



Remarks by John McCain at his Ohio Town Hall Meeting

July 9, 2008

ARLINGTON, VA -- U.S. Senator John McCain will deliver the following remarks as prepared for delivery at a town hall meeting in Portsmouth, OH, today at 3:00 p.m. EDT:

Before I take your questions, I want to begin by talking about the issue in this campaign that Americans worry the most about -- the American economy.

All of us know what is happening to the economy. It is slowing. More than 400,000 people have lost their jobs since December, and the rate of new job creation has fallen sharply. Americans are worried about the security of their current job, and they're worried that they, their kids and their neighbors may not find good jobs and new opportunities in the future. To make matters worse, gas is over \$4 a gallon and the price of oil has almost doubled in the last year. The cost of everything from energy to food is rising.

I have a plan to grow this economy, create more and better jobs, and get America moving again. I have a plan to reform government, achieve energy security, and ensure that healthcare is available and affordable for all. I believe the role of government is to unleash the creativity, ingenuity and hard work of the American people, and make it easier to create jobs.

At its core, the economy isn't the sum of an array of bewildering statistics. It's about where Americans work, how they live, how they pay their bills today and save for tomorrow. It's about small businesses opening their doors, hiring employees and growing. It's about giving workers the education and training to find a good job and prosper in it. It's about the aspirations of the American people to build a better life for their families; dreams that begin with a job.

There are many things the next president must do to get our economy running at full strength again, and to create the good jobs Americans need. But no economic challenge today is more urgent than strategic energy independence.

Our dangerous dependence on foreign oil has been thirty years in the making, and was caused by the failure of politicians in Washington to think long term about the future of the country. By 2030, America's demand for energy will rise by nearly twenty percent. Our jobs, our way of life, and our security depend on the next President beginning to solve this challenge.

Two weeks ago, I announced the Lexington Project. This project -- named for a place where Americans asserted our independence once before -- will secure our energy future, and it will create hundreds of thousands of new jobs for Americans.

We have billions of barrels of oil available to us in the United States, and vast reserves of natural gas as well. So we will begin by producing more of both, to send a message to the market and result in lower prices for oil and gas.

We will develop more clean energy. Nuclear power is the most dependable source of zero-emission energy we have. We will build at least 45 nuclear plants that will create over 700,000 good jobs to construct and operate them.

The development of clean coal technology will create jobs in some of America's most economically disadvantaged areas. Clean coal demonstration projects alone will employ over 30,000 Americans. Ohioans get 86 percent of all their electricity from coal. Your energy future and this economy require us to find and deploy a clean coal technology.

My proposal to help automakers design and sell new generations of cars that don't depend on gasoline will re-energize that struggling industry. In the development and manufacture of hybrid, flex-fuel, and electric cars, jobs will grow at auto plants, parts manufacturers, and in the communities that support them.

My plan to develop wind and solar power and renewable technologies will drive innovation and create high tech jobs. Ohio alone has more than 60 companies in the wind turbine supply chain, and wind and solar energy can become a research mission for the state's universities, and a new focus for Ohio's manufacturing base.

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My opponent's answer to the Lexington Project is no; no to more drilling; no to more nuclear power; no to research prizes that help solve the problem of affordable electric cars. For a guy whose "official seal" carried the motto, "Yes, we can," Senator Obama's agenda sure has a whole lot of "No, we can't."

To achieve full economic recovery, we need to think as well about the leading job creators in America. Small businesses have created 233,000 jobs so far this year while other sectors are losing jobs. Small businesses are the job engine of America, and I will make it easier for them to grow and create more jobs. My opponent wants to make it harder by imposing a healthcare mandate on small business that will add a crushing \$12,000 to the cost of employing anyone with a family. That means new jobs will not be created, existing jobs will be cut, and small-business employees who keep their jobs will likely have their wages cut to pay for this mandate. My plan attacks the real problems of health care -- cost, availability and portability.

We also need to keep the IRS from taking more of your income and making life harder for small business. If you believe you should pay more taxes, I am the wrong candidate for you. Senator Obama is your man. The choice in this election is stark and simple. Senator Obama will raise your taxes. I won't, because jobs are the most important thing our economy creates. And when you raise taxes in a bad economy you eliminate jobs. I'm not going to let that happen.

If you are one of the 23 million small business owners in America who files as an individual rate payer, Senator Obama is willing to raise your tax rates. If you have an investment for your child's education or own a mutual fund or a stock in a retirement plan, your taxes could be higher. He will raise estate taxes to 45 percent. I propose to cut them to 15 percent. And for those of you with children, I will double the child deduction from \$3,500 to \$7,000 for every dependent, in every family in America.

My opponent also believes America would be better off by foregoing opportunities to sell in growing foreign markets. I disagree. Twenty-five percent of all jobs in this country are linked to world trade. In just five states -- Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin and Colorado -- over five million jobs depend on open markets. To promote job creation, I will expand foreign markets for our goods and services.

Because the vast benefits of a global marketplace come at a cost for many, we have an obligation to help our workers receive the training they need when plants close and jobs are lost. Under my reforms, we will use our community colleges to help train workers for specific opportunities in their hometowns. And for older workers who have lost a job that won't come back, if they move rapidly to a new job we'll help make up the difference in wages between their old job and the new one.

To promote job creation, we must also get government's fiscal house in order. Government has grown by 60 percent in the last eight years, because this Congress and this Administration have failed to meet their responsibilities. When I'm president, I will order a stem to stern review of government, modernize how it does business and save billions of dollars. I will veto every single bill with wasteful spending. We aren't going to continue mortgaging this country's future for things Americans don't want or need.

My opponent has a very different record on this issue. He voted for an energy bill stuffed with give-aways to oil companies at a time of record profits. I voted against it. He supported the \$300 billion pork-laden agricultural subsidy bill. I opposed it. As for earmark spending, I have never asked for a single earmark in my entire career. In his Senate career, Senator Obama has requested some \$930 million for earmark projects. That comes to more than a million dollars in pork for every working day since he became a United States Senator. There is never a good time to put your parochial and political interests above those of the nation -- and least of right now, during an economic downturn.

For many, it is a very tough time. But my friends, we've been through worse, and beaten longer odds. Even in these difficult days, we must believe in ourselves. Nothing is inevitable in America. We've always been the captains of our fate. All you've ever asked of government is that it stand on your side, not in your way. I intend to do just that: to stand on your side; to help business and not government create jobs; to fight for your future and not the personal ambitions of politicians and bureaucrats.

We have much work to do if we are to end the self-interested partisanship that prevents us from fixing problems that need to be fixed and changing government to keep this country prosperous and at peace. I make you one promise I will always keep, no matter what.

In war and peace, I have been an imperfect servant of my country. But I have been her servant first, last and always. Whenever I faced an important choice between my country's interests or my own interests, party politics or any special interest, I chose my country. Nothing has ever mattered more to me than the honor of serving America, and nothing ever will. If you elect me President, I will always put our country first. I will put its greatness; its prosperity and peace; and the hopes and concerns of the people who make it great before any personal or partisan interest. I will keep that promise every hour of every day I am in office. And I will ask you to help me convince Congress, Republicans and Democrats, to keep that promise as well. There is nothing beyond our ability to achieve. We are Americans, and we don't hide from history. We make history. All we need is to believe in ourselves as we always have, and to cherish the beautiful country we are so blessed to call

home.

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