that fireman, coming out of the debris of the World Trade Towers with that determined look on his face. President Bush stood there with his bull horn, promising fire fighters on behalf of the Nation we would give them what they needed to face new dangers. The President hasn’t, but where I come from, a promise made is a promise kept.”*

*– Senator Joe Biden*

## THE BIDEN PLAN: SUPPORTING FIRE FIGHTERS

**Increase Support for the FIRE Act:** Senator Biden believes that no priority is higher than keeping Americans safe. In 2001, Senator Biden co-sponsored the original FIRE Act to better equip fire fighters. Nationwide, more than 33,000 fire departments have used FIRE Act funds to obtain new equipment and improve training. When President Bush repeatedly tried to slash the program, Senator Biden worked to restore the funding. The role of fire fighters has expanded since September 11<sup>th</sup> from providing local response to being prepared for a national disaster. Senator Biden’s Homeland Security Trust Fund Act includes \$500 million for FIRE Act grants every year for the next five years.

**Increase SAFER Grants:** Senator Biden was an early supporter of the SAFER Act, which has helped 400 local departments – large and small – hire additional fire fighters. When President Bush attempted to eliminate the program, Senator Biden worked to restore it and increased federal support for hiring both paid and volunteer first responders. But more needs to be done, as two-thirds of our fire departments are still understaffed and many first responders are overworked. Senator Biden’s Homeland Security Trust Fund Act, includes \$500 million to fund the SAFER program every year for the next five years.

**Help First Responders Communicate:** America’s first responders still cannot easily communicate with the military, police and other first responders in the event of an emergency or natural disaster. Why? The communications equipment between a unit of the National Guard, the local fire fighter or cop, or other first responders is not interoperable. Senator Biden supports giving first responders the equipment they need, so if there is a Katrina or a 9/11, the dedicated professionals or volunteers can do their jobs. The Senator is also a strong supporter of establishing a hard date for broadcasters to return their analog spectrum so emergency personnel can use it to improve communications.

**Fire Safety on America’s Campuses:** Since 2000, some 100 people have died in campus-related fires – and many of the tragedies could have been prevented with

proper safety measures. So Senator Biden annually introduces a resolution declaring September Campus Fire Safety Month. It encourages college administrators and local elected officials to implement educational programs, evaluate living conditions on and around campuses, and increase the use of fire detection systems.

## THE BIDEN RECORD: A FIRE FIGHTER'S SENATOR

**A Very Personal Bond:** For 35 years Senator Biden has had a personal bond with fire fighters. His local Delaware volunteer fire fighters helped in what he calls three of the most consequential events in his life. In 1972, after his wife and three children were broadsided by a tractor trailer, the fire force was able to save his two young sons trapped in the automobile. In 1988, after the Senator was diagnosed with a life-threatening cranial aneurism, his local fire fighters drove him in the middle of a snow storm from Delaware to Walter Reed Hospital, in Washington, D.C., for major surgery. And a few years ago when lightning struck his house, again fire fighters were there and saved his home.

**Head of the Fire Caucus:** Because fire fighters have played such a special part in Senator Biden's life, his mission is to help them in communities across America as much as they have helped him. In 1989, he became a Founding member of the Congressional Fire Caucus and assumed its chairmanship in 1996, a position he still holds today as the Senate's staunchest supporter of legislation to help fire fighters. Senator Biden also is President Emeritus of the Delaware Volunteer Firemen's Association.

**Memorials to Fire Fighters:** He co-sponsored legislation creating the Public Safety Office Medal of Valor, the Nation's highest award for fire fighters and other public safety officers who act with extraordinary valor. The Award is presented by the President. Throughout his career, Senator Biden also has supported numerous measures to honor fallen fire fighters.

**Benjamin Franklin Commemorative Coin:** In honor of Ben Franklin, who started America's first fire company, Senator Biden sponsored legislation enabling the Treasury to mint special silver coins with Franklin's image. Proceeds went to various fire safety organizations.

# SENATOR JOE BIDEN ON CIVIL RIGHTS

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*“What made me run for the Senate 35 years ago? Civil rights. I wanted to end the discrimination I saw. Thirty-five years later we have changed America and moved closer to our ideals, but new and more subtle sins are still there. It’s still my call to end the injustices I see.” –Senator Joe Biden*

## THE BIDEN PLAN: ENDING 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY DISCRIMINATION

**Judging the Judges:** The recent Supreme Court term proves that judges and justices can undo decades of progress on civil rights. That’s why Senator Biden has a well-earned reputation of being tough on judging judicial appointments. As chairman of the powerful Senate Judiciary Committee, he kept Robert Bork off the Supreme Court. More recently, as a senior member of the Committee, he strongly opposed putting Bush nominees John Roberts and Samuel Alito on the Supreme Court, fearing what unfortunately has proven true – they want to erase decades of progress for minorities and women. As the Bush Administration continues to try to pack federal courts with judges committed to a narrow view of the Constitution that denies minorities and women equal protection, Senator Biden will remain the voice of opposition.

**Ending Discrimination Based On Sexual Orientation:** Senator Biden believes legal recognition should not be denied same-sex couples. He advocates for re-examining federal laws, including the tax code, to ensure our national laws are not unfair to same-sex couples, and that committed adults who are adopting are not discriminated against because of sexual orientation. He supports letting states determine how to recognize civil unions and define marriage.

**Ending Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell:** Senator Biden supports ending the military’s Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell Policy. Twenty-four of the nations serving alongside U.S. forces in Iraq permit open service, and it has no negative impact on their forces or the morale of the soldiers. Senator Biden believes turning away patriotic Americans who volunteer to serve solely because of their sexual orientation is wrong.

**Equal Work, Equal Paycheck:** Today, with women still earning 77 cents for every dollar a man makes doing the same work, the Senator is a strong supporter of the Paycheck Fairness Act. It would help prevent pay discrimination by strengthening penalties should it occur. Senator Biden also supported increasing the federal minimum wage to \$7.25 an hour from \$5.15, where it had been stuck for 10 years, giving 13 million workers a pay raise.

**Stopping Discrimination at Work:** While workplace discrimination is not as obvious as when the Senator’s ancestors faced “No Irish Need Apply,” signs, today minorities,

women, and gays hear excuses like, “she won’t fit in,” or “he’s too qualified,” as employers pass on them. It may be subtle, but it’s hate in the heart, nevertheless. So Senator Biden supports the Employment Non-Discrimination Act to prohibit job discrimination of any kind. He also supports the Fair Pay Restoration Act to overturn a Supreme Court decision that makes it more difficult for women to bring pay discrimination cases.

**Punishing Hate Crimes:** Senator Biden is a strong supporter of the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act to expand federal and state coordination to fight hate crimes. Every year more than 7,000 hate crimes are committed. Senator Biden believes these acts not only hurt victims, they damage the values that are America. The Act would enable the Justice Department to assist local agencies in investigating and prosecuting crimes, and would expand the definition of hate crimes to include offenses based on sexual orientation, gender, or disability. Senator Biden also supports the Emmett Till Unsolved Civil Rights Crime Act which would dedicate resources at the Department of Justice and FBI to re-open unsolved murders from the civil rights era.

**Equal Access at the Ballot Box:** Today, there are more than 9,000 black and 6,000 Latino elected officials, largely due to the Voting Rights Act that put an end to literacy tests and poll taxes in the 1960s. In the early 1980s, Senator Biden helped expand the Act, and last year was an advocate for the Act’s successful renewal. Senator Biden believes that more must be done to stop misleading voters, and to ensure votes are counted. He would: put a stop to deceptive practices – like passing out fliers telling people to vote on the wrong day; require electronic voting systems to have a paper trail; and make sure states adequately train poll workers. He also supports giving voting representation to the 600,000 residents in the District of Columbia who now have no voting members in Congress.

**Expanding Educational Opportunities:** The importance of a college degree has never been greater, yet over the next decade 2 million students will not attend college because of costs. Senator Biden believes that college should not become a luxury good. His College ACCESS legislation would: provide a \$3,000 refundable tax credit that would fully cover the average cost of tuition and fees at a two-year college, or cover more than half the cost of tuition and fees at a public four-year college, and expand Pell Grants to low-income students to \$6,300.

**Protecting Worker Rights to Bargain Collectively:** Senator Biden is a co-sponsor of the Employee Free Choice Act, a bill to ensure workers can form, join, or assist labor unions without interference from employers.

**Ending The Crack-Powder Sentencing Disparity:** In 1986, Congress established a draconian sentencing scheme that punished the crack form of cocaine far more severely than the powder form. Currently, mere possession of 5 grams of crack triggers a five-year mandatory minimum sentence, while it takes distribution or manufacture of 500 grams of powder cocaine to trigger that same sentence. The assumptions that led



Congress to establish this disparity – that crack is inherently more dangerous and addictive than powder, that crack would devastate communities, and that prenatal exposure to crack was far more damaging than exposure to powder – have proved unfounded. Senator Biden has proposed legislation to implement the US Sentencing Commission’s recommendation to eliminate the 100:1 disparity between the two forms of the drug. He also supports increasing funding for prison- and jail-based drug treatment programs. Senator Biden is opposed to being soft on drug traffickers – he supports stiffer penalties for major drug traffickers and additional resources for the investigation and prosecution of them.

## THE BIDEN RECORD: THREE-DECADE MARCH FORWARD

**Protecting Affirmative Action:** Senator Biden has been a strong supporter of affirmative action. He opposed Republican attempts to ban affirmative action in federal contracts and to bar funds to administer affirmative action programs.

**Helping Americans With Disabilities:** Senator Biden always has been a strong supporter of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). He has long championed efforts to allow Medicaid to provide home- and community-based support services needed by disabled individuals to remain out of institutions. He also fought to allow low-income families with disabled children to buy into the Medicaid program.

**Protecting Against Genetic Discrimination:** Senator Biden has fought to prohibit employers and insurance companies from collecting or using genetic information when making decisions about hiring, providing health coverage, or discriminating in the pricing of an insurance policy.

**Preserving the Privacy of Medical Records:** Senator Biden knows how important it is to patients that their personal medical information be kept private. He supports: making sure individuals’ medical information is not used against them or unknowingly sold for commercial profit, and ensuring that as we move toward more efficient, cost-saving electronic medical records, privacy interests remain a priority.

**Celebrating Martin Luther King, Jr:** Senator Biden was an original co-sponsor of the bill to designate a national holiday in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr., and helped guide its passage through the Senate.