

WWE: THE 18-30 VOTER ISSUES PAPER

JOHN MCCAIN RESPONSE

ECONOMY

- ***What specific legislative proposal will you support to ensure that jobs that pay a living wage are available domestically for America's younger generation?***

The best way to help ensure that Americans have quality jobs in the future is to pursue a pro-growth agenda so that businesses grow and hire more people. Lower taxes and less regulation will unleash the private sector to grow. As president, John McCain will send to Congress a proposal to cut the taxes on America's business, from a rate of 35 to 25 percent. As it is, we have the second-highest tax on business in the industrialized world. High tax rates are driving many businesses and jobs overseas -- and, of course, our foreign competitors wouldn't mind if we kept it that way. As president, John McCain will help fix this drag on growth and job creation, and help American workers compete with any company in the world.

- ***What sectors do you perceive as being "high growth" areas for job creation for young adults?***

John McCain sees great growth in green technologies and alternative energies that will be essential to our energy strategy for the 21st century. Senator McCain will also do everything he can to ensure that other high-growth industries develop as he believes the United States needs a farsighted and fervent commitment to advancing technology, which is the key to U.S. competitiveness. He will ensure that economic policy encourages the conditions necessary for innovation markets to thrive: the availability of risk capital; low taxes and sound incentives for entrepreneurs; a regulatory environment that is not too burdensome, supports risk-taking and rewards innovators; adequate support for basic research; and labor market policies that lead to a highly-skilled workforce.

- ***With many young adults believing Social Security will not be available once they retire, what is being done now so that members of the next generation will be able to meet their financial obligations when they retire?***

No government program is the object of more political posturing and spin than Social Security. Americans have the right to know the truth, no matter how bad it is. The current Social Security system is unsustainable. A half century ago, sixteen American workers supported every retiree.

Today, it's just three. Soon, it will be only two. If we don't make some tough choices, Social Security either won't be there for our children and grandchildren or we will have had to raise taxes so dramatically to support them that we will have crushed the prosperity of average Americans. John McCain will fight to save the future of Social Security and believes that we may meet our obligations to the retirees of today and the future without raising taxes. John McCain supports supplementing the current Social Security system with personal accounts -- but not as a substitute for addressing benefit promises that cannot be kept. John McCain will reach across the aisle, but if the Democrats do not act, he will. No problem is in more need of honesty than the looming financial challenges of entitlement programs. Americans have the right to know the truth and John McCain will not leave office without fixing the problems that threaten our future prosperity and power. He'll submit a plan to save Social Security and Medicare, and ask Congress to do the same. He'll work on a bipartisan basis to make the hard choices; to protect the retirement security of the American worker, and the growth of the American economy. And if Congress is afraid to make those choices, then they can just let him do it. He'll take the heat. He'll ask Congress to let him submit a comprehensive proposal. He'll prepare it carefully, fairly and honestly. And they can vote yes or no: no amendments; no filibuster; no tricks: no band-aid solutions; no more kicking the can down the road as the problem becomes harder and more expensive to solve; no more hoping that a future generation of leaders will have the courage we lack.

- ***Because young adults have expressed concern that federal, state and local taxes are too high, what tax reforms would you offer to address this concern?***

John McCain has been fighting for low and fair taxes for over 20 years. He will maintain the current income and investment tax rates and fight the Democrats' plans for a crippling tax increase in 2011. John McCain will permanently repeal the Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT), an onerous tax that threatens 25 million middle class families who were never intended to pay it. John McCain believes the tax code should be less of a burden on those, whether they are mothers and fathers or single parents, who are trying to raise a family. He proposes to raise the personal exemption for each dependent from \$3,500 to \$7,000. He will also ban internet taxes, and new cell phone taxes. John McCain will also propose an alternative new and simpler tax system, and give America a real choice between our current tax code that costs Americans \$140 billion just to figure out, and a system that is simpler, flatter, and fair. Finally, John McCain will protect the American people against future tax increases by requiring a three-fifths majority in Congress to raise taxes.

- ***What policies and legislation will you promote to help 18-30 year olds achieve greater financial planning and security, and to help those who are living paycheck to paycheck get out of that cycle?***

John McCain believes we must promote savings among all Americans. Low taxes on dividends and capital gains promote saving, and John McCain will keep the current rates on dividends and capital gains and fight anti-growth efforts by Democrats to raise them.

- ***How would you describe the current status of health care in America? How will you tackle the challenge of providing all young adults with access to affordable health care?***

The problems with health care are well known: it is too expensive and 47 million people living in the United States lack health insurance. John McCain believes the key to health care reform is to restore control to the patients themselves. We want a system of health care in which everyone can afford and acquire the treatment and preventative care they need. Health care should be available to all and not limited by where you work or how much you make. Families should be in charge of their health care dollars and have more control over care.

John McCain will reform health care, making it easier for both individuals and families to obtain insurance. An important part of his plan is to use competition to improve the quality of health insurance with greater variety to match people's needs, lower prices, and portability. Families should be able to purchase health insurance nationwide, across state lines.

John McCain will reform the tax code to offer more choices beyond employer-based health insurance coverage. While still having the option of employer-based coverage, every family will also have the option of receiving a direct refundable tax credit - effectively cash - of \$2,500 for individuals and \$5,000 for families to offset the cost of insurance. Families will be able to choose the insurance provider that suits them best and the money would be sent directly to the insurance provider. Those obtaining innovative insurance that costs less than the credit can deposit the remainder in expanded Health Savings Accounts.

- ***What responsibility do employers have to assist in addressing the current health care dilemma for 18-30 year olds, particularly for young adults who are hired as short or long-term temp workers as they start their careers?***

Americans need new choices beyond those offered in employment-based coverage. They want a reformed system so that wherever you go and wherever you work, your health plan goes with you. John McCain offers a very straightforward way to achieve this.

Under current law, the federal government gives a tax benefit when employers provide health-insurance coverage to American workers and their families. This benefit doesn't cover the total cost of the health plan, and in reality each worker and family absorbs the rest of the cost in lower wages and diminished benefits. But it provides essential support for insurance coverage. Many workers are perfectly content with this arrangement, and under John McCain's reform plan they would be able to keep that coverage. Their employer-provided health plans would be largely untouched and unchanged.

But for every American who wanted it, another option would be available under John McCain's plan: Every year, they would receive a tax credit directly, with the same cash value of the credits for employees in big companies, in a small business, or self-employed. You simply choose the insurance provider that suits you best. By mail or online, you would then inform the government of your selection. And the money to help pay for your health care would be sent straight to that insurance provider. The health plan you chose would be as good as any that an employer could choose for you. And if a church or professional organization wishes to sponsor insurance for its members, they should be able to do so. The bottom line: Health insurance would be yours and your family's health-care plan to keep without worrying that it will go away along with your job.

- ***What should the government do, if anything, to ensure that every American has health coverage?***

The biggest problem with the American health-care system is one of cost and access, and as a result tens of millions of individuals have no insurance. For example, we currently spend about 2.4 trillion dollars a year on health care. A decade from now that number, under current projections, will double to over four trillion dollars.

The Obama and Clinton response to these problems is to promise universal coverage, whatever its cost, and the massive tax increases, mandates, and government regulation that it imposes. But in the end this will accomplish one thing only. Under their plans, we will replace the inefficiency, irrationality, and uncontrolled costs of the current system with the inefficiency, irrationality, and uncontrolled costs of a government monopoly. We'll have all the problems, and more, of private health care — rigid rules, long waits, and lack of choices, and risk degrading its great strengths and advantages including the innovation and life-saving technology that make American medicine the most advanced in the world.

John McCain has a different approach. He believes the key to real reform is to restore control over our health-care system to the patients themselves. To that end, his reforms are built on the pursuit of three goals: paying only for quality medical care, having insurance choices that are diverse and responsive to individual needs, and restoring our sense of personal responsibility.

EDUCATION

- ***What role do you believe the government should play in making higher education more accessible and affordable?***

The federal government has an important role in aiding those students not able to meeting the financial hurdle of college education. Federal grants and loans should be targeted toward those with genuine need for assistance. Moreover, it is imperative that the federal government be good stewards of this money, operating programs without waste, favoritism or loss of integrity. In the short term, students face the possibility that the credit crunch will disrupt loans for the fall semester. John McCain has called on the federal government and the 50 governors to anticipate problems and expand the lender-of-last resort capabilities for each state's guarantee agency.

- ***In light of the struggle to pay for college, what will you do to make it easier for young adults to attend college or graduate school without accumulating unmanageable debt?***

John McCain believes that the college experience is essential to empowering the next generation, which is why he believes we must ensure aid to students not able to meet the financial hurdle of college education. John McCain is committed to ensuring the integrity of federal student aid programs to assure access to low-interest loans to college students. In addition, he is proud to support rewarding national service with education benefits to help those who have served causes greater than their own self interest with meeting the financial obligations of higher education.

- ***What policies will you promote to help better prepare high school students for college or for entering the workforce?***

John McCain will prepare the next generation of workers by making American education worthy of the promise we make to our children and ourselves. We must be a nation committed to competitiveness and opportunity. We must fight for the ability of all students to have access to any school of demonstrated excellence. We must place parents and children at the center of the education process, empowering parents by greatly expanding the ability of parents to choose among schools for their children.

- ***What skills and training can help U.S. workers stay competitive in a global economy?***

John McCain will work with Congress and the states to overhaul unemployment insurance and make it a program for retraining, relocating and assisting workers who have lost a job that's not coming back to find a job that won't go away. He would replace our outmoded and redundant training programs with a single system. His plan will draw on the great strengths of America's community colleges, applying the funds from federal training accounts to give workers of every age a fresh start with new skills and new opportunities. We must also assure that America's students receive the education they need to compete in the workforce of tomorrow. John McCain believes we can start right now by improving the accountability of public education at the primary and secondary level, allowing competition, and helping provide parents with choices for their children's education. The better educated Americans are, the more capable they will be of adjusting to and benefiting from economic change.

John McCain knows we will not compete successfully by using old technology to produce old goods. We will succeed by knowing what to produce and continuously inventing new technologies to produce it. America has the world's best entrepreneurs, innovators, inventors and workers. That's why our advantages in the global marketplace have never been better. John McCain knows an educated work force equipped with American technology will out compete anyone. When our education and training programs match our technology, our country will move ahead, and no American worker will be left behind.

IRAQ & WAR ON TERRORISM

- ***What steps would you support for withdrawing U.S. troops from Iraq and why?***

Americans are fighting bravely in battles that are as dangerous, difficult and consequential as the great battles of our armed forces' storied past. In Iraq, John McCain knows the war has not gone well, and the American people have grown tired of it. He too has been made sick at heart by the many mistakes made by civilian and military commanders and the terrible price we have paid for them. He wants our troops home too, but he wants our troops to return home with honor and in victory. We cannot react to past mistakes by embracing calls to begin troop withdrawals or to revive our previous failed strategy of a partial troop pullback that will be an even greater mistake, a mistake of colossal historical proportions, which will seriously weaken American security.

Critics say that the "surge" of troops isn't a solution in itself, that we must make progress toward Iraqi self-sufficiency. John McCain agrees. Iraqis themselves must increasingly take responsibility for their own security, and they must become responsible political actors. It does not follow from this, however, that we should now recklessly retreat from Iraq regardless of the consequences. We must take the course of prudence and responsibility, and help Iraqis move closer to the day when they no longer need our help.

That is the route of responsible statesmanship. John McCain believes we have incurred a moral responsibility in Iraq. It would be an unconscionable act of betrayal, a stain on our character as a great nation, if we were to walk away from the Iraqi people and consign them to the horrendous violence, ethnic cleansing, and possibly genocide that would follow a reckless, irresponsible, and premature withdrawal.

- ***Before U.S. troops leave Iraq, what structure needs to be in place to ensure stability in Iraq?***

The job of bringing security to Iraq is not finished, and considerable challenges remain before stability in Iraq can be assured. But there is no doubt about the basic reality in Iraq: we are no longer staring into the abyss of defeat, and we can now look ahead to the genuine prospect of success. John McCain believes that success in Iraq is the establishment of a generally peaceful, stable, prosperous, democratic state that poses no threat to its neighbors and contributes to the defeat of terrorists. It is the advance of religious tolerance over violent radicalism. It is a level of security that allows the Iraqi authorities to govern, the average person to live a normal life, and international entities to operate. It is a situation in which the rule of law, after decades of tyranny, takes hold. It is an Iraq where Iraqi forces have the responsibility for enforcing security in their country, and where American troops can return home, with the honor of having secured their country's interests at great personal cost, and helping another people achieve peace and self-determination.

Today these goals are within reach. "Never despair," Winston Churchill once said. And we did not despair. We were tested, and we rose to the challenge. Some political leaders close their eyes to the progress that the surge has made possible, and want only to argue about the past. We can have that debate. John McCain profoundly disagrees with those who say we would all be better off if we had left Saddam Hussein in power. Americans should be proud that they led the way in

removing a vicious dictator and opening the door to freedom, stability, and prosperity in Iraq and across the Middle East.

But the question for the next President is not about the past, but about the future and how to secure it. Our most vital security interests are at stake in Iraq. The stability of the entire Middle East, that volatile and critically important region, is at stake. The United States' credibility as a moral and political leader is at stake. How to safeguard those interests is what we should be debating.

- ***How will you balance the continuing costs of the war in Iraq with the costs of domestic policy needs?***

As president, John McCain will take all his responsibilities to the American people seriously. But he would have one responsibility that would outweigh all the others, and that is to protect the security of this great nation from all enemies. The defense of our nation against a determined enemy is a national priority that must be funded accordingly. However, by enforcing fiscal discipline, John McCain believes we can meet our obligations, both domestically and abroad, by eliminating wasteful spending and ensuring that discretionary spending is going where it belongs -- to essential priorities like the security of our citizens, job training, and the care of our veterans.

- ***What recruitment and retention measures do you support to ensure our military maintains adequate personnel levels?***

We are a nation at war, and we have asked of our men and women of the armed forces an almost unprecedented level of commitment and sacrifice. Extended deployments and back-to-back combat tours have, unfortunately, become the standard rather than the exception so that we can effectively prosecute operations against our enemies -- such as Gen. Petraeus and our brave troops are now doing in Iraq. For many years, John McCain has been calling for a larger ground force so we would not have to resort to such extended, yet necessary, deployments. Moreover, while our nation can never truly repay the debt owed to the brave men and women in its armed services, he believes we must strive to assure they receive the compensation they deserve, which is why he recently supported an across-the-board pay raise for our military. He believes these approaches will buttress an effective recruitment and retention effort.

- ***What actions do you support to stabilize U.S. relations with Iran?***

John McCain believes the U.S. should continue to pressure Iran to give up its nuclear ambitions and oppose its efforts to dominate the region. Iran has a record of hostility toward the U.S., has sponsored terrorist attacks that have killed Americans, and is supporting forces in Iraq that have killed American soldiers. While all options to stop Iran's nuclear ambitions must remain on the table, there is much more the U.S. and our allies can do short of military force: increasing the cost of doing business in Iran, investigating firms that invest in Iran, divesting from Iran, tightening economic and financial sanctions, and support for the vast majority of Iranians who wish to live under a different government.

The U.S. should also privatize the sanctions effort by launching a disinvestment campaign. By persuading individuals, pension funds, and financial institutions to divest from companies doing business with Iran, we can isolate and delegitimize a hostile government. John McCain is

committed to increase the level debate inside the country about whether the present course serves the interests of the Iranian people or merely those of a misguided elite. Americans and all proponents of freedom need to reassure the millions of Iranians who aspire to self-determination that we support their longing for freedom and democracy. There is much more we can and should do to translate such support into concrete action.

THE ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY POLICY

• *What steps will you take in order to ensure that our environment will be protected for future generations?*

Among John McCain's highest priorities will be working with Congress, national, state, and local leaders, and the full range of stakeholders to promote U.S. energy security and implement a national market-based cap and trade system tailored to protect the nation's economic, environmental, and national security. As part of this initiative, John McCain will use the powers of the presidency to see that the international community, including China and India, fulfill its obligations to address climate change in a manner that will effectively protect the global environment and our economy. He will institute federal policies to help achieve an energy mix that is far more diverse, dependable, economical, clean, and sustainable. Another of his top objectives will be to draw into his administration the most qualified individuals in our country to fill key cabinet and other positions in these vital policy areas.

John McCain's priorities on environmental issues outside of energy and global warming will be: improving management of the nation's wetlands, fisheries and ocean ecosystems; improving the care and maintenance of our national parks; instituting executive policies and procedures to ensure that policy and rule making in his administration is based on merit, public interest, sound science, cost-benefit, and the faithful execution of the law; improving efforts to provide the clean water that Americans need and deserve, and submitting a budget that reflects responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars and the environment—a budget which emphasizes legitimate environmental priorities, and eliminates pork barrel spending that mistreats taxpayers and the environment.

• *What are your thoughts on global warming and its growing impact? How do you plan to address this issue?*

The issue of climate change is one of the most important issues facing our nation and the world today. Accordingly, John McCain believes that the next President of the United States, working with Congress, has an obligation to act. The environmental and economic threat posed by climate change is enormous, as are the stakes of how well we deal with the problem. Clearly, the quality of our response to this challenge will heavily influence the safety, security, and prosperity of our country for many decades to come.

John McCain believes we should pursue a market-based, cap-and-trade system to achieve appropriate limits on greenhouse gas emissions as efficiently and effectively as possible. He will ensure that such a system is employed as a means of diversifying the nation's energy mix, which, in turn, will make us less dependent on foreign oil, and place America at the forefront of developing energy and environmental protection technologies that the world will demand for many years to come. He will also ensure that these efforts meet several key tests, including protecting consumers and the economy, preventing other countries from dodging their

responsibilities, promoting the development and deployment of advanced technology, and prioritizing America's economic, environmental, and national-security interests.

• ***What will you do to address factors that are detrimental to the environment, such as pollution and a potential energy crisis?***

As President of the United States, John McCain would ensure that the Clean Air Act is vigorously enforced, that the national air quality standards are based on sound economic and environmental science, and comply fully with the requirements of the law to protect human health and the environment.

He believe in the "polluter pays" concept, but we should be careful to ensure that the term "polluter" is defined as those who actually pollute, not those simply in a business with the potential to do so because of irresponsible or negligent action. Polluted sites that pose a threat to human health and the environment must be cleaned. As President, he will work to ensure that parties responsible for polluted sites are made to pay the bill. In cases where no responsible party can be found and held accountable in a timely fashion, then he will see that ample resources are available to address threats to human health and the environment, efficiently and expeditiously.

The Clean Water Act is one of our most successful environmental laws. Wetlands are a vital component of our natural aquatic ecosystems and should be recognized as such. Among other benefits, they play an important role in mitigating floods, provide key habitat for a variety of flora and fauna, and naturally purify waters around them. John McCain supports wetlands protection, and as President he will work to develop a wetlands policy that provides necessary protection of our aquatic resources, builds strong and lasting partnerships, and respects local conditions and needs.

John McCain also believes that strengthening our energy security goes hand-in-hand with addressing global climate change, which he believes is real with human activity contributing to the buildup of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. He is proud to support a market based, cap-and-trade system to achieve appropriate limits on greenhouse gas emissions, while diversifying our energy supply away from foreign oil, as efficiently and effectively as possible.

• ***What measures do you support to address our country's dependence on foreign oil? What should be done, if anything, by the government to reduce our use of and dependence on fossil fuels?***

John McCain will also deliver a national energy strategy that declares independence from the risk bred by our reliance on oil imported from petro-dictators the vulnerability to the troubled politics of their lands. John McCain is a proven conservative, and his strategy will not rely on subsidies, rifle-shot tax breaks, line-items for lobbyists, or big-government debacles. It will promote the diversification and conservation of our energy sources and substantially reduce the impact of our energy consumption on the planet. It will rely on the genius and technological prowess of American industry and science. Government must set achievable goals, but the markets should be free to produce the means.

Fuel efficiency standards can play a significant role in reducing our dependence on foreign oil and improving the nation's air quality, and the production of more fuel-efficient cars may also help the America's automobile manufacturing industry to compete more successfully both at home and abroad. Energy diversity and fuel efficiency can and should be improved. As President John

McCain will work with Congress and all stakeholders to see that achievable and appropriate standards are put into place that will optimize advances in technology, protect auto safety, meet family needs and consumer demands, promote the nation's energy security, and help our industry compete in a global economy. He believes that the use of advanced materials and other technologies including alternatively fueled vehicles, flexibly fueled vehicles, and plug-in hybrid vehicles can help us meet our objectives successfully. He has supported CAFE standards in the past and will continue to work to increase CAFE standards to a level that is practical and achievable for all new vehicles, foreign and domestic, because improved fuel economy will help our nation achieve national energy security, reduce carbon emissions, and improve local and regional air quality.