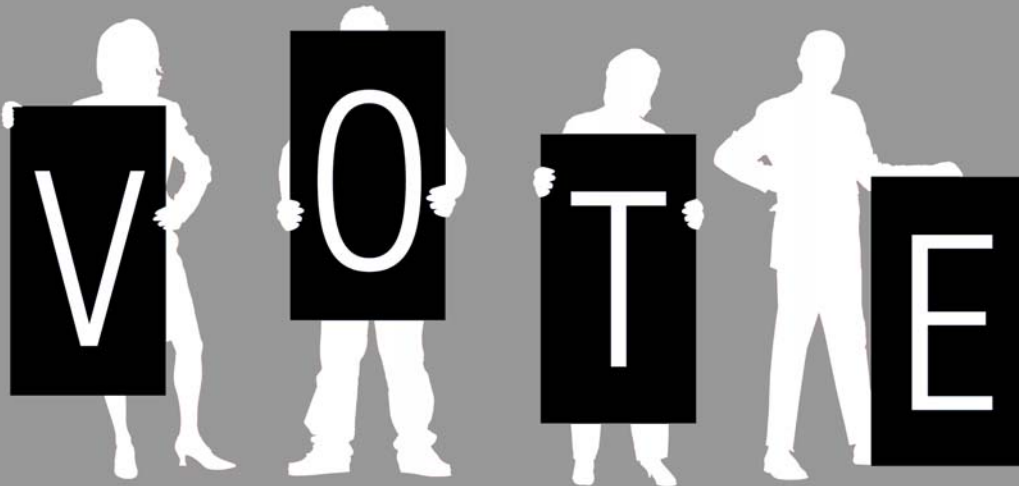




LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®  
EDUCATION FUND

# 2008 PRESIDENTIAL GENERAL ELECTION VOTERS' GUIDE

sometimes it takes a four letter word



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®

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## ABOUT THIS 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 2008 presidential election. 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 President; and 2) the candidate must qualify for the ballot in enough states to win a majority of electoral votes; and, 3) the candidate must meet 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 August 8, 2008.
2. Responses were limited to 50 words and truncated after the 50th word.

## 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. Candidates may also directly petition each state individually to gain access to the ballot. The way the voters cast their ballots for President and Vice President determines how the members of the Electoral College will vote. See box on Electoral College on page 6.

**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.

# JOHN MCCAIN



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WEB SITE: [www.johnmccain.com](http://www.johnmccain.com)

## **BIOGRAPHY:**

John McCain graduated from the Naval Academy and served for 22 years as a naval aviator. He was elected to the House of Representatives in 1982 and the Senate in 1986. He has served as chairman of the Commerce Committee and ranking member of the Armed Services Committee.

## **GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE: *What, if anything, do you believe the federal government should do to control global climate change?***

I support developing a cap-and-trade system to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 60% by 2050, providing tax credits for alternative energy, promoting zero-carbon nuclear power, reducing the federal government's carbon footprint, funding research into clean-coal technology, and offering incentives for America's automobile industry to develop electric cars.

## **COST OF HEALTH CARE: *What should be done at the federal level, if anything, to combat the high cost of health care?***

Under my plan, American families will receive \$5,000 tax credits to purchase insurance, either through employers or the private market—insurance that can follow them if they change jobs or leave the workforce. I will work for reforms to lower costs and provide coverage to Americans with pre-existing conditions.

## **ECOMONIC DISPARITY: *What, if anything, should the federal government do about the growing economic disparity between the middle class and the well-to-do?***

We must spur growth, create jobs, improve educational attainment, and enhance financial security. My plan will keep income and payroll taxes low, reduce the price of gas, double the dependent exemption, bring down health-care costs, give deserving homeowners new fixed mortgages, slash our high business taxes, and expand trade.

## **EDUCATION: *What, if anything, should the federal government do to create the world's best educational system for all children in America?***

Our education system must focus on standards, accountability, and choice. My plan calls for recruiting highly qualified teachers in the neediest communities, empowering parents to choose the best schools for their children, expanding online educational opportunities, providing low-income families with access to tutors, and funding professional development for teachers.

## **U.S. STRATEGY - RISING GLOBAL POWERS: *What should the U.S. strategy be towards rising global powers like Russia and China?***

As President, I will work to establish good relations with other nations. At the same time, I will stand up for democratic values and human rights, and I will oppose aggression and international lawlessness that threaten our security.



## RALPH NADER

WEB SITE: [www.votenader.org](http://www.votenader.org)

### **BIOGRAPHY:**

Attorney, author, and consumer advocate, named by Time Magazine one of the “100 Most Influential Americans in the 20th Century.” Over 4 decades of public service. Helped establish the OSHA, EPA, Consumer Product Safety Commission, the Safe Drinking Water Act, Motor Vehicle Safety Act, and Freedom of Information Act.

### **GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE: *What, if anything, do you believe the federal government should do to control global climate change?***

The government should stop subsidizing fossil fuels: oil, electric and coal mining interests. Invest in renewable energy that is efficient, sustainable, and environmentally friendly: wind and solar power. Encourage more efficient automobiles, homes and businesses. Ratify the Kyoto Protocol. Create an independent Oceanic Protection Agency. Adopt a carbon pollution tax.

### **COST OF HEALTH CARE: *What should be done at the federal level, if anything, to combat the high cost of health care?***

Adopt a private delivery, free choice of hospital and doctor, single payer public health insurance system. This would save \$350 billion annually by eliminating exorbitant executive pay, advertising, computerized billing fraud and abuse, and apply those savings to comprehensively cover everyone without increasing taxpayer costs. Lower costs through bulk purchasing.

### **ECONOMIC DISPARITY: *What, if anything, should the federal government do about the growing economic disparity between the middle class and the well-to-do?***

Unfair legislation allows the middle class to suffer while the rich entrench their status. To correct this we should enact a living \$10 wage, adopt a fair tax, and provide equal pay for women. We must end corporate subsidies and bailouts. Repeal NAFTA and the anti-union Taft/Hartley Law.

### **EDUCATION: *What, if anything, should the federal government do to create the world’s best educational system for all children in America?***

Increase civic education and decrease standardized testing. Repeal “No Child Left Behind” Act. Do not tie test performance to school funding. Provide full funding for pre-school and nutrition programs. Get product marketing out of the schools. Ensure that the nation’s crumbling schools are repaired within 3 years.

### **U.S. STRATEGY - RISING GLOBAL POWERS: *What should the U.S. strategy be towards rising global powers like Russia and China?***

The US should be a humanitarian superpower. Our foreign policy must redefine global security, peace, arms control, an end to nuclear weapons and expand the many assets of our country to assist with major initiatives against global infectious diseases. Stop support of foreign dictators. Human rights come before trade, profit.

# BARACK OBAMA



**WEB SITE:** [www.barackobama.com](http://www.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.

## **GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE:** *What, if anything, do you believe the federal government should do to control global climate change?*

I believe the federal government should pursue multiple paths to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and address the threat of global climate change, including implementing aggressive cap and trade requirements to reduce U.S. emissions by 80% from 1990 levels and investing heavily in clean energy and advanced vehicle technologies.

## **COST OF HEALTH CARE:** *What should be done at the federal level, if anything, to combat the high cost of health care?*

My healthcare plan will make aggressive investments in cost-cutting technologies and will place more focus on prevention and chronic care management. The net result will be to bring down the costs of healthcare spending by \$2,500 for a typical family, annually, and lower the expense of Medicare's services.

## **ECOMONIC DISPARITY:** *What, if anything, should the federal government do about the growing economic disparity between the middle class and the well-to-do?*

I will cut taxes for the middle class and roll back some of the Bush tax cuts for those making over \$250,000 to restore fairness to the tax code. I will make long term public investments in R&D, clean energy, infrastructure, and manufacturing to create millions of good-paying jobs.

## **EDUCATION:** *What, if anything, should the federal government do to create the world's best educational system for all children in America?*

I will strengthen public schools by expanding early childhood education, reforming and funding No Child Left Behind, recruiting and rewarding high-quality teachers, and expanding afterschool and summer learning opportunities. I will create a \$4,000 American Opportunity Tax Credit and expand financial aid to make higher education affordable for all.

## **U.S. STRATEGY - RISING GLOBAL POWERS:** *What should the U.S. strategy be towards rising global powers like Russia and China?*

We must enhance our abilities both to collaborate and compete with China, while being vigilant about China's military modernization and respect for human rights. As we seek a future of clear-eyed engagement with Russia, we must ensure Russia acts as a force for progress, not regression to past conflicts.

# ELECTORAL COLLEGE

The Electoral College was established by the founding fathers as a compromise between election of the president by Congress and election by popular vote. Voters actually cast their ballot for electors who then vote for the President and Vice President. Every four years, the 538 members of the Electoral College, a little known feature of our Constitution, meet in their respective states to perform their sole constitutional function: to elect the President and Vice-President of the United States. Under the Electoral College system, almost all of the states award their electoral votes on a winner-take-all basis, so that the candidate who receives the most popular votes in a state receives all of that state's electoral votes. Two ballots are taken, with each elector casting one vote for the President and one for the Vice-President. Electors almost always vote for the candidates to whom they have been pledged. However, the Constitution does not bind them to do so.

**THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS IS WHERE HANDS ON WORK TO SAFEGUARD DEMOCRACY LEADS TO CIVIC IMPROVEMENT. LEARN MORE AT [WWW.LWV.ORG](http://WWW.LWV.ORG) AND [WWW.VOTE411.ORG](http://WWW.VOTE411.ORG).**

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ELECTION INFORMATION YOU NEED

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