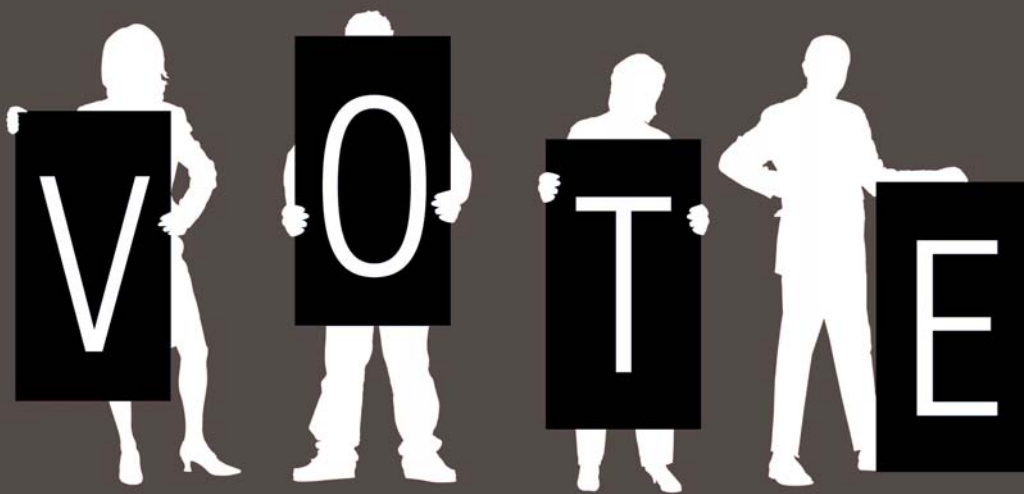




LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
EDUCATION FUND

2008 PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY VOTERS' GUIDE

sometimes it takes a four letter word



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®

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ABOUT THIS VOTERS' GUIDE

This Voters' Guide is published by the League of Women Voters Education Fund. The League has a long tradition of publishing the verbatim responses of candidates to questions important to voters. The League offers this Voters' Guide to assist citizens in their decision making process as they prepare for participation in the presidential primary season. The League of Women Voters does not support or oppose any candidate or political party.

GROUND RULES

1. All qualified presidential candidates were invited to provide biographical information and responses to five issue specific questions. Candidates were qualified if they met the following criteria: 1) the candidate must have made a public announcement of her/his intention to run for her/his Party's nomination for President; and 2) the candidate must have met the Presidential Election Campaign Fund Act's minimum contribution threshold requirements for qualifying for matching funds, based on the most recent data publicly available on the FEC Web site as of October 5, 2007.
2. Responses were limited to 50 words and truncated after the 50th word.
3. If a candidate did not respond by the deadline, "No Response Received" is printed.

CANDIDATE STATEMENTS

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ABOUT THE OFFICE OF PRESIDENT

Salary: \$400,000 per year

Term: Four years. Limit of two terms.

How Elected: Every four years political parties nominate candidates to run for President of the United States in a General Election that is held on the first Tuesday in November of years divisible by the number four. Although all parties use conventions to nominate their candidates, in most states the Democratic and Republican parties also run state-wide caucuses or primary elections. The results of the primary influence how the delegates to their respective party's convention will cast ballots for candidates for President. The degree to which convention delegates are bound by the results of the primary elections or caucuses varies from state to state.

Duties: The President is the head of state of the United States of America and is the Chief Executive Officer and the Commander in Chief of all military forces. The powers of the President are described in the Constitution and federal law. Subject to Senate approval, the President appoints the members of the Cabinet, ambassadors to other nations and the United Nations, Supreme Court Justices and federal judges. The President, along with the Cabinet and its agencies, is responsible for carrying out and enforcing the laws of the United States. The President may also recommend legislation to the United States Congress.

THE QUESTIONS

FOSSIL FUELS: What should be done, if anything, at the federal level to reduce our use of and dependence on fossil fuels?

IRAQ AND THE MIDDLE EAST: What should be our short term and long term goals in Iraq and the Middle East?

HEALTH COVERAGE: What should the federal government do, if anything, to ensure that every American has health coverage?

CAMPAIGN SPENDING LIMITS: Please explain why you do or do not support setting spending limits for political campaigns and providing a set amount of public funding for all candidates who agree to take no private contributions.

IMMIGRATION: What should the federal government do about immigration?



JOSEPH R. BIDEN JR.

WEB SITE: joebiden.com

BIOGRAPHY:

No Response Received.

FOSSIL FUELS:

We must transition to alternatives and increase efficiency. I would raise the renewable fuel standard, require that cars marketed here be capable of running on E85/flex fuel by 2017, require major gas stations sell alternative fuels, upgrade fuel economy standards and support a large investment in new super-efficient technology.

IRAQ AND THE MIDDLE EAST:

First, end the Iraq war. I'm the only candidate with a plan to end the war without leaving chaos behind. Second, the Middle East dots are connected. To address them, we must renew our faith in America's ideas and ideals and lead from a position of confidence, not fear.

HEALTH COVERAGE:

We must cover all kids and we must at least give everyone access to the same health care plans that Members of Congress have or allow them to buy-in to Medicare. We need to lower premiums by providing catastrophic coverage and to focus on prevention, treatment, simplification and modernization.

CAMPAIGN SPENDING LIMITS:

Elections should be about the power of ideas - not the power of money. I have been a leading voice on campaign reform for over 30 years. I support spending limits and public funding for Congressional campaigns and have cosponsored a bill which would strengthen the presidential public financing system.

IMMIGRATION:

We must provide a reasonable path to bring out from the shadows over 12 million people living and working here and create a worker visa system that is driven by the needs of employers and workers. We should provide a pathway to citizenship to keep talent and promise in America.



HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON

WEB SITE: hillaryclinton.com

BIOGRAPHY:

Hillary Rodham Clinton, 60, graduated from Wellesley College in 1969 and Yale Law School in 1973. She was the First Lady of Arkansas from 1979 to 1981 and the First Lady of the United States from 1993 to 2001. She has represented New York in the U.S. Senate since 2000.

FOSSIL FUELS:

Hillary's plan to move our country toward energy independence has three big goals: to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80 percent from 1990 levels by 2050; to cut foreign oil imports by two-thirds from projected levels by 2030; and to transform our carbon-based economy into an efficient green economy.

HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON (CONT.)

IRAQ AND THE MIDDLE EAST:

Hillary will end the war in Iraq. She will replace our troops with a new diplomatic initiative to restore stability to Iraq and the region. She will ensure that America plays a constructive and engaged role in a renewed Middle East peace process.

HEALTH COVERAGE:

Hillary has a plan to ensure quality, affordable health care for all Americans. Under her plan, individuals will get a tax credit to help pay for premiums; insurance companies won't be able to discriminate based on pre-existing conditions; and people won't lose coverage if they switch or lose their jobs.

CAMPAIGN SPENDING LIMITS:

Hillary will work to move our country to a public financing system that is both fair and effective. It is the only real solution to reducing the influence of money in politics, and she will help pass and sign into law a meaningful, fair, and comprehensive public financing system.

IMMIGRATION:

Hillary supports comprehensive immigration reform that includes strengthening our borders; placing stronger sanctions on employers; supporting family reunification; and providing a path to earned legalization for people who have been living in the United States respecting the law, learning English and willing to meet a high bar.

CHRIS DODD



WEB SITE: chrisdodd.com

No Response Received.

JOHN EDWARDS



WEB SITE: johnedwards.com

BIOGRAPHY:

John Edwards has spent a lifetime taking on special interests and fighting for regular Americans – in courtrooms, in the Senate and beyond. He fought for health care, strengthening the middle class, better schools, preserving the environment and reforming campaign finance. Recently, he directed a poverty center at UNC Chapel Hill.

FOSSIL FUELS:

I will cap carbon emissions and reduce them by 80 percent by 2050 and I will create a new fund, financed by greenhouse gas polluters, to invest in clean energy technology. And I will ask Americans – who are ready to be patriotic about something other than war – to conserve.

JOHN EDWARDS (CONT.)

IRAQ AND THE MIDDLE EAST:

We should immediately draw down 40,000 to 50,000 troops, completely withdraw all combat troops in Iraq within nine to ten months and leave no permanent bases behind. After withdrawal, we should retain sufficient forces in friendly nearby countries to ensure that instability in Iraq doesn't spill over into other countries.

HEALTH COVERAGE:

I was the first candidate to propose a detailed plan guaranteeing true universal health care. I will pass a law mandating that every American have insurance, require businesses to cover their employees or help pay for their coverage and make insurance affordable by expanding public programs and offering tax credits.



BARACK OBAMA

WEB SITE: barackobama.com

BIOGRAPHY:

Obama began his career as a community organizer on Chicago's South Side and headed a voter registration drive. Obama practiced civil rights law and taught constitutional law. He served eight years in the State Senate before his election to the U.S. Senate. He graduated from Columbia University and Harvard Law.

FOSSIL FUELS:

Obama supports a bold market-based cap-and-trade system to reduce dependence on foreign oil and combat climate change. Obama will also dramatically increase investment in clean energy technologies and energy efficiency. He proposes increasing fuel efficiency standards, biofuels, electricity from renewable sources, and a low carbon fuel standard.

CAMPAIGN SPENDING LIMITS:

To reduce the influence of money in politics, I will create a public financing system for congressional candidates and strengthen the current system for presidential candidates. I will rewrite rules to put small donors in charge through increased matching funds. I will reduce contribution limits to better reflect Americans' incomes.

IMMIGRATION:

Immigration is central to the story of America, but today our system needs an overhaul. We need to get control of our borders, create a fair path to citizenship that requires paying a fine and learning English, and crack down on employers that violate the law.

IRAQ AND THE MIDDLE EAST:

Obama opposed the war in Iraq from the beginning. He will end it by withdrawing our combat troops over 16 months, calling a new constitutional convention, and urging Iraq's neighbors to work towards stability. Obama seeks a two-state solution—Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace and security.

HEALTH COVERAGE:

Obama will sign universal health legislation by the end of his first term, ensuring all Americans have high-quality, affordable coverage. His plan will save a typical American family up to \$2,500 annually; modernize our health care system to contain costs and improve quality; and promote prevention and public health.

BARACK OBAMA (CONT.)

CAMPAIGN SPENDING LIMITS:

Obama strongly supports public financing of elections and does not accept any campaign donations from federal lobbyists or PACs. Obama has co-sponsored legislation that would create a voluntary system to provide full public funding for candidates who agree to spending limits.

IMMIGRATION:

Obama supports comprehensive immigration reform that strengthens border security; fixes our broken immigration bureaucracy; and creates a responsible path to citizenship that requires undocumented immigrants to pay a fine, learn English, follow the law, and go to the back of the line.

BILL RICHARDSON



WEB SITE: richardsonforpresident.com

BIOGRAPHY:

I am in my second term as the Governor of New Mexico. I also served as Energy Secretary, Ambassador to the United Nations, and a Congressman for 14 years. I have also served as a diplomatic troubleshooter and have negotiated the release of hostages from Iraq, Sudan and North Korea.

HEALTH COVERAGE:

Affordable, universal healthcare should be our national goal. America's core values demand no less. My plan revolves around the concept of choice, and it creates no new bureaucracies and raises no new taxes. It also allows Americans to keep their current plans if they're satisfied with them.

FOSSIL FUELS:

We must act boldly and now in order to make America a Clean Energy Nation. I am calling for a revolution — an energy and climate revolution based on reducing oil demand, creating new efficiencies, and mandating dramatic cuts in greenhouse-gas emissions. Please see my entire plan at my website.

CAMPAIGN SPENDING LIMITS:

Our campaign finance system is a mess. We need to reform it, and that starts by taking the following steps: No gifts from lobbyists; No earmarks; Strong disclosure and enforcement; We must explore effective strategies for public financing as we have in New Mexico

IRAQ AND THE MIDDLE EAST:

We must withdraw all our forces from Iraq – leaving no residual troops behind. There is no political progress in Iraq, and as long as our forces remain, there will be none. Only our leaving will force the Iraqis to make the hard choices necessary for lasting peace.

IMMIGRATION:

I am committed to both enforcing our borders and pushing for immigration reform. We need tough, effective border control – and building a fence will not increase security; only more border patrol manpower will. I believe in realistic immigration reform that requires undocumented workers to truly earn their legal status.

DEMOCRATS



RUDY GIULIANI

WEB SITE: joinrudy2008.com

BIOGRAPHY:

Rudy Giuliani has over 20 years of public leadership experience as Mayor of New York, U.S. Attorney, and Reagan’s Associate Attorney General. As Mayor, Rudy cut taxes 23 times, turned a \$2.3 billion budget deficit into a multi-billion dollar surplus, cut crime by 56% and reduced welfare rolls by 640,000.

FOSSIL FUELS:

America needs to be energy independent – it is a matter of our economy, pollution, and national security. Every potential solution must be pursued including nuclear power, increased energy exploration, and aggressive investment in alternative energy sources. America can achieve energy independence through a national strategy emphasizing diversification, innovation and conservation.

IRAQ AND THE MIDDLE EAST:

Our goal is victory in Iraq and Afghanistan. We need to see the emergence of stable governments and societies that can act as our allies against terrorists. America must defeat the global terrorist movement and its ideology. Our commitment to Israel’s security is a permanent feature of our foreign policy.

HEALTH COVERAGE:

America is at a crossroads when it comes to health care. My plan will increase the quality, affordability and portability of health care by empowering patients and their doctors, not government bureaucrats. Government mandates, which make health care more expensive, go in the wrong direction.

CAMPAIGN SPENDING LIMITS:

I support protecting people’s freedom to participate in the electoral process. Political free speech is the foundation of our First Amendment rights, and people realize their rights of free speech by getting involved in campaigns and make contributions to campaigns. We need to bend over backwards to protect political speech.

IMMIGRATION:

The first responsibility of the federal government is to protect our citizens. We need to control America’s borders, while ending illegal immigration and identifying every non-citizen in our nation. We must restore integrity, accountability and the rule of law to immigration to regain the faith of the American people.



JOHN MCCAIN

WEB SITE: johnmccain.com

BIOGRAPHY:

Graduating from the Naval Academy, John McCain began his service to his country as a naval aviator and spent over five years as a prisoner of war in North Vietnam. After serving in

the House of Representatives, he was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1986, where he currently serves.

JOHN MCCAIN (CONT.)

FOSSIL FUELS:

I believe that strengthening our energy security goes hand-in-hand with addressing global climate change. I favor a market-based, cap and trade system to achieve appropriate limits on greenhouse gas emissions efficiently and effectively. Under that system, every firm will have clear rewards to diversifying our energy mix.

IRAQ AND THE MIDDLE EAST:

Two generations of Americans have fought wars in Iraq; we cannot condemn a third to the same fate by letting that country become a failed state in which we must again intervene. Anchoring Iraq in a stable, prosperous region must be the purpose of American strategy in the Middle East.

HEALTH COVERAGE:

The problem with American health care is not one of quality, but one of cost. I have proposed a health care plan that addresses the escalating cost of health care to ensure more American families can afford access to the finest health care system in the world.

CAMPAIGN SPENDING LIMITS:

There will always be money in politics, but I firmly believe we need to have a balance that prevents special interests from using their combined billions of dollars to buy influence in a way that undermines the ability of representatives to fairly represent the interests of all their constituents.

IMMIGRATION:

If we have learned anything from the recent immigration debate, it is that Americans have lost trust that their government will take the measures necessary to secure our borders. As president, I will secure our nation's borders before addressing any of our additional pressing immigration concerns.

RON PAUL



WEB SITE: ronpaul2008.com

BIOGRAPHY:

Congressman Ron Paul is serving his tenth term in the U.S. House of Representatives. Dr. Paul has delivered more than 4,000 babies as an OB/GYN. He has been married to his wife Carol for over 50 years, and they have five children, 18 grandchildren, and one great-grandchild.

FOSSIL FUELS:

I will work to restore a free market in energy and to repeal federal regulations and taxes that impede the development of new energy sources. Erase the federally-mandated advantage, and the alternatives market will flourish. Internalizing the cost of pollution on polluters will result in cleaner, safer alternatives.

REPUBLICANS

RON PAUL (CONT.)

IRAQ AND THE MIDDLE EAST:

Our goal in Iraq should be immediate withdrawal. I will consult with military officials and let them conduct this withdrawal as safely as possible. Our long term goal should be trade and diplomacy with all Middle Eastern nations, along with a complete cessation of any interference in their internal affairs.

HEALTH COVERAGE:

Government health care means long waiting periods, lack of choice, and poor quality. Many Canadians, fed up with socialized medicine, come to the U.S. to obtain care. By removing federal regulations, encouraging competition, and presenting real choices, we can make our health care system the envy of the world again.

CAMPAIGN SPENDING LIMITS:

It is unconstitutional to limit political speech, including capping the amount Americans can contribute to political campaigns or causes. Public financing of campaigns will inevitably lead to bureaucrats deciding which candidates are worthy of public support, thus increasing the government's ability to shut out dissenting views from the political process.

IMMIGRATION:

My six-point immigration plan is to: (1) Physically secure our borders; (2) Enforce visa rules; (3) Not allow amnesty; (4) Provide no welfare for those here illegally; (5) End birthright citizenship; and (6) Create true reform that is fair for all.



MITT ROMNEY

WEB SITE: mittromney.com

No Response Received.



TOM TANCREDO

WEB SITE: teamtancredo.org

BIOGRAPHY:

Before his election to Congress in 1998, he served five years in the Colorado legislature, and was appointed regional representative for the Department of Education by President Reagan, a position he held for over ten years. Tancredo lives with his wife of 30 years, Jackie in Colorado.

FOSSIL FUELS:

I support immediate and rapid development of nuclear energy for the purpose of significantly reducing our reliance on petroleum products.

TOM TANCREDO (CONT.)

IRAQ AND THE MIDDLE EAST:

Unfortunately, we will have to maintain a presence in the region for a long time. As for Iraq, I believe our troops must step back as the main police force in the country. The Iraqi security forces need to take control of the security in their country.

HEALTH COVERAGE:

I believe in market based solutions to health care problems, not through bigger government programs. One solution is the use of Association Health Plans or AHPs. AHPs would assist greatly in improving access to affordable health care without creating a new big government scheme.

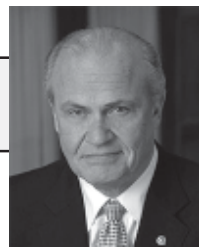
CAMPAIGN SPENDING LIMITS:

I believe it's unconstitutional to restrict anyone from spending their own money on their own campaign.

IMMIGRATION:

The only realistic solution to the problem of illegal immigration is a strategy of attrition, which stops the incentives for them to come into our country, most notably by eliminating the jobs magnet. America must also reexamine its legal immigration policies and secure our borders.

FRED THOMPSON



WEB SITE: fred08.com

BIOGRAPHY:

The first person in my family to graduate high school, I was a prosecutor, counsel on the Senate Watergate Committee, and lawyer, helping to bring down a corrupt Tennessee Governor. I served eight years in the U.S. Senate seeking tax cuts, spending restraint, effective government, and a strong national security.

FOSSIL FUELS:

I support expanding our nation's efforts to broaden our energy sources and decrease our dependence on foreign oil, which threatens our national security and prosperity. We need to encourage the development and use of renewable energy, ethanol and biodiesel fuels, clean coal technology, and nuclear power.

IRAQ AND THE MIDDLE EAST:

We must bring security to Iraq. The surge is working and should be continued. We need to achieve political stability. Long-term, we need to defeat the terrorists wherever they are found, prevent rogue nations from acquiring weapons of mass destruction, and promote peace and stability throughout the region.

HEALTH COVERAGE:

Some choose not to be insured; others (many of whom are illegal aliens) cannot afford it. Every American should be able to get affordable, accessible, and portable health insurance. Change the tax code to put individuals in control. Coverage can be made available without new mandates or higher taxes.

FRED THOMPSON (CONT.)

CAMPAIGN SPENDING LIMITS:

Candidates should be able to raise and spend what it takes to win a campaign. Limits on individual contributions should be raised and all contributions publicly disclosed in real time. I support prohibiting “soft money” contributions to political parties. Those who violate campaign finance laws should be severely punished.

IMMIGRATION:

Immigration is a national security issue. A government that cannot secure its borders and determine who enters abrogates a fundamental responsibility. We need to secure our borders, enforce existing laws, no amnesty, cut federal funds for “sanctuary cities,” and pursue “attrition through enforcement,” while improving the legal immigration process.

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS IS WHERE HANDS ON WORK TO SAFEGUARD DEMOCRACY LEADS TO CIVIC IMPROVEMENT. LEARN MORE AT WWW.LWV.ORG AND WWW.VOTE411.ORG.

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