

FEATURE

# Decision Time Draws Near Where Do the Candidates Stand On Key Issues?

To help the community make an informed decision on Election Day, here is a side-by-side comparison of where the two main presidential candidates stand on select issues.

The information is taken from the candidates' Web sites, their public statements, and their voting records in the Senate as of September 1. It does not cover the candidates' entire policy proposals. For more details, visit [www.johnmccain.com](http://www.johnmccain.com) and [www.barackobama.com](http://www.barackobama.com).



## John McCain



### EDUCATION

- Supports extending and strengthening No Child Left Behind.
- Would raise standards for Head Start teachers.
- Has a plan to recruit, prepare, retain, and reward teachers that includes performance bonuses.
- Supports greater school choice, including the option of private and charter schools.
- Supports giving principals more control over spending.
- Supports simplifying higher education tax benefits.
- Would provide more money to community colleges to set aside for displaced or unemployed workers.

### ENERGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

- Supports a carbon emissions cap-and-trade system with a goal of reducing emissions 60% below 1990 levels by 2050.
- Supports lifting the ban on offshore drilling.
- Opposes drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.
- Would commit \$2 billion annually to advance clean coal technologies.
- Would offer a \$300 million prize for producing battery technology for full commercial development of plug-in hybrid and fully electric automobiles.
- Would raise penalties that automakers pay for violating fuel economy standards.
- Calls on automakers to make a more rapid and complete switch to flex-fuel vehicles.
- Supports a one-time suspension of the 18.4% federal gas tax.
- Would offer a \$5,000 tax credit for the purchase of a zero-emissions car.
- Proposes a goal to build 45 new nuclear power plants by 2030 and supports a nuclear waste storage site at Yucca Mountain in Nevada.
- Proposes tax credits to encourage the market for alternative fuels such as wind, hydro, and solar power.

### HEALTH CARE

- Opposes a national health insurance mandate.
- Wants to strengthen the individual health insurance market by giving a \$2,500 direct refundable tax credit to individuals and \$5,000 to families to offset the cost of insurance. Tax incentives for employer-sponsored health coverage would be eliminated.
- Would make available Subsidized Guaranteed Access Plans to those with preexisting conditions and others who have trouble finding coverage in the individual market.
- Supports broad adoption of health information technology and expansion of Health Savings Accounts.
- Supports association health plans, which would allow small businesses to band together across state lines to purchase health insurance.
- Calls for safe reimportation of drugs and faster introduction of generic drugs. Supports medical liability reform.

### IMMIGRATION

- Co-authored with Sen. Kennedy (D-MA) legislation creating a pathway to citizenship for undocumented workers, a temporary guest worker program, and a new electronic employment verification system with tougher penalties for employers that knowingly hire unauthorized workers.
- Supports securing the nation's borders first and requiring governors of border states to certify that their borders are secure before addressing other areas of comprehensive immigration reform.
- Voted to authorize construction of a 700-mile fence along the U.S.-Mexico border.

### LABOR AND WORKFORCE REGULATIONS

- Voted against card check legislation, which would allow unions to organize workers by having them sign a card in the presence of labor officials, instead of voting by private ballot.
- Supported the invalidation of the Clinton-era ergonomics regulation.

### TAXES

- Would make the 2001 and 2003 tax cuts permanent for all households.
- Would cut the corporate tax rate from 35% to 25%.
- Would raise the federal death tax exemption to \$5 million (\$10 million for married couples) and cut the rate to 15%.
- Supports maintaining a 15% tax on capital gains and dividend income.
- Wants to establish a permanent tax credit for research and development.
- Wants to phase out the alternative minimum tax (AMT) completely.
- Would keep the top income tax rate at 35%.
- Proposes to raise the personal exemption for each dependent from \$3,500 to \$7,000.
- Would allow first-year deduction, or "expensing," of equipment and technology investments.
- Would allow taxpayers to choose between the current tax system or a less complicated one with two tax rates and a generous standard deduction.
- Would seek a permanent ban on Internet taxes.

- Would overhaul No Child Left Behind to change how students are assessed and would provide support to schools that need improvement.
- Would create early learning challenge grants to promote state "zero to five" efforts and help states move toward voluntary, universal preschool.
- Would quadruple Early Head Start and spend \$10 billion to boost slots and quality at Head Start programs.
- Supports school choice within public education.
- Has a plan to recruit, prepare, retain, and reward teachers that includes pay increases.
- Proposes a tax credit of up to \$4,000 for higher education tuition in exchange for community service.
- Would provide community colleges with additional grants.

- Supports a carbon emissions cap-and-trade system with a goal of reducing emissions 80% below 1990 levels by 2050.
- Supports lifting the ban on offshore drilling only as part of a compromise energy policy.
- Opposes drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.
- Would tap the Strategic Oil Reserve to cut gasoline prices.
- Backs a windfall profits tax on oil companies.
- Proposes giving American families an immediate \$1,000 emergency energy rebate.
- Proposes spending \$150 billion over 10 years to spur private efforts to develop renewable energy sources.
- Would create public-private partnerships to develop five "first-of-a-kind" commercial scale coal-fired plants with clean carbon capture and sequestration technology.
- Would double fleet-wide fuel economy standards by 2028 and provide \$4 billion in credits and loans to domestic automakers to help reach those standards.
- Would require 10% of electricity to come from renewable sources by 2012 and 25% by 2025.
- Opposes a suspension of the federal gas tax.
- Wants to put 1 million plug-in hybrids on the road by 2015 and create a new \$7,000 tax credit for the purchase of clean-fuel vehicles.
- Opposes storing nuclear waste at Yucca Mountain in Nevada.

- Would create a new public health insurance program for individuals who do not have employer-provided health care and who do not qualify for other existing federal programs. Existing federal health insurance programs would be expanded.
- Would mandate health insurance coverage for people up to age 25.
- Would require large employers that do not provide health coverage for employees to pay into the national health insurance program.
- Would provide some small businesses with a refundable tax credit of up to 50% on what they spend on employee health insurance premiums.
- Would create a national health insurance exchange to help more people find private insurance plans. These plans would have to meet a number of requirements to participate in the exchange.
- Supports broad adoption of health information technology.
- Supports safe reimportation of drugs from developed nations and would prohibit efforts to keep generics out of the market. Would allow the government to set Medicare drug prices.
- Supports insurance coverage for serious mental illnesses on the same terms and conditions as other illnesses.

- Co-authored an amendment to the McCain/Kennedy immigration bill that would have created a new electronic employment eligibility verification system and tougher penalties for employers that knowingly hire unauthorized workers.
- Supports creating a pathway to citizenship for undocumented workers and a temporary guest worker program.
- Voted to authorize construction of a 700-mile fence along the U.S.-Mexico border.

- Co-sponsored card check legislation, which would allow unions to organize workers by having them sign a card in the presence of union officials, instead of voting by private ballot.
- Would expand the Family and Medical Leave Act to apply to businesses with 25 or more employees. Would also expand the scope of the law to allow workers to take leave for elder care needs and to address domestic violence as well as let parents take up to 24 hours of leave each year to participate in their children's academic activities.
- Would encourage states to pass mandated paid sick leave.
- Proposes to raise the minimum wage and index it to inflation.

- Would repeal the 2001 and 2003 tax cuts for those making more than \$250,000 a year.
- Would repeal tax breaks and loopholes for companies that retain their earnings overseas and use those funds to lower the corporate tax rate on companies that expand or start operations in the United States.
- Would provide a tax credit of up to \$500 per person or \$1,000 for working families.
- Would eliminate taxes for seniors making less than \$50,000 per year.
- Would freeze the federal death tax exemption at \$3.5 million (\$7 million for married couples) and maintain a top tax rate of 45%.
- Proposes to increase taxes on capital gains and dividend income to 20% for individuals and families making more than \$200,000 and \$250,000 per year, respectively.
- Would triple the Earned Income Tax Credit for minimum wage workers.
- Would adjust, but not phase out, the alternative minimum tax (AMT).
- Wants to establish a permanent tax credit for research and development.
- Would raise the top two income tax rates from 33% and 35% to 36% and 39.6%, respectively.
- Would impose an unspecified Social Security payroll tax on earnings above \$250,000 beginning in 10 years. (Currently, earnings of up to \$102,000 are subject to payroll taxes.) Would eliminate all capital gains taxes on start-up and small businesses.