

## Remarks of Senator Barack Obama—as prepared for delivery

**Denver and Fort Collins, Colorado, Sunday, October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2008**

Colorado, in just 9 days, you'll have the chance to elect your next President. And you'll have the chance to bring the change we need to Washington. That's the good news. But we're going to have to work, and struggle, and fight for every single one of those 9 days to move our country in a new direction. We cannot let up. And we won't.

Because one thing we know is that change never comes without a fight. In the final days of campaigns, the say-anything, do-anything politics too often takes over. We've seen it before. And we're seeing it again today. The ugly phone calls. The misleading mail and TV ads. The careless, outrageous comments. All aimed at keeping us from working together, all aimed at stopping change.

Well, this isn't what we need right now. The American people don't want to hear politicians attack each other – you want to hear about how we're going to attack the challenges facing middle class families each and every day. So what we need now is honest leadership and real change, and that's why I'm running for President of the United States.

This is a moment of great uncertainty for America. The economic crisis we face is the worst since the Great Depression. Businesses large and small are finding it impossible to get loans, which means they can't buy new equipment, or hire new workers, or even make payroll for the workers they have.

We've lost more than 750,000 jobs this year. Wages are lower than they've been in a decade, at a time when the cost of health care and college have never been higher. It's getting harder and harder to make the mortgage, or fill up your gas tank, or even keep the electricity on at the end of the month. At this rate, the question isn't just "are you better off than you were four years ago?", it's "are you better off than you were four weeks ago?"

So what we need right now is a real debate about how to fix our economy and help middle class families. But that's not what we're getting from the other side. A couple of weeks ago, my opponent's campaign said that "if we keep talking about the economy, we're going to lose", so they said they'd be focusing on attacking me instead.

And that's one campaign promise they've actually kept. Senator McCain has been throwing everything he's got at us, hoping something will stick. He's even called me a socialist for suggesting that we focus on tax cuts, not for corporations and the wealthy, but for the middle class.

The other day, he took it to a whole new level. He said that I was like George W. Bush. You can't make this stuff up, folks. In what may be the strangest twist of all, Senator McCain said that I would somehow continue the Bush economic policies – and that he, John McCain, would change them.

But then, just this morning, Senator McCain said that he and President Bush – “share a common philosophy.” That's right, Colorado. I guess that was John McCain finally giving us a little straight talk, and owning up to the fact that he and George Bush actually have a whole lot in common.

Well, we know what the Bush-McCain philosophy looks like. It's a philosophy that says we should give more and more to folks at the top and hope that it trickles down. It's a philosophy that gives tax breaks to wealthy CEOs and to corporations that ship jobs overseas while hundreds of thousands of jobs are disappearing here at home. It's a philosophy that justifies spending \$10 billion a month in Iraq while the Iraqi government sits on a huge surplus and our economy is in crisis.

For eight years, we've seen the Bush-McCain philosophy put our country on the wrong track, and we cannot have another four years that look just like the last eight. It's time for change in Washington, and that's why I'm running for President of the United States.

We know that the economic crisis that hit Wall Street has been hurting middle class families on Main Street for years. But during the primaries, Senator McCain was saying that we've made “great progress economically” under George Bush, and just last month he was still arguing that the “fundamentals of our economy are strong.” That's not change.

We know that we have to get spending under control in Washington so that we're not mortgaging our children's future under a mountain of debt. But for all of Senator McCain's tough talk on spending, he voted for four out of the five Bush budgets that let things get totally out of control. That's not change.

We know that it's time for new ideas and new leadership in the White House. But Senator McCain voted with President Bush 90 percent of the time over the last eight years. Just the other day, George Bush returned the favor and voted early for John McCain. Well, Colorado, you can vote early too. And you can finally put an end to the Bush-McCain philosophy. You can vote for change. You can vote for a new direction for our country.

We know what's coming from the McCain campaign over the next nine days, because it's the same kind of politics that we've seen over the last eight years. It's a politics that is more about tearing your opponent down than lifting this country up. Well I can take nine more days of John McCain's attacks, but the American people can't take four more years of the same failed policies and the same failed politics. We're not going to let George Bush pass the torch to John

McCain. It's time for change. And that's why I'm running for President of the United States.

I know these are difficult times. I know folks are worried. But I believe that we can steer ourselves out of this crisis because I believe in this country. Because I believe in you. I believe in the American people.

We are the United States of America. We are a nation that's faced down war and depression; great challenges and great threats. And at each and every moment, we have risen to meet these challenges – not as Democrats, not as Republicans, but as Americans. With resolve. With confidence. With that fundamental belief that here in America, our destiny is not written for us, but by us. That's who we are, and that's the country we need to be right now.

But Colorado, I know this. It will take a new direction. It will take new leadership in Washington.

It's time to turn the page on eight years of economic policies that put Wall Street before Main Street but ended up hurting both. We need policies that grow our economy from the bottom-up, so that every American, everywhere, has the chance to get ahead. Not just the person who owns the factory, but the men and women who work on its floor. Not just the CEO, but the secretary and the janitor. Because if we've learned anything from this economic crisis, it's that we're all connected; we're all in this together; and we will rise or fall as one nation – as one people.

The rescue plan that passed the Congress was a necessary first step to easing this credit crisis, but if we're going to rebuild this economy from the bottom up, we need an immediate rescue plan for the middle-class – and that's what I will do as President of the United States.

I've proposed a new American jobs tax credit for each new employee that companies hire here in the United States over the next two years. I'll stop giving tax breaks to companies that ship jobs overseas and invest in companies that create good jobs right here in Colorado. I'll help small businesses get back on their feet by eliminating capital gains taxes and giving them emergency loans to keep their doors open and hire workers. And I will create a Jobs and Growth fund to help states and local governments save one million jobs and pay for health care and education without having to raise your taxes.

I'll also act quickly to help people stay in their homes. I'll help responsible homeowners refinance their mortgages on affordable terms, and put in place a three-month moratorium on foreclosures to give folks the breathing room they need to get back on their feet. And I won't let banks and lenders off the hook when it was their greed and irresponsibility that got us into this mess. We should not be bailing out Wall Street – we should be restoring opportunity on Main Street.

These are the steps that we must take – right now – to start getting our economy back on track. But we also need a new set of priorities to grow our economy and create jobs over the long-term.

It starts with tax relief. There's been a lot of talk about taxes in this campaign. And the truth is, my opponent and I are both proposing tax cuts. The difference is, he wants to give a \$700,000 tax cut to the average Fortune 500 CEO. I want to put a middle class tax cut in the pockets of 95% of workers and their families. My opponent doesn't want you to know this, but under my plan, tax rates will actually be less than they were under Ronald Reagan.

It's true that I want to roll back the Bush tax cuts on the wealthiest Americans and go back to the rate they paid under Bill Clinton. John McCain calls that socialism. What he forgets is that just a few years ago, he himself said those Bush tax cuts were irresponsible. He said he couldn't "in good conscience" support a tax cut where the benefits went to the wealthy at the expense of "middle class Americans who most need tax relief." Well, he was right then, and I am right now.

So let me be crystal clear: If you make less than a quarter of a million dollars a year – which includes 98% of small business owners – you won't see your taxes increase one single dime. Not your payroll taxes, not your income taxes, not your capital gains taxes – nothing. That is my commitment to you.

For the last eight years, we have tried it John McCain's way. We have tried it George Bush's way. We've given more and more to those with the most and hoped that prosperity would trickle down to everyone else. And guess what? It didn't. So it's time to try something new. It's time to grow this economy by investing in the middle class again.

If I am President, I will invest \$15 billion a year in renewable sources of energy to create five million new, green jobs over the next decade – jobs that pay well and can't be outsourced; jobs building solar panels and wind turbines and fuel-efficient cars; jobs that will help us end our dependence on oil from Middle East dictators.

I'll also put two million more Americans to work rebuilding our crumbling roads, schools, and bridges – because it is time to build an American infrastructure for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. And if people ask how we're going to pay for this, you tell them that if we can spend \$10 billion a month in Iraq, we can spend some money to rebuild America.

If I am President, I will finally fix the problems in our health care system that we've been talking about for too long. This issue is personal for me. My mother died of ovarian cancer at the age of 53, and I'll never forget how she spent the final months of her life lying in a hospital bed, fighting with her insurance company

because they claimed that her cancer was a pre-existing condition and didn't want to pay for treatment. If I am President, I will make sure those insurance companies can never do that again.

Like George Bush, John McCain wants to tax your health care benefits for the first time in history, and let insurance companies keep discriminating against people who need health care the most. It's the same, failed, insurance company first/your family last health care policy – and we're going to change it.

My health care plan will make sure insurance companies can't discriminate against those who are sick and need care most. If you have health insurance, the only thing that will change under my plan is that we will lower premiums. If you don't have health insurance, you'll be able to get the same kind of health insurance that Members of Congress get for themselves. And we'll invest in preventative care and new technology to finally lower the cost of health care for families, businesses, and the entire economy. That's the change we need.

And if I'm President, we'll give every child, everywhere the skills and the knowledge they need to compete with any worker, anywhere in the world. I will not allow countries to out-teach us today so they can out-compete us tomorrow. It is time to provide every American with a world-class education. That means investing in early childhood education. That means recruiting an army of new teachers, and paying them better, and giving them more support in exchange for higher standards and more accountability.

And it means making a deal with every American who has the drive and the will but not the money to go to college. My opponent's top economic advisor actually said that they have no plan to invest in college affordability because we can't have a giveaway to every special interest. Well I don't think the young people of America are a special interest – they are the future of this country. That's why I'll make this deal with you: if you commit to serving your community or your country, we will make sure you can afford your tuition. No ifs, ands or buts. You invest in America, America will invest in you, and together, we will move this country forward.

Now, make no mistake: the change we need won't come easy or without cost. We will all need to tighten our belts, we will all need to sacrifice and we will all need to pull our weight because now more than ever, we are all in this together.

At a defining moment like this, we don't have the luxury of relying on the same political games and the same political tactics that are used every election to divide us from one another and make us afraid of one another. With the challenges and crises we face right now, we cannot afford to divide this country by class or region; by who we are or what policies we support.

There are no real or fake parts of this country. We are not separated by the pro-

America and anti-America parts of this nation – we all love this country, no matter where we live or where we come from. There are patriots who supported this war in Iraq and patriots who opposed it; patriots who believe in Democratic policies and those who believe in Republican policies. The men and women from Colorado and all across America who serve on our battlefields may be Democrats and Republicans and Independents, but they have fought together and bled together and some died together under the same proud flag. They have not served a Red America or a Blue America – they have served the United States of America.

We have always been at our best when we've had leadership that called us to look past our differences and come together as one nation, as one people; leadership that rallied this entire country to a common purpose – to a higher purpose. And I am running for President of the United States of America because that is the country we need to be right now.

This country and the dream it represents are being tested in a way that we haven't seen in nearly a century. And future generations will judge ours by how we respond to this test. Will they say that this was a time when America lost its way and its purpose? When we allowed the same divisions and fear tactics and our own petty differences to plunge this country into a dark and painful recession?

Or will they say that this was another one of those moments when America overcame? When we battled back from adversity by recognizing that common stake that we have in each other's success?

This is one of those moments. I realize you're cynical and fed up with politics. I understand that you're disappointed and even angry with your leaders. You have every right to be. But despite all of this, I ask of you what's been asked of the American people in times of trial and turmoil throughout our history. I ask you to believe – to believe in yourselves, in each other, and in the future we can build together.

Together, we cannot fail. Not now. Not when we have a crisis to solve and an economy to save. Not when there are so many Americans without jobs and without homes. Not when there are families who can't afford to see a doctor, or send their child to college, or pay their bills at the end of the month. Not when there is a generation that is counting on us to give them the same opportunities and the same chances that we had for ourselves.

We can do this. Americans have done this before. Some of us had grandparents or parents who said maybe I can't go to college but my child can; maybe I can't have my own business but my child can. I may have to rent, but maybe my children will have a home they can call their own. I may not have a lot of money but maybe my child will run for Senate. I might live in a small village but maybe someday my son can be president of the United States of America.

Now it falls to us. Together, we cannot fail. And I need you to make it happen. If you want the next four years looking like the last eight, then I am not your candidate. But if you want real change – if you want an economy that rewards work, and that works for Main Street and Wall Street; if you want tax relief for the middle class and millions of new jobs; if you want health care you can afford and education that helps your kids compete; then I ask you to knock on some doors, make some calls, talk to your neighbors, and give me your vote. In Colorado, you can vote early right here, and right now. To find out how, just go to [voteforchange.com](http://voteforchange.com). And if you stand with me in nine days, I promise you – we will win Colorado, we will win this election, and then you and I – together – will change this country and change this world. Thank you, God bless you, and may God bless America.