Election 2008*

Unless you’ve been in a coma or traversing the remote wilderness of Tajikistan the last year and a half, you probably know that there is a presidential election coming up. War(s), diplomacy, terrorism, a faltering economy, a Wall Street bailout, offshore drilling, Troopergate, and “lipstick on a pig”…there are a myriad of issues to base your decision around. However, before you go off on November 4th and partake in the hallowed democratic ritual that is “voting,” we at the Holistic Healer would like to provide you with some information on where the two major candidates stand on health and wellness issues. Because an informed citizenry, on all the issues, will result in informed and effective political leaders…hopefully...

Barack Obama (D)

On Health Care—The Obama Plan has the government providing a comprehensive, affordable, and portable health care, similar to the health care members of Congress currently have. All citizens are eligible for this plan, although the Obama Plan provides assistance for those wishing to purchase a private plan. It also requires employers to either offer a “meaningful contribution” to their employees’ health care or pay towards the national plan.

On Healthy/Sustainable Agriculture—Obama plans to provide incentives for organic farming and regional food systems. He also advocates labeling food by its country of origin as well as “strictly regulating” pollution from factory farms and meat producers.

On Sexual Health and Education—Obama is the co-sponsor of the 2007 Prevention First Act, which “will increase funding for family planning and comprehensive sex education that teaches both abstinence and safe sex methods. The Act will also end insurance discrimination against contraception, improve awareness about emergency contraception, and provide compassionate assistance to rape victims.” Obama also supports abortion rights.

On Energy—Obama’s energy plan focuses on significant investment in alternative energy (which includes “clean coal,” along with solar, wind, natural gas, etc) as well as developing the “cleanest, cheapest, fastest” energy source—efficiency. This will be made through incentives to produce more efficient cars and more efficient home and business electricity consumption.

John McCain (R)

On Health Care—The McCain plan breaks from the traditional “employer pays” model by providing tax credits ($2,500 for individuals, $5,000 for families) to offset health care costs and ensure portability. McCain will also “encourage and expand” individual Health Savings Accounts to encourage portability and long-term care security. He moreover advocates various measures to reduce the overall cost of health care in America.

On Healthy/Sustainable Agriculture—In order to grow “better crops using less land, water and natural resource,” as well as reduce greenhouse gas emissions, McCain will “direct the USDA to carry out a comprehensive research approach to help develop more drought resistant higher yield crops and increase production per acre.”

On Sexual Health—“Twice in the last decade — in 2003 and 2005 — the Arizona senator has voted against legislation requiring insurance plans that cover prescription drugs to also cover birth control.” The Washington Independent, “McCain’s Birth Control Dodge,” 7/11/08. McCain also opposes abortion rights.

On Energy—McCain: “In a world of hostile and unstable suppliers of oil, this nation will achieve strategic independence by 2025.” To accomplish this, McCain has an “all of the above” approach to energy. This includes substantial investment in nuclear power plants (Obama is more cautious of potential dangers in nuclear power), a focus on domestic oil and natural gas drilling (Obama’s plan is less focused on drilling), and investment in ‘clean’ alternative forms of energy.

For more on the candidates’ positions, go to the next page

*All information, unless otherwise noted, is from the candidates’ official webpages
More on the Presidential Candidates

Barack Obama

On Stem Cell Research—Obama feels that “we owe it to the American public to explore the potential of stem cells to treat the millions of people suffering from debilitating and life-threatening diseases.” He has sponsored legislation “which would allow research of human embryonic stem cells derived from embryos donated (with consent) from in vitro fertilization clinics.”

On a Healthy Environment—The Obama climate change plan calls for an 80% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, achieved through a number of measures, including a “cap and trade” emission control system as well as investment in clean energy technology. Obama also plans to “restore the force of the Clean Air Act,” and he has policy specifics on protecting water supplies, preventing environmental racism, and protecting communities from toxic or carcinogenic substances.

On Alcohol/Drugs—Obama supports strengthening substance abuse prevention systems and restricting tobacco and alcohol advertising towards children. He sponsored legislation battling methamphetamine, and he supports drug rehabilitation programs.

Potent Potable—"Look, when I was a kid, I inhaled frequently. That was the point." – Barack Obama, on youthful indiscretions

John McCain

On Stem Cell Research—“Stem cell research offers tremendous hope for those suffering from a variety of deadly diseases - hope for both cures and life-extending treatments. However, the compassion to relieve suffering and to cure deadly disease cannot erode moral and ethical principles.” In contrast to Obama, McCain opposes the use of embryonic stem cells in research, but he supports the use of adult stem cells.

On a Healthy Environment—By 2050, McCain calls for a 66% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, achieved through a “cap-and-trade” regulation system. In this system, the sale of carbon “permits” would go towards funding research in clean energy technology. McCain is an advocate for “national parks, national seashores, wildlife refuges and national monuments.”

On Alcohol/Drugs—”John McCain's finest moments on addiction policy during the past decade were related to his...campaign to regulate the tobacco industry, tax tobacco products more heavily, and limit tobacco advertising.” McCain has also promoted the availability of smoking cessation programs.

Potent Potable—"We spent $3 million to study the DNA of bears in Montana. I don't know if that was a paternity issue or a criminal issue." – John McCain, on congressional spending

Elections Resources

- www.barackobama.com—official website for Barack Obama
- www.johnmccain.com—official website for John McCain
- www.declareyourself.com—This site lucidly guides you through the steps in registering to vote. It also provides information on obtaining absentee ballots (for all you out-of-staters), information on the electoral process, and stances on the various candidate’s issues
- www.scvotes.org—Need to know who’s running for Solicitor of Colleton County? This website can tell you who’s running for EVERY race you’re going to vote for on November 4th, so you can go do your homework. It also has information on registering and absentee voting.
- www.factcheck.org— The tagline for this website is “Holding Politicians Accountable,” and they do this by check the veracity of every bold proclamation or insidious attack on candidates for a host of elections.

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- Over the Counter
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Did You Know?

- Eight Presidents were born as British subjects, the last being William Henry Harrison in 1773?
- Martin van Buren, the 8th President of the US, has been given the nickname “The Little Magician”?
Yes, it’s true. Belied by the ad-nausea coverage that Barack Obama and John McCain have received for, well, about the past decade or so, there ARE, in fact, other races to vote for this year. This section of the Holistic Healer focuses on a few health and wellness issues for a few races, but all the races, at all levels of government, will have an effect on the world we live in. So, we encourage you to dig deeper than this smattering of information, and cast an informed vote.

**U.S Senate**

Lindsey Graham, Incumbent (R)
- Voted to ban partial-birth abortions and prohibit transporting minors out-of-state to receive an abortion.
- Recognized by South Carolina Citizens for Life as the 2006 Legislator of the Year
- Introduced Parental Rights Legislation to safeguard our children from potentially indecent classroom content

“Flat-top” Bob Conley (D)*
- Catholic background gives him "sanctity of life" views.
- On health care, he stresses that "health care reform should focus on redirecting patients away from large corporate hospitals into small, community-run facilities. Any other federal solution will be driven by profits instead of patient care."

*http://www.ontheissues.org/senate/Bob_Conley.htm

**District 1, US House of Representatives**

Henry Brown, Incumbent (R)
- “All South Carolinians deserve access to the affordable, accessible and high quality healthcare. Unfortunately, too many hardworking Americans are forced to choose between having health insurance and paying their bills.” To this end, Brown has advocated for medical liability reform, Health Savings Accounts, and increased funding for health research.

Linda Ketner (D) - Ketner advocates revamping the health care system “to reward prevention and health rather than illness, and require basic preventive treatments to be insured.” She also advocates streamlining the health care bureaucracy, reforming laws to prevent insurance overcharging, and investing in research. “Bottom line, we must reduce the costs of healthcare to a level where we can guarantee access for every working American, but through the private sector in a way that allows people to choose their own doctor.”

**District 115, State House of Representatives (James Island)**

Anne Peterson Hutto (D)
On the environment—“We live in a truly beautiful and unique area. Anne is committed to helping keep it that way by enforcing common-sense environmental rules and conserving our natural resources.” She plans on doing this by working across the aisle and standing up to special interests.

Wallace Scarborough, Incumbent (R)
On the environment—In a 2007 interview, Scarborough said that “I need to help protect the environment along our coast and water ways as God is not making any more and we need not destroy that which he has given us.” In this regard, he points to protecting Long Island (outside James Island) and securing funding for Morris Lighthouse.

Eugene Platt (Green Party)?
Eugene Platt lost the Democratic Primary to Hutto but secured the Green Party nomination for this election. The Election Commission, under the cleverly named “sore loser” law, does not allow a loser in one party primary to enter the general election representing another party. Platt has teamed with the ACLU to challenge the constitutionality of this ruling. The case is pending. Platt’s two “critical issues” are fighting inequitable taxation “favoring the wealthy,” and protecting the district from overdevelopment.

**You talk, we listen.**

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Unless otherwise noted, all information comes from the candidates’ official websites
Opinion: I Don’t Want Health Care If Just Anyone Can Have It

By Jocelyn Chou

As a concerned citizen, I must voice my adamant disapproval of the "universal health care" proposals we've been hearing so much about. I don't have any gripes with expanding and improving health coverage, per se. It's the "universal" part that irks me. Providing health care for all would completely undermine the whole idea of health care. If every last one of the 40 million uninsured bozos in this country is going to get access to the vast, virtually unnavigable system of medical care we chosen few now enjoy, then I no longer even want it.

When hospital administrators see me flash my Blue Cross card, it means something. It tells the world, "Hey, look at me: I pay increasingly high monthly premiums, submit to annual exams, and claim any health-related expenditures over seven percent of my yearly income on my taxes, and you can't." But when this bill passes, they'll be handing out insurance cards willy-nilly, and nobody will be able to tell the difference between someone who's had health coverage for 20 years and someone whose boss was compelled by law to provide it to all full-time employees.

Health care is all about exclusivity, pure and simple. It's for a group of like-minded people bonded by the dream of only having to contribute a portion of their weekly wages to ensure unfettered access to a number of licensed health care professionals. If we change all that, health care will be about as elite as a public restroom, open to any yokel who waltzes into an emergency room and can legally establish California residency.

The only reason this is even being considered is because a majority of voters want it. Well, of course they do—they don't have it! But you don't see 33rd Degree Freemasons letting any old average citizen into their inner sanctum just because he's curious. And you won't catch me sharing my God-given right to affordable lifesaving medical procedures with every bum who's got a jones for another hepatitis vaccination. It's undignified.

After all, how do I know I've made it in this world if I'm not able to enjoy something others can't?

Lack of access to health care is the seventh leading cause of death in the country, and that says something. It doesn't get much more elite than being part of a club other people are literally dying to get into. So what incentive would there be if everyone were guaranteed equal health care, regardless of income, age, or employment status? Who would be left to proudly tell their grandchildren about the glory days of PPOs? That is a future I’d rather not imagine, thank you very much.

I urge all citizens of good sense to reject any universal health care plan that gets put forward. It's time to stand up for what's right, and protect our most respectable institutions. If we don't do it now, what will they tell us next—that everyone deserves a free public education and "the right" to a fair trial?

"Stories and opinions on this page are A. not real, and B. pilfered from www.theonion.com"