

<b>SOURCE</b>	Obama-Biden Transition Project documents
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## Memorandum on Obama Promise Books

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To: Interested Parties  
Subject: Obama Promise Book Project

Thank you for your willingness to help on the promise book project. This memorandum details the general approach we have been following to compile “promise books” for discrete policy areas. The purpose of a promise book is to catalog all of the pledges, promises, proposals, and other commitments that Sen. Obama has made in a particular policy area. They will be of crucial importance going forward, and we greatly appreciate your assistance.

### Formatting

We have used Microsoft Word to prepare an outline-style document for each policy area. A sample is attached. The major features of the document that should be included are:

- An “overview” section. At a minimum, this section should describe all of the time-sensitive commitments made regarding your policy area. It should include: any appointments that Sen. Obama has pledged to make; any new positions, programs, offices, agencies, or other entities that he has promised to create; and anything that he has committed to do “immediately” or within the first 100 days of his administration.
- Sections for each discrete sub-area. You should use your discretion to organize the document in a way that makes sense to you and is readable. Some policy books may focus on narrow policy areas that do not need to be divided into sections. Most will be much larger, and it will make sense to break them into sections and sub-sections. So, for example, the health care promise book might include a section for Medicare, a separate section for proposals related to the uninsured, etc.
- A comprehensive list of all the sources reviewed. This list should include every document that you examined, even if you did not ultimately include anything from it in the promise book.

### Sources

In searching for promises you should consult the following sources:

- “Fact Sheets” from the Obama campaign. These are generally short documents that summarize Sen. Obama’s proposals in a given area. A few of them are available by going to the relevant “issues” page at [www.barackobama.com](http://www.barackobama.com). But for the most part you will have to obtain them from us electronically. In some policy areas there will be numerous fact sheets that are very repetitive. It is still important to review every fact sheet to catch any new details added to a proposal.
- Responses to questionnaires prepared by the Obama campaign. The Obama campaign has responded to scores of questionnaires by newspapers, unions, and other groups over the course of the campaign. These responses usually repeat the policy proposals set out in the fact sheets, but often expand on those proposals and contain new promises and commitments. Be careful to review all of the questionnaires that are sent to you, even if it seems unlikely that the group that created the questionnaire would be interested in your policy area. Questionnaires are often broad-ranging. For example, the questionnaire created by AFSCME included questions on national security, campaign finance, education, health care, and immigration. Finally, if you come across multiple iterations of a response to a questionnaire, please use the most recent, final version.
- Speeches by Senator Obama. You should review all of the speeches that may touch on your area. The speeches are available at <http://www.barackobama.com/speeches/index.php> and <http://obama.senate.gov/speech>.

- Press releases and statements by the campaign or senate office. You should review all of the press releases from the campaign that might touch upon your policy area. These are available at <http://www.barackobama.com/newsroom/press/> and <http://obama.senate.gov/press/>.
- Debate transcripts. The transcripts for most of the primary debates are available online. Links to the transcripts are available at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democratic\\_Party\\_\(United\\_States\)\\_presidential\\_debates,\\_2008](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democratic_Party_(United_States)_presidential_debates,_2008).
- Legislation. You should include all bills and amendments from the 110th and 109th Congress that were introduced by Sen. Obama and are relevant to your policy area. You can find this information at <http://thomas.loc.gov>. You should include only those bills and amendments where Sen. Obama was listed as a sponsor, and omit bills and amendments where he was merely a co-sponsor. (There is one exception to this rule. If Sen. Obama has committed to “pass,” “enact,” or “sign into law” a piece of legislation in a fact sheet, questionnaire, or other document, you should include that legislation even if Sen. Obama was not the lead sponsor.)
- News reports, interviews, etc. If you have access to Lexis-Nexis or Westlaw, please do a search of major newspapers to try and find promises or statements related to your policy area that were not included in the above documents. If you are aware of any other sources containing relevant promises, please include them as well.

## What to Include

### *What qualifies as a promise?*

Use your best judgment in determining what qualifies as a promise, but err on the side of inclusion. Words like “will,” “would,” “create,” “ensure,” “increase,” “eliminate,” are good signals of specific policy commitments. We have also been including statements such as “all children should have access to health care” and “corporations should not be rewarded for shipping jobs overseas.” Finally, many of the campaign materials include statements at a high level of generality, such as “I will make sure that a college education is affordable and within the reach of every American.” These should generally be included as well, even if there are more specific commitments underlying the general promise.

### *What if a promise seems to overlap with a different policy area?*

There is necessarily a great deal of overlap between different policy areas, and we expect that some promises and proposals will be relevant to several different promise books. Please include all promises that are relevant to your policy area in any way, even if you think they would also fit into another policy area.

## Citations

In order for the promise books to be useful going forward, it is important that you include a citation for every single promise that you list. It is only necessary to cite one source for each promise; there is no need to cite multiple sources if the promise was repeated several times over the course of the campaign. Citations should go in endnotes at the end of the document. If, however, Obama has made inconsistent statements or changed his position, this should be noted in a footnote at the bottom of the page.

We have generally used the following citation format:

### *Fact Sheet:*

OFA, Fact Sheet: Barack Obama’s Plan to Empower Americans with Disabilities (12/11/07), at 3.

### *Website Content:*

OFA, Website Content, <http://www.barackobama.com/issues/education/> (visited 9/2/08).

### *Response to Questionnaire:*

OFA, Response to TakeCareNet Candidate Survey (12/14/07), at 3.

### *Speech:*

Sen. Barack Obama, Remarks: Cutting Costs and Covering America (5/29/07), at 3.

### *Press Release:*

OFA, Press Release, Statement of Senator Barack Obama on the Anniversary of Title IX (6/23/08), at 1.

*Debate:*

6/3/07 Manchester, New Hampshire Debate Transcript.

*Print Article:*

David Leonhardt, How Obama Reconciles Dueling Views on Economy, The New York Times, Aug. 24, 2008, at A1.

*Online Article:*

CNBC Interview, 3/27/08, <http://www.cnbc.com/id/23832520> (visited 9/1/08).

Wherever possible, please cite the page of the document where the promise appears and the date of the document. (Although dates are not generally included in the text of the campaign fact sheets and questionnaire responses, they often can be found in the computer file name).

### **Updating**

Please update your promise book as the campaign progresses, to include statements appearing in speeches, debates, press releases, and other materials that are released between now and election day.

### **Questions**

If you have any questions, please contact [REDACTED].



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