

# 'I will be a President who draws upon the energy and expertise of the Indian-American community'

**T**his is a defining moment. Our nation is at war. Our planet is in peril. Our American dream is slipping away. That is why, in this election, it is not enough to simply change parties in the White House. We have to fundamentally change our politics if we are going to make progress on the great challenges we face.

I am running for President of the United States to offer the American people fundamental change – change that they can believe in. Instead of continuing the same old divisive fights in Washington that are more about scoring political points than solving problems, we need leadership that inspires, energizes, and mobilizes the American people behind a common purpose. That's how we're finally going to build a new majority for change that can win in November, and pass a policy agenda that protects America's national security, and advances the American dream for our citizens.

This kind of change will require the active participation of the American people. And as President, I will reach out to encourage the active engagement and partnership of the vibrant Indian-American community in making the change we seek. Already, in communities across this country, Indian Americans are lifting up our economy and creating jobs. Leading entrepreneurs, innovators, lawyers, doctors, engineers, and hard-working professionals are adding to the richness and success of the American story.

And yet, since the attacks of 9/11, we have been gripped by a politics of fear that has far too often targeted Indian Americans, excluding them from the American story. Too often, flawed strategies like racial profiling have had a disproportionate effect on Indian Americans. Too often, restrictions at our borders have prevented entry for many students and family members who seek nothing more than opportunity, and reunification with loved ones. In the process, we have restricted the promise of America for millions of hard-working, law-abiding individuals who advance our nation's economy and potential through strong families, excellence in education and achievement, and personal faith.

As President, I will restore the essential balance between the security we demand and the liberties we cherish. I worked as a State Senator to bring together law enforcement and civil rights advocates to reform racial profiling tactics – this is not a reliable tool for our law enforcement, and it is not reflective of core American values. As a United States Senator, I co-sponsored legislation that would expand federal jurisdiction to reach violent hate crimes motivated by race, color, religion, or national origin – because there can be no justification for these heinous acts. And I helped craft comprehensive immigration reform that would have fixed our broken immigration system by securing our borders while reaffirming our legacy as a nation of laws and a nation of immigrants.

Instead of policies that make Indian Americans feel targeted or excluded from the American story, I will be a President who draws upon the energy and expertise of the Indian American community. Together, we can restore and revitalize America's innovation-based economy so that we create jobs and meet our most pressing domestic challenges: a comprehensive energy plan that enhances our national security and saves our planet; a universal health care plan that cuts costs for every American; and a stimulus for our economy that invests in innovation and infrastructure, and provides a tax cut to the middle class, struggling homeowners and seniors.

To succeed, we need to make use of technology, a sector where so many Indian Americans have thrived. Our campaign has already demonstrated the power of technology to connect people, foster grassroots organization, and build a movement for change from the bottom up. When I am President, I am committed to implementing a broad technology agenda that will allow us to open up the federal government, put more information on-line, and create a new level of transparency so that we change the way business is done in Washington. Americans should be able to



BARACK  
OBAMA

harness the power of new tools that enable them to view and participate in their government's deliberations and decision-making.

We must also utilize the power of technology to achieve key national goals like energy independence, universal health care, and a world-class education for all of our children. That is why I will work for the deployment of a 21<sup>st</sup> century communications infrastructure all across America.

We need to use technology to reduce the costs of health care. That is why my plan will invest \$10 billion a year over the next five years to move the U.S. health care system toward broad adoption of standards-based electronic health information systems, including electronic health records.

est democracy and the world's largest democracy are natural partners, sharing important interests and fundamental democratic values. That is why I voted for the U.S.-India nuclear energy deal on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. And that is why I will move forward to build a close strategic partnership between the United States and India when I am President of the United States.

The United States and India must work together to combat the common threats of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We have both been victims of catastrophic terrorist attacks, and we have a shared interest in succeeding in the fight against al Qaeda and its operational and ideological affiliates. That fight must not be undercut by a misguided war in Iraq.

I opposed the Iraq war from the beginning, arguing that we needed to "finish the fight with Bin Laden and al

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**As President, I will strengthen the critical relationship between the United States and India. The world's oldest democracy and the world's largest democracy are natural partners, sharing important interests and fundamental democratic values.**

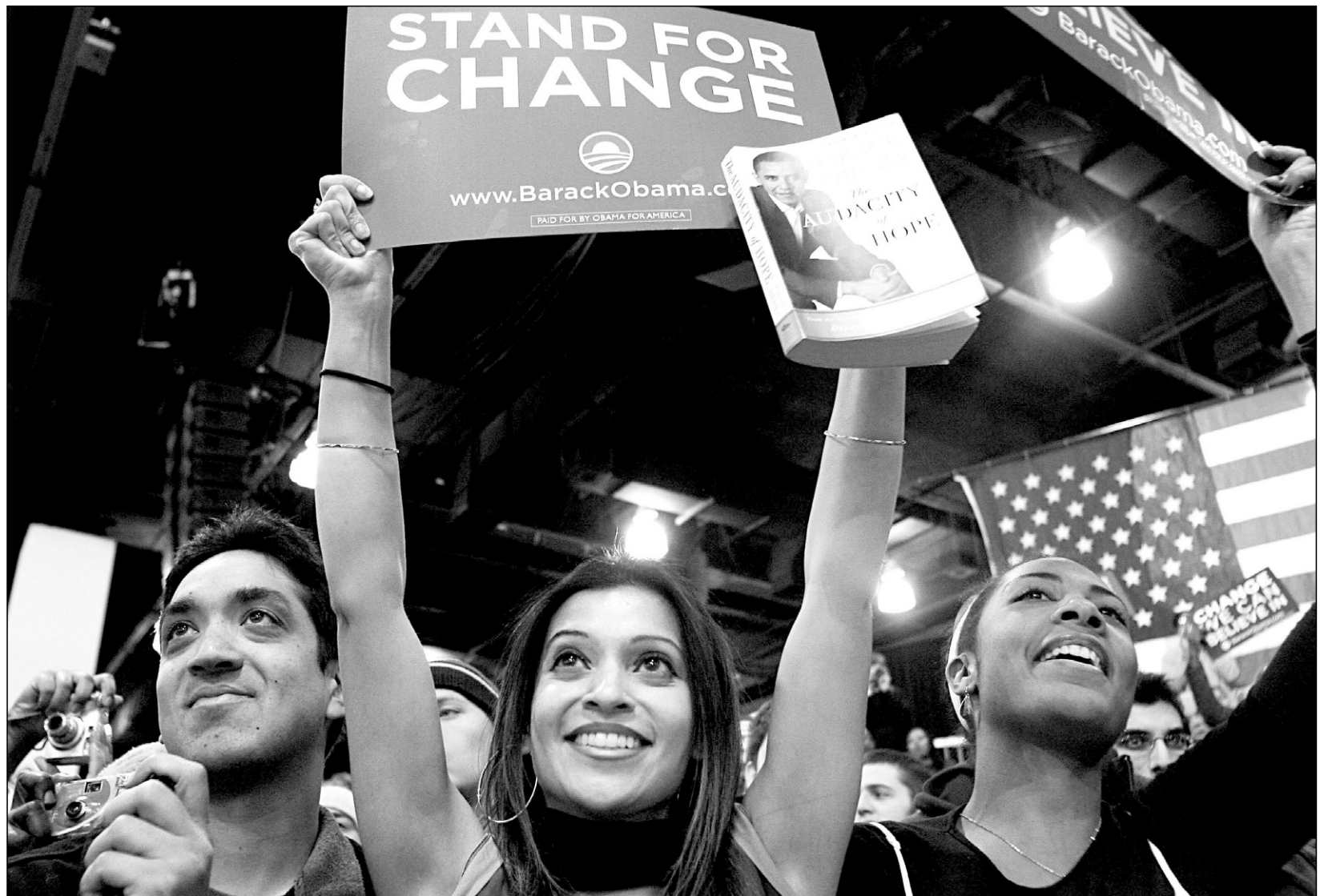
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We need to use technology to solve our energy crisis. That is why my energy plan uses revenue generated from the cap-and-trade permit auction for carbon emissions to invest \$150 billion over 10 years to advance the next generation of biofuels and fuel infrastructure, accelerate the commercialization of plug-in hybrids, promote development of commercial scale renewable energy, invest in low emissions coal plants, and begin transition to a new digital electricity grid. This will allow us to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels, which makes us dependent on foreign dictators for energy, and endangers the future of our planet.

As President, I will also strengthen the critical relationship between the United States and India. The world's old-

est democracy and the world's largest democracy are natural partners, sharing important interests and fundamental democratic values. I have argued that we need to do more to roll back the al Qaeda sanctuary along the Afghan-Pakistan border, and that we cannot put all of our eggs in the Musharraf basket in Pakistan. That is why I proposed, long before the declaration of martial law in Pakistan, that we need to condition our assistance to the Pakistani government so that we encourage stronger action against al Qaeda and a restoration of democracy. Our goal remains not simply an ally in Pakistan – our goal is a democratic ally, with a vibrant civil society and strong institutions.

While we will be vigilant in tracking down terrorists and taking down terrorist networks, we know that the battle against extremism is not just military. As democracies



JOSHUA LOTT/GETTY IMAGES

founded upon the rule of law – and countries committed to economic opportunity – the United States and India also know that the solution to extremism is not just military; it is also political and economic. That is why I am committed to renewing American diplomacy and restoring our commitment to human rights abroad and civil liberties at home. As President, I will close Guantanamo, restore habeas corpus, and renounce torture without equivocation, because America needs to be a light of justice to the world.

I will make it a focus of my foreign policy to roll back the tide of hopelessness that gives rise to hate. We know where extremists thrive: in conflict zones that are incubators of resentment and anarchy; and in weak states that cannot control their borders or territory, or meet the basic needs of their people. From Africa to central Asia to the Pacific Rim – nearly 60 countries stand on the brink of conflict or collapse.

As President, I will double our foreign assistance to help nations build independent judicial systems, vibrant civil society networks, public schools that offer hope not hate, honest police forces, and financial systems that are transparent and accountable. Freedom must also mean freedom from want, not freedom lost to an empty stomach. So I will make poverty reduction a key part of helping other nations reduce anarchy.

None of this will be easy. The kind of change we seek – whether it is revitalizing our economy here at home, or

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restoring our leadership abroad – will be difficult. But I have confidence in the greatest resource that our nation has – the American people. Because we can only affect this kind of meaningful change from the bottom up.

I have spent over two decades working for change from the bottom up. I fought for jobs as an organizer on the streets of Chicago. I stood up for people who were denied opportunity at work or justice at the voting booth as a civil rights lawyer. I expanded health care and gave a tax cut to working people as a State Senator. And when I got to Washington, I helped pass the most far-reaching ethics reform since Watergate.

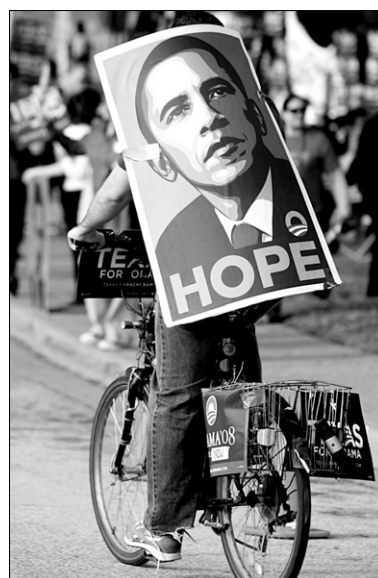
In my life, I have always looked to Mahatma Gandhi as an inspiration, because he embodies the kind of transformational change that can be made when ordinary people come together to do extraordinary things. That is why his portrait hangs in my Senate office: to remind me that real results will not just come from Washington – they will come from the people. And that is why I am proud to have the longstanding support of so many Indian Americans in all aspects of my campaign, as well as the endorsements of leading elected Indian American law-makers.

For many years, I have been impressed by the dedication of Indian Americans to make their communities and their country a better place. My relationship with the community stretches back to my days as a student. This bond is strong and deep because it is in part personal. Like so many Indian Americans, my father arrived in America without money, but with a student visa and a determination to live his dreams.

I would not be running for President if it were not for the promise of America. I was born in Hawaii, the child of a teenage mom and a father from Kenya who left when I was two. My family didn't have money or status, but like so many Indian American families, they gave me love, and education, and hope – hope that in America, we can live our dreams, and in living our dreams we can contribute to the dreams of all Americans.

I invite the Indian American community, and all Americans, to join me in renewing the strength of America. Together, we can revitalize America's economy, restore our security and standing in the world, and reaffirm our ideals. We can begin the next chapter in the American story with a simple phrase that reflects the hope and optimism that so many Indian Americans show in their daily lives: Yes we can.

**As President, I will reach out to encourage the active engagement and partnership of the vibrant Indian-American community in making the change we seek. Already, in communities across this country, Indian Americans are lifting up our economy and creating jobs. Leading entrepreneurs, innovators, lawyers, doctors, engineers, and hard-working professionals are adding to the richness and success of the American story.**



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