

[translated from Korean]

**“Why I Changed from Clinton to Obama,”**  
**Op-Ed by Prof. Grace Yoo**  
**Korea Daily, Feb. 22, 2008.**

I normally do not get involved in politics. But this election year has electrified me. I have reached out to my family and friends throughout the United States including many of my Korean immigrant aunts, uncles, in-laws and second generation Korean American cousins.

This 2008 election is important for Korean Americans to voice. Asian-Americans now constitute 14 million people, or nearly 5% of the U.S. population. In states like California, New York, New Jersey, Hawaii and Texas, Asian-Americans continue to play a pivotal role in deciding the winner of both primary and general elections. Finally, politicians are beginning to understand how the growing voting bloc of all Asian-Americans, including registered Korean-American voters, is important to the outcome of national elections. This is an exciting time and opportunity for all Korean-Americans to make a difference in carefully evaluating and selecting the next President.

Because what I have found in my research on Korean immigrants, health care access and disparities in care, I support the Democratic nominees in this Presidential election because both candidates address the need for health care access and the gaps in health care access that so many Korean and other ethnic minority immigrants face. Like so many of you, I was leaning towards Hillary Clinton because of her focus on healthcare policy, but, more recently, I have seen what we need. Our country needs Barack Obama. The key difference in his approach that I prefer over Clinton’s approach to healthcare is that Obama’s health care plan is about affordability. Clinton mandates that everyone purchase health insurance with little regard to affordability and quality of plan. Obama’s health care plan is about affordability which truly gives uninsured Americans options.

Korean Americans have one of the highest uninsured rates compared to any racial/ethnic group in the U.S. Even when Korean immigrants purchase health insurance, high deductibles prevent many from actually using their health plan. Health insurance is merely used for emergency purposes. Health care access is a crisis for many immigrant Korean Americans families in the U.S. I believe Obama’s approach to solving this healthcare crisis is better because he offers a health plan that would be affordable for hard-working Korean Americans, especially for many in our community who are small business owners.

In addition to his better approach to solving the healthcare problems that plague so many immigrant families, Sen. Obama represents for so many of our communities the true American Dream. Barack Obama, the son of a Kenyan immigrant, symbolically represents why so many Korean immigrants have come to this country – for change and for opportunity. Unlike the Clintons, Obama is not part of the democratic establishment. His candidacy represents the hard-

fought struggles and collective grassroots efforts of everyday individuals. Unlike the Clintons, he does not bring the scandals of the past to his Presidency. As demonstrated by his ability to woo the majority of both white and black Americans, Obama brings healing and unity across so many political divisions and racial divisions. Having been raised in Hawaii and Indonesia, I also believe Obama has the understanding of what it takes to work internationally and cross-culturally. I have hope he can bring peace and an end to the Iraq war.

We are at a time of major change and each of US can make a DIFFERENCE in this year's election. Vote for change. Vote for Obama.

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