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The Issues A-Z

You know what Dr. Bob stands for. Unlike most candidates who only talk about the popular issues currently in the headlines, Bob's position on *any* topic is an open book. Keep reading below for a short summary of his most important issues.

Here I Stand: The Issues from A to Z

by Dr. Bob Bowman

Over the years, I have been best known for my opposition to "Star Wars" weapons, nuclear war, an interventionist foreign policy, and excessive "defense" spending. Nonetheless, as a candidate for national office, I think I should tell voters where I stand on *all* the issues – even those where I am not a recognized expert. Some of these issues are ones candidates love to duck, because every position is bound to offend someone. Still, ducking is not my style. I think it would be great if *every* candidate stated his position on every one of these issues, up front, in writing, and on his web site. Give me your comments, suggestions, and gripes, and I'll deal with them. But for now, here I stand.

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[Dr. Bob Bowman's Vision for America](#)

What does Bob Bowman see for America's future? What will our country look like 20 years from now when our vision succeeds?

[A Combat Veteran's View](#)

Lt. Col. Bob Bowman served as a pilot in Vietnam and was the Director of the "Star Wars" defense program under Presidents Ford and Carter. Read how Bob wants to support our troops.

Abortion: I accept the Supreme Court's decision on Roe v. Wade and will not seek to undermine a woman's right to choose in the first trimester. I support making birth control and the "morning-after" pill readily available to women, including minors. With the exception of when a mother's health is at stake, I do not support late-term (third trimester) abortions. I support improving women's access to quality healthcare at all life stages. I support improved financial and healthcare assistance for women choosing to make their children available for adoption. I support parental notification when a minor seeks abortion unless a judge has determined that the minor's interests are best protected otherwise.

The people of this country, with their diverse beliefs, will probably never agree on when human life begins. But the vast majority of us can agree that abortion is a tragedy -- and so is making a criminal out of a desperate woman. Extreme or hard-line positions are divisive and non-productive. With policies which truly support families, we can be pro-choice and still make huge reductions in the number of abortions, and we can be pro-life, building a society which nurtures life at every stage, without violating a woman's right to choose. In an enlightened, compassionate society in which families are educated and financially secure, and in which health care is available to all, most women will choose life. Let us build such a society.

Government policies should strive to make it as easy as possible for women to make the most life-affirming choice. But in the end, we must accept the choices that individual women make for themselves. Most people would support the idea that abortions be rare, but always safe. Roe v. Wade was not intended to provide a right to abortion on demand at any stage of pregnancy. It is imperative that we provide easy access to healthcare for women and young girls, and make "morning-after" pills readily available, as well as the many safe forms of birth control.

Affirmative Action: I favor affirmative action. The effects of hundreds of years of slavery and discrimination have not yet been undone. Destructive welfare policies still emasculate black men and separate families. "Negative Action" must be stopped.

Beach Renourishment: Protection and maintenance of our beaches is especially important to those of us in Florida. It's critical to our way of life as well as our tourist industry. All too often, beach renourishment is done in a wasteful manner or at the wrong time of year when the new sand gets washed away almost immediately. But that doesn't mean it shouldn't get done. We must do it smarter and with better advance planning. We must also consider off-shore artificial reefs and other

means of prevention in addition to renourishment when necessary.

Border Security: The security of our borders is important for two main reasons: (1) to prevent terrorists from entering the country and endangering our citizens, and (2) to prevent a massive influx of illegal aliens willing to work for sub-standard wages, depressing the wages of all American workers. (Please see the paragraph on Immigration.) Securing the border requires a combination of high-tech devices and sufficient manpower. But if the incentives and inducements for immigrants are high enough, they will get in somehow (and in many instances die trying). An essential element of border security is therefore the elimination of financial inducements offered by unscrupulous companies looking for cheap labor. Punish the corporate executives and the incentives will dry up. Then so will the flow of illegals into the country. A halt to the massive influx of economic refugees will make it much easier for our border patrol agents to spot and stop potential terrorists.

Border security also involves halting the importation of weapons of mass destruction and other threatening cargo. Technology is being developed in an underfunded laboratory at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, which will allow WMD to be detected without even opening shipping containers for inspection. Such efforts must be supported, as well as the Border Patrol and the Coast Guard. Of course, we can also reduce the incentives for terrorists to enter the country. This is done by adopting more benign foreign policies which do not stir up fear and anger among people in other countries.

Campaign Finance & Electoral Reform: I strongly favor campaign finance reform. Corporations are not people, and money is not speech. There is no first amendment right for special interests to buy elections and politicians. Eventually, we must make it possible for people of modest means to run for office without selling themselves to the big money interests. This means public financing of campaigns and equal free air time to all qualified candidates. But more is required. Electoral reform demands proportional representation, preference voting (instant runoff), easy ballot access for third parties, and media reform (reinstitution of equal time rules, the fairness doctrine, and rules against media monopolies). If we are to have a government which serves people and not multinational corporations and banks, we must sever the connection between big money and political power. Most importantly, we must make sure that every citizen has the opportunity to vote and that every vote results in a paper ballot which can be counted, recounted, and audited as necessary. Methods of voting which do not meet this test must be outlawed.

CIA: We have several intelligence-gathering agencies in the Pentagon. They are more than adequate to the task. The Central Intelligence Agency has caused the death of millions of people with its covert actions and the resulting wars. It has caused the United States to be hated and to become the target of terrorists. Two presidents have tried to reform the CIA, and have failed. If it can't be reformed, the CIA should be abolished.

At the same time, professional analysts at the CIA have often been right only to be ignored or overruled by the White House. (And this is not the only administration to be guilty of that. It has happened for decades, and under both parties.) There should be a way of providing unfiltered intelligence to both parties in Congress regardless of who is president.

The American people have suffered quite enough because of doctored intelligence and deliberate manipulation. Perhaps we should scrap Negroponte's lofty position, eliminate the "dirty tricks" part of the CIA and transfer the intelligence-gathering part out of the Executive Branch altogether. As an independent agency, it could provide assessments directly to Congress, like the Congressional Budget Office. Call it the Congressional Intelligence Agency.

Conservative/Liberal Division: The terms "Conservative" and "Liberal" are time-honored labels that have unfortunately lost most of their meaning today. The Corporate media portray a Conservative as an Ebenezer Scrooge before his Christmas Eve ghostly visitors, consigning the poor to the prisons and workhouses. Likewise, they show a Liberal as a Fagan, picking the pockets of the deserving wealthy, corrupting the morals of our youth, and exhibiting not the slightest hint of conscience or self-control. Neither of these Dickensian caricatures is true. The corporate ruling class and their media have artificially divided the American people and turned us against each other because they don't want us to know who our real oppressors are. Well, no more. It's time we the people came together and took back our country. Conservatives and liberals have BOTH been alienated, manipulated, ridiculed, and ignored by the ruling elite (I call them the radical centrists) who have no ideology at all, but serve only money and power. What I learned from my 2000 campaign was that conservatives

and liberals agree on the vast majority of the issues. They just use different words. Both want a government that follows the Constitution and serves the interests of ordinary Americans. Both want an end to wars of conquest and empire on behalf of the financial interests of multinational corporations. Both love their country but fear and distrust their government. Both are correct. Both will have their interests served by a new American government freed from the control of big-money interests.

Constitutional Government: The debate should not be about how big government should be, but whom it should serve. One of the legitimate functions given the federal government by the Constitution is to provide for the common defense. Americans are now under attack, along with the several States and the nation itself, not by other nations, but by transnational corporations and banks and their stooges – in particular the World Trade Organization. It can overrule laws made by the American people and confiscate our property. We need a federal government big enough and strong enough to protect us from these enemies. Instead, the Republicans want to weaken and dismantle the government ... and the Democrats want to keep it powerful, but use its power *on behalf of* our enemies. Both parties serve big business interests. It wasn't always thus. The two Roosevelts (one from each party) both used the government to protect people from the power of big business. We need such a government again. Recently, presidents of both parties have waged unconstitutional wars on behalf of the giant money interests making up the Trilateral Commission and the Bilderburgers. They have used America's youth as cannon fodder for corporate profits. They have committed impeachable offenses by violating our founding document. It's time for a president who gives more than lip service to his oath of office and who treats the Constitution like it matters. The Democratic Party was once the party of the people -- workers, the middle class, immigrants, our men and women in uniform, Mom & Pop businesses. It can be again, but only if it stands up for the Constitution and the people.

Corporate Personhood: Effective campaign finance reform has been stymied because corporations are deemed to have a "free speech" right to spend as much money as they want to influence elections and buy politicians. This grew out of a mistaken interpretation of a 19th century ruling in favor of a railroad. Corporations were initially chartered creations of the states. They were allowed to come into being for a specific purpose and for a specific period of time. They were to perform some function in the public's interest. They were never intended to have the rights of human beings under the Constitution. I have proposed a Constitutional Amendment which simply says that "Corporations and other fictitious entities are not persons under this Constitution and shall not have the rights and privileges thereof." This amendment does not really change the Constitution, but merely clarifies its original intent.

Crime: Like everyone else, I am against crime. But too many politicians are doing evil in the name of fighting crime. This country's fastest-growing industry is locking people up. We have a quarter of all the prisoners in the whole world in this country. If I were President, I would pardon thousands of nonviolent offenders and political prisoners. As a member of Congress, I will work to end the disastrous "war on drugs," which has turned out to be little more than an excuse to lock up thousands of nonviolent young Americans, while white-collar criminals responsible for destroying thousands of lives go free. Justice in America should not have a price tag. It should be color-blind -- even to green.

Cuba: We should end the embargo of Cuba and establish normalized relations immediately.

Death Penalty: I firmly oppose the death penalty. It has been proven that it does not deter, but promotes violence, vengeance, and disrespect for human life. It is applied mainly against the poor and, all too often, the innocent. It is barbaric, anachronistic, and counter-productive. As a pro-life Congressman, I will seek to abolish the death penalty.

"Defense of Marriage" Amendments: I vehemently oppose amending the Constitution of the United States (or of the individual states) to enshrine discrimination by prohibiting gay marriage. The recently proposed federal amendment would have not only banned gay marriage, but also banned any arrangement resulting in gay couples having any of the rights and privileges of marriage. It would thus have banned gay unions by whatever name. This unconscionable bigotry is an attempt to once again pander to the "religious" right in order to get them out to vote, enhancing the chances of Republican candidates.

The truth is that gay couples do not threaten the institution of marriage. Heterosexual couples do

that by engaging in adultery and divorce. If someone wants to protect marriage, those are the things they should take on - not gays. We don't need to amend the Constitution, but we might want to consider laws making it not so easy to get a divorce, whether you're gay or straight. Such decisions should be left to the voters of each state, not dictated by the Constitution.

Defense Spending: As a career military officer, with 101 combat missions in Vietnam, I support a military strong enough to protect the people of this country. But I oppose using the military to protect the financial interests of multinational corporations and banks. After 60 years, there is no reason for us to still be occupying Germany and Japan. I would bring home our troops. This change in mission and deployment would allow the defense budget to be reduced substantially. We now have a trillion dollars in new weapons on the books for future procurement -- useless nukes and unneeded cold war weapons. At the same time, we have thousands of soldiers and their families on food stamps. Our priorities must change. The defense budget no longer bears any relationship to our national security. It has become little more than corporate welfare for the weapons manufacturers Eisenhower warned us about... and a subsidy for the transnational financial interests our military protects. I believe defense spending can be cut by more than 50% while increasing our national security. Congress holds the purse-strings. It should do something with them for a change.

Domestic Spying: Our government must strictly adhere to the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. We must not give up our freedom for the "security" of a totalitarian prison. Warrantless wiretaps are illegal. Period.

Drug Policy: Our "War on Drugs" is a disaster. It's an excuse for violating human rights at home and protecting right-wing dictators abroad. Military aid for Colombia will only result in more human rights violations against the people of Colombia. It should be halted immediately. Here at home, I would pardon all those imprisoned for possession or use of small amounts of marijuana. For users of cocaine, heroin, and other highly-addictive drugs, treatment should replace incarceration. Prison should be saved for the importers and distributors of illegal drugs -- including the CIA. I support industrial hemp and the medical use of marijuana.

Education: I have long advocated doubling the pay of teachers. But in listening to teachers I have found that good schools are the result of financially secure, involved parents. So the way to improve education is not to throw money at schools, but to throw money at families. When every American family is financially secure, with only one parent having to work, then every school will be a good school.

I support home schooling, cooperative home schooling, and groups of parents joining together to hire teachers to help educate their children. (That used to be called a public school. Now it is called a private school.) But not every family is financially secure. So government must help by providing schools for those who cannot afford private schools. Or by providing the financial means for poor parents to afford private schools. That is the theory behind vouchers. Unfortunately, no voucher scheme yet proposed really does that. G.W. Bush's \$1,500/year voucher would be a great help to already affluent parents. But it would allow the working poor to send their child to school for maybe three months.

Let's face it. For now, we need public schools, adequately financed and locally controlled. Higher education should be free in exchange for service to the community or nation. One of the fundamental requirements for good schools is discipline. Without it, nothing else matters. Private schools spend less money by far than public schools. Their teachers are often less experienced. But they have discipline, and that is why they tend to be better. We MUST find a way to help public school teachers maintain discipline in the classroom and provide a real learning environment to their students.

Endangered Species Act: I enthusiastically support the continuation and enforcement of the Endangered Species Act. We may never know the potential value to human life and health of a species until it is extinct, and then it's too late. Like it or not, we humans are the custodians of creation, and we must act responsibly, for we are indeed responsible.

Energy: Our goal should not just be freedom from foreign oil. It should be freedom from fossil fuels altogether. Petroleum is an essential ingredient for many industrial applications - plastics, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, and others. It is ridiculous to be burning up our limited supply of petroleum in automobiles. We must pursue alternative fuels like hydrogen and ethanol from prairie

grass. In the meantime, it is essential that we drastically increase CAFÉ mileage standards for automobiles, and apply them as well to SUVs and light trucks.

For the generation of electricity, we must use renewables like solar, wind, geothermal, and tidal energy.

Nuclear power plants can be made quite safe, but they won't be part of the solution until there is a safe, permanent means of disposing of radioactive nuclear waste. No such means is in sight, and I therefore oppose new nuclear power plants.

Environment: I take seriously our responsibility for preserving the environment which supports all life. As a Christian, I believe that protecting what God has created and given to us is a divine trust. As the father of 7 and the grandfather of 21, I am committed to leaving behind a livable planet for future generations. Please see the paragraphs on "Global Warming," "Oil Drilling," "Pollution," and the "Endangered Species Act."

Evolution: Truth is truth. There is no conflict between science and scripture -- as long as both are properly understood. Much of evolution is scientific fact. Other aspects are still unproven theory. None of it proves that there is no God. The big bang theory of the origin of the universe is very much in accord with the creation of the universe out of nothing by God. The orderliness of creation suggests an extremely intelligent force was behind it. Nothing in the facts of evolution conflicts with the message of Genesis. To say that God used evolution to develop the animal kingdom is not to deny the special creation of humankind.

The only religionists who should be upset by the correct teaching of evolution are the "young-earth creationists" who misunderstand scripture and believe that the universe is only six thousand years old and that all the scientific evidence to the contrary is the result of a gigantic hoax God is playing upon us. They must be ignored. The public schools must teach evolution, must present it scientifically, must admit that much of it is unproven theory, and must refrain from inferring from it either the presence or the absence of a God. Interpreting the facts of evolution and their religious significance must be left to the churches.

Fair Tax: I endorse the "FairTax" proposal. It would replace all payroll taxes and income taxes with a single National Sales Tax estimated at 23%. While most such proposals in the past have been regressive, in that they burden the poor, who must pay sales tax on all their purchases, "FairTax" is different. It gives every family a "Prebate" based on family size which equals the tax they would pay on purchases equal to the subsistence income for their family size. This means, that in effect the working poor pay no tax at all, and the middle class only pay tax on expenditures over the subsistence level. On the other hand, the wealthy and corporations (even those headquartered overseas) must pay their fair share. It is a proposal worthy of serious study and support.

The "Tax Policy" paragraph below is for whatever period remains before the "FairTax" can be implemented.

Farm Issues: Like other small businesses, American family farmers are becoming an endangered species. They are falling victim to globalization and the giant agribusiness transnational corporations. Farm subsidies should only go to family farms. They are a vital national resource and must be protected and encouraged to develop new methods of sustainable agriculture. Dairymen and farmers are getting a smaller and smaller share of each dollar we spend in the supermarket. The lion's share goes to giant processors and packagers. This trend must be reversed.

Flag-Burning Amendment: I oppose amending the Constitution to solve a non-problem. Besides, the word "desecration" can only apply to something sacred. The flag is not an idol. It is a symbol. Those of us who fought for this country did not really fight for a piece of cloth. We fought for what it represents - freedom, liberty, human rights ... including the freedom to express one's views on policy by flag-burning. It's not a kind of "speech" that I support, but it's not one I'm willing to prohibit, either. Too many of these proposed amendments are attempts to overrule the judicial branch of government, including the Supreme Court. That's a step that should be taken very carefully, and only when absolutely necessary. (One example that comes to mind is an amendment to deny corporations the rights of personhood, thereby stripping them of their "right" to buy politicians and elections with big money. See the paragraph on "Corporate Personhood.")

Foreign Policy: Foreign policy must be conducted in the interest of the American people and (when not in conflict with this) the interest of the people of the world. It must NOT be conducted in the interest of transnational organizations and their owners. The world's billionaires must no longer be allowed to dictate policies through the IMF, the World Bank, the G-8, the WTO, and their hired hands in the Republican and Democratic parties. They must NOT be able to use our sons and daughters as hired killers for the multinational corporations and banks.

The greatest threat we face is nuclear terrorism. "Star Wars" is no help. I directed all the "Star Wars" programs under Presidents Ford and Carter and I know. No "Star Wars" weapon will do any good against a terrorist with a rental truck. We are the target of terrorists because our government is feared and hated -- and for good reason. It is hated because it has done hateful things to people all around the world. It has deposed elected leaders and supported brutal dictators who sell out their own people to the multinational corporations. More recently, our government has been responsible for the death of over half a million children in Iraq and for the rape of Yugoslavia. Under the Cheney/Rumsfeld/Bush administration, foreign policy has been abandoned altogether in favor of empire-building through illegal, unconstitutional wars against Afghanistan and Iraq. This has further increased the fear and hatred directed against us. It has provided thousands of new recruits for Osama bin Laden. It has increased the terrorist threat to this country.

The only way to free the American people from the threat of nuclear terrorism is to get control of our government and stop it from doing hateful things in our name. No president can go to war without the approval of Congress and the funding only Congress can provide. As a member of Congress, I will vote to use the men and women of our armed forces to protect our borders, not the financial interests of Folgers, Chiquita Banana, Exxon, and Halliburton. We must end the embargo of Cuba, end the imposition of sanctions against nations we can't control, end the occupation of Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, and Iraq, and end gunboat diplomacy altogether. We must refrain from arrogant unilateralism. Instead, we must use diplomacy and humility to regain a respected place in the family of nations.

I was fortunate enough to meet General Wesley Clark in Fort Lauderdale. He has some interesting things to say about foreign policy, and gave me permission to quote him.. "(1) We should make more friends and fewer enemies. (2) We should be speaking with other nations, even those with whom we have disagreements. (3) We should use military force only, only, ONLY as a last resort." I wholeheartedly agree with his proposals. It would be a safer and more peaceful world if he were our president. Still, the Constitution gives Congress the right to make policy. The president only carries it out. It's time Congress reasserted its right and returned this nation to a Constitutional foreign policy.

Gay Rights: I support human rights; and the last time I checked, homosexuals were human beings. So by definition I support homosexual rights. They should have the same rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness as anyone else, and that includes the right to be free from discrimination and harassment. From a moral and societal point of view, we should all oppose promiscuity, whether gay or straight. We tell our straight teenagers to "Save it for marriage." But what do we tell our gay teenagers to save it for? Now, many people are uptight about the word "marriage." They want it used exclusively for the union of a man and a woman. OK. So let's call a monogamous commitment between gays or lesbians "pairage." But for goodness sakes, we must encourage it, whatever it is called. We can no longer doom homosexuals to a lifetime of celibacy, closeted deceit, or promiscuity. We must hold out the hope of being able to live in a lifelong relationship, and to have that relationship recognized by society and given all the legal rights, responsibilities, and privileges that accrue to married heterosexual couples.

In accordance with the separation of Church and State, individual religious denominations should be free to administer its sacraments as it wishes, and to withhold the sacraments according to its own canons. That includes the sacrament of matrimony. Churches may grant this sacrament to couples meeting whatever requirements they may establish, including sexual preference or gender. That is, churches may (or may not) discriminate against same-sex couples. The government, however, must not discriminate in licensing the civil contract between consenting adult couples seeking to form a family relationship. To allow such discrimination (or worse, to enshrine it in the Constitution) would be an abomination indeed.

Geneva Convention: All prisoners taken in the "War on Terror" should be accorded either the rights granted by the Bill of Rights or those granted by the Geneva Convention. There is no excuse for

attempting to deny the protections of the Geneva Convention to prisoners, whether they are combatants or not. If we mistreat prisoners, we can expect our soldiers to be mistreated as well. But even if our people are tortured and mistreated by their captors, that does not give us an excuse to do likewise. We are a nation of laws, and we must maintain a position as a responsible member of the family of nations.

Genocide: There should be strict limitations on the unilateral use of US troops. However, the US should work in concert with the UN and other nations to do all in its power to stop genocide in Darfur and wherever it raises its ugly head. To ignore the situation because the millions at risk are black is the worst kind of racism.

Global Warming: As a scientist, I find overwhelming evidence for global warming and other hazards of unfettered human activity like the burning of fossil fuels. I also see ways to protect the environment while spurring the economy, like the development of electric, hydrogen-powered, fuel cell, or hybrid automobiles, nonpolluting mass transit and intercity transportation, and the development of renewable power sources like solar and wind. I support the Kyoto accords. Complying with them will not damage the economy -- only the financial interests of some of the old, entrenched corporations. Like the blacksmiths and buggy makers of a century ago, they must change or disappear. We cannot afford to rape our environment in order to keep them in business. While we seek new sources of energy, we must practice responsible conservation in order to give the scientists and engineers time to do their thing.

Gun Control: I wish guns could be done away with, but they can't. Restrictions and buy-backs only affect the law-abiding citizens, not the crooks. Until we can disarm the crooks -- and the FBI and the DEA and the IRS and the INS and the CIA and the military -- we MUST allow citizens to bear arms to protect themselves against tyranny. That's what the second amendment is all about. It has nothing to do with hunting. In too many nations, people live in fear of a hated national police. Usually armed, paid, and trained by the US government, these agencies shoot first and ask questions later. They tell us it can't happen here. But recent events with respect to Waco, Ruby Ridge, Little Havana, and Pine Ridge must give us pause. We are not supposed to have a national police force. The FBI is supposed to be an investigative body. If we can't get these federal agencies under control, we should disarm them completely. Personally, I preach nonviolent resistance. I feel it is a more effective response to tyranny. (All those weapons didn't help the Branch Davidians.) But many disagree with me. So I must nonviolently put my body on the line to protect their right to their guns. Having said that, I support all reasonable efforts to prevent crooks, psychopaths, and domestic abusers from purchasing firearms.

Health Care: The Republicans ignore the health care crisis. The Democrats argue about who has the better band-aid for the system. But what the system needs is radical surgery. The insurance companies take about half of every healthcare dollar. That money never gets to the doctors and nurses who take care of us. We must kick the insurance companies out of the healthcare business completely, and break the stranglehold of the HMOs and for-profit hospital conglomerates. We must finally join the rest of the civilized world with a doctor-run single-payer national health system.

This can be achieved through a gradual improvement and expansion of Medicare until all Americans are covered for all healthcare expenses. Elective cosmetic procedures would be excluded and available on a fee-for-service basis.

Homeowners Insurance: In parts of the country prone to natural disasters, homeowners insurance is becoming difficult to obtain or prohibitively expensive. Since the 2004 hurricanes, many Florida residents have lost their homes because of this. While the regulation of insurance is primarily a state function, there is something the federal government can do. There is already federal flood insurance available. This program could be expanded to provide high-deductible catastrophe insurance covering events like floods, hurricanes, earthquakes, wildfires, and tornados which affect large numbers of homes. Ordinary homeowners insurance would continue to cover individual events like ordinary house fires. Freed of the risk of multiple claims for a single catastrophe, insurance companies could return rates to much lower levels. State regulators should make sure this happens, and should tell insurers that if they wish to operate in the lucrative auto insurance market, then they must provide homeowners insurance as well.

Immigration: Immigration is a complex issue which cuts across party lines. Those in favor of "amnesty" or a "guest worker program" include pro-corporate Republicans, elements of the Roman

Catholic Church seeking new congregants to replace millions of alienated and excommunicated parishioners, a few Union leaders hoping for new dues-paying members, and liberal Democrats driven by compassion for poor illegal immigrants seeking a better life. Those opposing the “guest worker program” include a few racist Republicans and a lot of disgruntled taxpayers who don’t want to subsidize social services for illegals. None of the above groups sees the critical problem with illegal immigration (or indeed with uncontrolled legal immigration). The problem is that large numbers of immigrants willing to work for peanuts depresses the wages for all working Americans, including what’s left of the middle class.

President Bush and other supporters of a “guest worker program” keep talking about immigrants taking jobs that Americans won’t do. That is completely false. There are no jobs Americans won’t do. There are only jobs that Americans won’t do for the paltry wages corporations pay illegal immigrants. If they were paid a decent wage for their efforts, American workers would pick our crops, collect our garbage, mow our lawns, flip our hamburgers, wash our dishes, and build our houses. If there were no illegal immigrants, employers would have to pay decent wages. They would have no choice. (There are jobs that can’t be exported.) Yes, if American workers were paid a living wage, prices would go up. But wages would go up far more, so that more Americans could afford the fruits of their labor. The fact of the matter is that allowing large numbers of immigrants to stay in this country is a subsidy to unscrupulous businesses which employ them and exploit them.

While compassion demands that we provide health care and emergency services to illegal immigrants and their families, we are NOT obligated to provide them with welfare, unemployment compensation, or education for their children. Second, we must have a secure way of determining who is in this country legally, and then severely punish employers who hire illegals. If they are unable to get jobs or welfare, the illegals will go back home. Yes, controlling the border with more fences and troops may supply part of the answer, but the real solution lies in preventing illegals from earning money in the United States. That will not only encourage many to leave, it will also prevent more from coming here in the first place. Any kind of “amnesty” or “guest worker program” will just have the opposite effect and encourage millions more to risk their lives to get into the country and “cash in.”

If we are truly compassionate, and want to better the lives of poor Mexicans, the way to do it is to help the Mexican people get an honest recount and elect a populist government to replace the oligarchs. Then we can assist that new government of Mexico to better the lives of their own people where they live. Of course, it would help if we got rid of our own oligarchs, too. (After all, they came to power with two stolen elections.) They are the ones pushing the “guest worker program,” because it means lower labor costs for their fat-cat industrialist friends, and therefore higher profits. In the end, it’s all about money.

Iraq: Saddam Hussein, as bad as he was, had nothing to do with Al Qaeda or 9/11. His secular Ba'athist state was hated by fundamentalist Muslims. By kicking him out under the pretext of his “weapons of mass destruction,” we have empowered Shi'ite Muslim fanatics who want to make Iraq an Islamic state, and greatly worsened the terrorist threat to the United States and its citizens.

If we allow our military occupation to continue, we will be doomed to the same kind of defeat in Iraq that we suffered in Vietnam, where so many of my buddies died. Most Iraqis want us to leave. Al Qaeda and Iran want us to stay, because the war is depleting our military and destroying its morale. Our troops deserve better than that. They should be brought home and replaced by peacekeepers from the UN and Iraq’s neighbors.

To make that happen, our government will have to make three commitments: (1) to give up all rights to Iraqi oil, (2) to give up control of the rebuilding projects (let Halliburton bid like anybody else, and let them hire Iraqis for a change), and (3) to give up the 14 permanent military bases we are building in Iraq. President Bush isn’t going to make those commitments willingly, so the Congress must force him to. Congress has the Constitutional power to do so, and must exercise it. Jack Murtha has made a very reasonable proposal. It must be taken seriously.

Internet Regulation: I oppose government control or taxation of the Internet except where necessary to prevent monopoly control by corporate interests. The Internet is one of the last remaining means of mass communication available to the people. Almost all radio, TV, and newspaper media are dominated by a handful of giant corporations, some of them foreign-owned and all of them driven by the profit motive. The government sold out the people and gave away our

public ownership of the airwaves. We must not let it do the same to the Internet.

Iran: Iran is a threat to the security of the United States because of past misguided foreign policy. At the behest of the oil companies, the CIA overthrew Mosadegh and installed the brutal Shah of Iran. The Shah, in return for selling out his own people to our oil companies, was supported. His infamous Savak secret police was trained, armed, and paid by the United States. It's no wonder the Iranian people resented us by the time the Shah lost control. Even so, most Iranians don't want to destroy the U.S. or kill Americans. They just want to be left alone to run their country as they see fit. Like North Korea, they desperately need electrical power, and are pursuing nuclear reactors. They claim that their uranium enrichment program is for strictly civilian purposes, and we have little evidence that that's not the case. Until the United States started its saber-rattling, Iran's nuclear activities were under close watch by United Nations inspectors. Analysts at the CIA claim that Iran, even if it really wants nuclear weapons, could not build one for ten years. The Bush Administration, however, is calling this a "crisis," has already inserted US troops into parts of Iran, and is refusing to take the option to use military force off the table. (Sounds like Iraq all over again, doesn't it?)

Senior military officers, disgusted by the war in Iraq, have threatened to resign if our government orders a nuclear attack on Iran. And indeed they should. The Nuremberg principles which this country expounded after World War II provide that military officers have not only the right, but the DUTY to disobey an illegal order. Indeed, if Dick Cheney or Donald Rumsfeld orders an unprovoked attack upon Iran, somebody needs to take them into custody as war criminals!

Jobs and Paychecks: One of my top priorities is to stop government subsidies for exporting American jobs. Every American should have the opportunity to work for a living wage. There are no jobs Americans won't do - only jobs Americans won't do for the paltry wages given to illegal immigrants. Every job should provide a living wage. One way to accomplish this is to have a minimum wage which starts at \$15 per hour and is adjusted for inflation. The minimum wage could also be adjusted for regional variations in the cost of living. At the very least, we should adjust the minimum wage for inflation retroactively to its inception at a dollar an hour. That would raise the minimum wage to about \$13.50 - not really a living wage in many parts of the country, but better than what we have now. I am proposing a bill to raise the minimum wage over a period of twelve years to what it would have been had it been adjusted for inflation ever since its creation, and then to continue semi-annual increases to keep up with inflation.

But raising the minimum wage is not enough. We must deal with the imbalance in labor supply and demand. To restore wages to a decent level means recognizing that for too long the government has subsidized the exportation of jobs and the importation of cheap labor. Both must stop. Government should impose tariffs on goods imported by companies who export jobs from this country. We must remove the incentives for job exportation. Government must also stop importing cheap labor through its open borders policy. Jailing the employers who hire illegal aliens will be far more effective than walls and fences in solving the problem. Once jobs and workers are brought back into balance, an increased minimum wage will be effective, and a true "living wage" can be achieved.

If the private sector can't provide jobs for all, the government should take up the slack - not with welfare, but with productive work. FDR did it, and it worked. It also resulted in enormous improvements in the nation's infrastructure. This is often criticized as a "make work" project which produces little. But these same critics often turn around and say that war is good for the economy. But an unnecessary war is a "make work" project of the worst kind, because it produces nothing and destroys much (including lives). Others say tax cuts for the rich are good for the economy because they enable these rich folks to create more jobs. What it really does is further increase the enormous gap between the rich and the poor. The truth is that what is really good for the economy is for every family to get a good paycheck. That should be the objective of government policy.

Korea: North Korea is a dangerous country possessing nuclear weapons and led by an unstable and reclusive dictator. It is far more of a threat to us than Iraq ever was. Then why did we go to war against Iraq and not North Korea? Two reasons: (1) our leaders really knew Saddam had no weapons of mass destruction, and therefore Iraq would be much easier to defeat militarily than North Korea, and (2) North Korea doesn't have any oil.

The United States was successfully dealing with North Korea when G.W. Bush came in and cut off all negotiations. Isolating Kim Jong Il has only made him more dangerous. But there is a way to defuse

this situation. Once more send Jimmy Carter to North Korea to negotiate an end to their nuclear program in exchange for the United States and Japan providing safe nuclear power plants capable of providing the Koreans with the electrical power they so desperately need. We had such an agreement once before, but reneged on the deal. It's time to recognize the legitimate needs of North Korea and meet them. Then we should remove our troops from South Korea and allow the Korean people to negotiate reunification on their own terms.

Kyoto Treaty: The United States should ratify the Kyoto Treaty and accept our responsibility to help the world avoid disaster from Global Warming.

Labor Issues: American workers are earning less now than they did fifty years ago. In the 1950s, most workers supported their families with one job. Today it takes three. Both husband and wife must work, and one of them has two jobs. Meanwhile, productivity has soared. Workers create more wealth now than ever. Where does it go? To the CEOs and investors. Labor has been emasculated by the Taft-Hartley Law, by deregulation which has legalized corporate monopoly power, and by Reagan's destruction of the Air Traffic Controllers union. Things must be brought back into balance. If the government is going to exercise its muscle, it should be on behalf of workers, not investors.

I have worked with labor unions to raise the minimum wage in Florida. It is a disgrace that Congress won't even vote for a modest increase in the national minimum wage. At the same time, they voted themselves a salary increase three times as much as the total annual salary of a worker on the minimum wage! Forget the Minimum Wage. Everyone should get a Livable Wage. There is no excuse for hunger, homelessness, and poverty in America today. This is the 21st century, not the 19th. If worker pay had kept up with CEO pay, the average worker in this country would be making a million dollars a year, and the minimum wage would be \$171 per hour! Corporations can pay their CEOs whatever they want, but we don't have to give them a tax deduction for it. The tax deduction for executive compensation should be capped at 20 times the wage of the company's lowest paid worker.

I am absolutely opposed to federal "right to work" laws, and am committed to restoring organized labor to its rightful place in our society.

Libya: American-educated Qaddafi is a natural ally. We should quit hounding him and make peace.

Middle East & the Israeli/Palestinian Conflict: As an ROTC student, I attended a special seminar on the Israeli/Palestinian conflict in 1952. Even then, it was obvious that there was no solution which would be just to both sides. Both have suffered grave injustices for which no solution can fully make amends. Any solution must somehow share the injustice in an equitable way.

In the half a century since then, violence has been piled onto violence, retribution onto retribution, retaliation onto retaliation, injury onto injury, and yet more injustice upon injustice. A resolution of the conflict acceptable to both sides is even further out of reach than it was in 1952. Yet a resolution must be found. The continuing violence is only breeding more hatred and sowing the seeds of more violence in generations yet to come.

The United States has at times played a positive role in bringing the sides together in search of peace. The Camp David accords under Jimmy Carter gave the world hope that a resolution was at hand. Somehow it slipped away. The subsequent attempts under Bill Clinton had no chance of success because they were predicated on a West Bank looking like a piece of Swiss cheese, with the Palestinian areas being the holes. Any resolution must include a contiguous Palestinian homeland on the West Bank, free of Israeli settlements, highways, checkpoints, and walls.

For decades, I have been calling for a solution based on Israeli withdrawal to its pre-1967 borders coupled with a US guarantee of Israeli security within those borders. The Israelis must give up their West Bank settlements and the dream of defensible borders. The Palestinians must give up their "right of return" and their goal of shoving the Israelis into the sea. Hamas and Hezbollah must be disarmed and isolated from their support bases in Syria and Iran. Once peace has been established between Israel and a Palestinian state, the people on both sides will refuse to support further violence and bloodshed. There will be no popular support for suicide bombers. History has shown that the ONLY thing that has ever ended a campaign of terror is to isolate the terrorists from the broader population which hides them and supports them. The way to do that is to listen to and actually do something about the legitimate grievances of the people at large. The Palestinian people

are no different. Give them jobs, safety in their homes, a decent standard of living, and hope for the future, and they will not support nor tolerate terrorists in their midst.

At that point, having helped the two sides come to a peaceful settlement, the task of the United States becomes one of building the peace through active engagement and broad financial assistance to both sides. One of the best things we can do is encourage economic inter-dependence between the states of Israel and Palestine. Ideally this should take place within a broader campaign to rebuild the entire Middle East. I call it "Marshall Plan 2." Such an endeavor can only succeed if we are seen as an impartial and benign helping hand - not as an occupying power, nor as a lapdog for either side. The last time we had such status in the Middle East was with Jim Baker under George the First. The neo-con fascists in the current administration have shaped both US and Israeli policy to suit their financial interests, and they have abandoned the even-handed approach necessary to success. What's worse, they have involved us in wars of aggression in the area, against Afghanistan and Iraq, and are putting us in danger of a wider war against Syria and Iran. We are useless as a peacemaker so long as we are seen as an ally of Israel fighting her wars for her. Ironically, the Israeli people need the United States to be an honest broker. By abandoning this position for one of cheerleader for actions of the Israeli government (even gross over-reactions like the recent destruction of much of Lebanon), the United States has become less useful to Israel. They don't need a cheerleader; they need a referee.

Many times I have been called anti-Semitic because of my criticism of specific policies of the government of Israel. Those who engage in such name-calling are showing their ignorance. My father was half-Jewish. I have Israeli professors on my Advisory Board, and I even lived briefly on a kibbutz in Israel. Criticizing actions and policies of the Israeli government is no more anti-Semitic than criticizing actions and policies of the US government is anti-American.

Moral Issues: Let's get one thing straight. Morality has very little to do with sex and a great deal to do with money and power. It has to do with how we treat one another. It is immoral for the big money interests to force government to serve their greed instead of serving the people's need. I do agree that public servants need to set a high moral standard for themselves, as an example. As Presiding Archbishop of the United Catholic Church, I'm used to having to do that. And I favored the impeachment of Bill Clinton -- but for the right reason. Not over poor Monica. I would have impeached him for the bombing of Baghdad and the rape of Yugoslavia.

There are indeed huge moral issues facing us today. Waging wars of aggression is a moral issue. Poverty in the midst of wealth is a moral issue. The treatment of widows and orphans is a moral issue. (It was in Jesus' day, and it still is.) Health care is a moral issue. Let the churches worry about who is sleeping with whom if they choose. The government has bigger fish to fry. Government should concern itself with morality in the board room and the war room, not the bedroom.

National Missile Defense: The threat used to justify this program is bogus. No nation other than Russia, China, and England possesses the capability to hit the United States with nuclear weapons, and any NMD system would be useless as a defense against them. North Korea and Iran are decades away from having the capability to deploy Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs). Terrorists, even if they had a nuclear weapon, would not use such a high-tech, costly, unreliable, and visible means of delivery. They would send their nuke up the Potomac in a barge or fly it into Red Square in a Cessna or smuggle it into the US wrapped in a bale of marijuana or deliver it to its target in a Ryder rental truck.

Missile "defense" is of no use against nuclear terrorists, but would only heighten the legitimate hatred and fear which underlie the danger. The program should be scrapped permanently. George W. Bush's resurrected "Star Wars" is even worse. The only believable military use for most of these weapons is to help an aggressor win. Their offensive uses dwarf their "defensive" capabilities. Even their meager "defensive" capabilities are only believable in the hands of an aggressor trying to protect himself from retaliation after his first strike. Their only deterrent value is to deter another country (like China) from interfering in U.S. gunboat diplomacy and wars of aggression. (For more on NMD see www.rmbowman.com/ssn . Dr. Bowman is the author of the 1984 book "Star Wars: Defense or Death Star." In the 1970s, he directed all the "Star Wars" programs under Presidents Ford and Carter, when their existence was secret.)

New World Order: The New World Order got its start with Charlie Wilson (chairman of General Motors and later Secretary of Defense) and Krupp Industries in Hitler's Germany in the 1930s.

Prescott Bush advanced it in the 1940s. It got a big push from David Rockefeller in 1960 with the Trilateral Commission, and reached its fruition under George H. W. Bush. It incorporates the IMF, the World Bank, the G-8, and the WTO. It rules the world on behalf of the billionaire industrialists and bankers. It is global capitalism run amok. It manipulates public opinion through its corporate media monopolies. Ironically, the United Nations is almost irrelevant and plays little role in the New World Order.

9/11: The truth about 9/11 is that we don't KNOW the truth about 9/11, and we should. I will sponsor (and have already lined up co-sponsors for) legislation initiating a truly independent investigation of 9/11. There is mounting evidence of possible complicity by elements of our own government.

If they have nothing to hide, why are they hiding everything? Why are they hiding audiotapes of FAA and NORAD controllers? Why are they hiding videotapes of whatever hit the Pentagon? Why are they hiding the black boxes? Why did they destroy most of the forensic evidence which appears to show that three buildings at the World Trade Center were brought down by thermite demolition charges? If the thermite residue found on severed steel beams didn't bring down the towers, what did? (Never before in history did steel skyscrapers fall because of fire, and THREE of them did on the same day ... one of which wasn't even hit by an airplane!) For the government's story to be accepted as factual, they will have to explain why WTC 7 came down. Why did four hijacked airliners fly around for up to an hour and 45 minutes without being intercepted? Why were normal procedures not followed? (If normal procedures HAD been followed, the aircraft would have been intercepted with 20 minutes to spare, the twin towers would still be standing, and thousands of dead Americans would still be alive.) If it was massive incompetence, why has no one been fired? ... or demoted? ... or court martialed? (Instead they were promoted or given the medal of freedom!) If Osama bin Laden was really suspected, why did our government violate its own "no-fly" order to hurriedly fly the bin Laden family out of the United States before they could be questioned? Why does the "Osama bin Laden" in the "confession" videotape have a nose about an inch shorter than the real Osama bin Laden? Why have half a dozen of the 19 "hijackers" turned up in other countries ... alive and well? Were there really any hijackers at all, and if there were, were they patsies? Who made millions on short sales of United and American Airlines? Where is the tens of billions of dollars worth of missing gold that was stored in the World Trade Center? Why did the Secret Service not whisk the president away from the school where he and the students read about a pet goat even after it became clear that the nation was under attack?

The American people and the families of those who died on 9/11 deserve the truth, and we do not yet have it. The above are but a tiny fraction of the unanswered questions not even raised by those who "investigated" the 9/11 tragedy. The most unbelievable of all the conspiracy theories surrounding 9/11 is the OFFICIAL conspiracy theory told us by our government. The Kean-Hamilton-Zelikow commission report was a whitewash, a cover-up, and a bundle of deception. I have spoken to both Governor Kean and Congressman Hamilton, and they admit that they were lied to about why there was no intercept. If a new investigation discovers a wider conspiracy and identifies living people (American or foreign) as being responsible, they should be indicted for treason. And those who covered up the treason should themselves be indicted as accessories after the fact.

If, however, a new investigation finds that the government's current story is essentially correct, then it should go beyond Kean and Hamilton to assign responsibility for the failure of our air defenses to protect the Twin Towers and the Pentagon. There must be accountability. Without it, we will never know why our multi-trillion dollar defense establishment was unable even to protect its own headquarters from an unarmed aircraft. This is unacceptable. It leaves the American people with no assurance that they can be protected in the event of another attack.

North American Union, NAU (or Security and Prosperity Partnership, SPP): A few years ago, President George W. Bush and the then heads of state of Mexico and Canada quietly signed an agreement initiating the SPP and heading our three nations toward political union. The plan includes a 12-lane highway from a port on the West coast of Mexico up through the heart of the United States and into Canada. This highway will parallel Interstate 35 through Texas and on up to a major trade hub in Kansas City. Neither the hub in Kansas City or the toll road itself will belong to the United States. Like so many of our toll roads, it will be foreign owned. The idea is for goods from Japan, China, and the Far East to enter through Mexico, go unhindered across the US border to the hub in Kansas City and then fan out throughout the country or go on into Canada. American longshoremens and teamsters would be avoided altogether. That way corporations make more profit because they

pay Chinese laborers to make the goods, Mexican laborers to transfer it from ships to trucks, and Mexican drivers to deliver it to their warehouses.

This scheme is NAFTA on steroids. It is globalization gone wild. It will further destroy the standard of living in the United States, and finish off our middle class - and all without any consultation with the American people or their representatives in Congress. Congress must make it clear that this is illegal and unacceptable.

Ocean Preservation: The oceans are the font of all life. Life on earth not only sprung from the oceans, but is still dependent on healthy oceans and the sea life within them. Protecting the oceans and coral reefs are critical to the future of life on earth. The federal government should pass legislation preventing cruise ships and other vessels from dumping fecal matter and other waste within the twelve mile limit. It should also enter negotiations with other nations to prevent harmful dumping in the deep oceans as well.

Oil Drilling: The United States should be moving away from dependency on ALL oil, not just foreign oil. I oppose drilling in the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge on environmental grounds. I also oppose drilling in the Gulf of Mexico for the same reason. As a Floridian, I am especially mindful of the horrendous damage which could be done by oil slicks deposited on the white beaches of western Florida. The answer to our oil appetite is conservation and alternative technologies such as ethanol, hydrogen, solar, wind, and geothermal. I favor a tax structure which makes alternative, clean sources of energy cheaper than the burning of fossil fuels.

Pensions: In the short term, we need to take care of workers who have had their private pension plans eliminated by default, bankruptcy, or fraud (think Enron). In the long run, we as a people must realize that more and more corporations are going to end their pension plans as well as their health plans for both workers and retirees. They feel they must do this in order to compete with European countries who do not have to carry the costs of pensions and health plans, because their governments supply them for the people.

It is true that American companies are at a competitive disadvantage because of this. The only long-term solution is for the United States to adopt the same enlightened policies as all the other industrialized nations. Neither health care nor pensions should be subject to the whim (or continued existence) of a private entity. They should be guaranteed by the full faith and credit of our government. This will relieve our corporations of a competitive burden which is causing massive losses and all too many bankruptcies. It will also give our workers the confidence that their health care and pensions will always be there for them. Such expensive government programs can be paid for by restoring a progressive income tax and resurrecting an effective corporate tax on profits, including the corporations which now escape taxes entirely by moving offshore and using foreign bank accounts and dummy headquarters in the Bahamas. The bottom line is that adequate pensions should be something that American workers can always count on.

Pollution: We should demand that our children and grandchildren inherit an America in which they have plenteous supplies of clean water to drink, clean air to breathe, and clean earth to live on and grow things in. This will require that we demand that polluters (not taxpayers) pay to clean up their messes. They'll learn that pollution creates cost, and they'll factor that into the decisions they make and the way they do business. Eventually, they'll find ways to conduct their business without creating pollution. That's the free enterprise way.

If the government goes around cleaning up after the polluters, that just encourages them to continue doing things the cheap and dirty way. Of course, at the present time, nobody is doing the cleanup. Government regulators are controlled by political appointees who come from the very industries they are supposed to be regulating. This "fox in the hen house" approach has only led to pollution, unsafe working conditions, dangerous and inferior products (including tainted food), and of course larger profits for the most irresponsible companies. Once again, it's a case of government serving the greed of the corporations instead of the needs of the public. A Citizens' Congress will put an end to such practices.

Prayer In School: The Constitution forbids the government to establish a state religion. The courts are correct in protecting minorities from having the religion of the majority forced on them. But we must see that Atheism does not become a state religion forced on the majority. Common sense must prevail. After all, the Constitution also forbids the government from interfering in the free exercise

of religion.

Prescription Drugs: The current Plan D (for Disaster) program for prescription drugs for seniors is masquerading as part of Medicare. It is nothing like Medicare. It is a subsidy for giant pharmaceutical companies and a boon for insurance companies. But it is a disaster for struggling seniors. The whole mess should be scrapped completely. Instead, prescription drugs should be covered as a normal part of Medicare, just like x-rays, doctor visits, and surgery. In addition, the government should allow itself to negotiate with drug manufacturers for the lowest possible prices. That would save money for taxpayers. But the cost to the government of drugs should be immaterial to patients, because they should never pay more than \$10 for a month's supply of medicine.

Property Taxes: In many states, homeowners get a modest exemption from property taxes. More importantly, the rate at which the assessed valuation of their property can increase is limited, usually to 3% per year. This prevents senior citizens from being taxed out of their homes. This, however, has had an undesirable side effect. Many seniors are unable to downsize into a retirement home because they lose this protection when changing homes. After living in their home for many years, a couple can sell their home and purchase another of lower value only to see their property taxes quadruple to an unaffordable level. This can be solved by making their tax valuation protection portable. The valuation of the replacement home would be capped at the valuation of the original home provided the purchase price of the new home is equal to or less than the sale price of the original home. If the replacement home is more expensive, only the excess amount is subject to increased valuation.

In the long run, communities should find some other means to raise money for essential services like firefighting, police, schools, etc. The property tax is in reality a double tax because it taxes what you bought with after-tax income.

Quid Pro Quo Politics: Too many politicians take money from big money interests and their K Street lobbyists, then turn around and vote on behalf of those interests. If the giant multinational corporations didn't make billions in profits from the votes of "their" politicians, they wouldn't spend tens of millions on those politicians. The result is that we have the best Congress money can buy. It's usually impossible to prove that a "quid pro quo" has taken place. But if you look at how individuals vote and then look at who funded their campaign, who lined their pocket, and who took them on expensive junkets, you KNOW it has happened. When I get to Congress, I will NOT take money or gifts from corporations or lobbyists. I will serve the PEOPLE of my district and the United States. My votes will not be for sale.

Race Relations: First, we should stop using this phrase. Call it Ethnic Relations or something. All of us – black, brown, white, yellow, red – are part of the Human Race. To suggest that blacks belong to a different race is to open the door to the belief that they are somehow inferior. There is still discrimination against people of color, and it results in them having less opportunity, less education, lower income, poorer health, mistreatment in our courts, shorter lives, heartbreak, resentment, and anger. When working people are shortchanged by the big money interests, people of color suffer the most. The struggle for real equality is far from over. We belong with the oppressed minorities in the front lines.

School of the Americas: The House voted to change its name, but not its mission. It is still training death squads in the techniques of torture, intimidation, and assassination. It must be closed and not reopened under any name.

Social Security: There's a very easy way to make the Social Security system solvent forever -- do away with the cap on earnings subject to the FICA tax. Right now, this is by far our most regressive tax. It is a heavy burden on workers and small businesses; but it is a free ride for the wealthy. Tax all income at the same rate. Make FICA a flat tax. That will bring in so much money the government won't know what to do with it. The current ceiling could be replaced with a floor. Nobody would have to pay FICA tax on the first \$40,000 per year, but they would get credit as if they had. All income above that would be taxed at the current rate. Benefits could be raised, and there would still be more than enough to handle the baby boomers.

Space: As a rocket scientist, I'm a big supporter of the space program. The United States should encourage the development of a vibrant civilian space program, and Florida should be at the center of it.

The backbone of the space program is the cadre of scientists, engineers, technicians, and mechanics supporting the Space Shuttle and its applications. I am deeply concerned about a four-year gap between the end of the Shuttle program in 2010 and the beginning of the next era in 2014. If we save money by laying off shuttle workers and lose their talents and their corporate memory, we may have a very hard time reconstructing a team for the next generation of space exploration. We should instead allow the team to gradually reduce in size to that needed for the future. This reduction should take place through natural attrition and retirement. We must also make sure that we maintain and recruit the right mix of skills for the future. This will not be an easy task, and will require cooperation between the federal government, the state of Florida, and Brevard County.

Stem Cell Research: I strongly support stem cell research. In conducting this research, scientists should be respectful of life. To conduct abortions in order to acquire fetal tissue would be wrong. But it makes sense to utilize existing fetal stem cells for life-enhancing research instead of discarding them. The current restrictions on stem-cell lines is too constraining and should be lifted. In spite of the propaganda put out by opponents of embryonic stem cell research, the potential of adult stem cells is not as great. The life of a paralyzed father or mother must be put ahead of the life in a blastocyst (group of cells which has the potential to develop into an embryo).

Tax Policy: Corporations "tax" workers 45 times as much as the government does. The average worker creates well over \$100 worth of new wealth each hour. But his take home pay is only \$8. The government takes \$2 in taxes, and the corporation takes \$90 for overhead and profit, including obscene CEO salaries. This is the "tax" we need to reduce. Even failed CEOs are given hundreds of millions of dollars when they are fired.

CEO salaries now exceed 500 times the salary of their workers. And these gigantic compensation packages are tax-deductible expenses for the corporation. We taxpayers are subsidizing their salaries! We should limit the corporate tax deduction for executive compensation to 20 times the salary of their lowest paid worker. We must also close the loopholes that allow the multinationals to avoid taxation altogether. We could probably eliminate income taxes for workers and small businesses making less than \$50,000 per year if we made sure the multinationals who use foreign suppliers, foreign slave labor, and offshore bank accounts are told, "If you want to sell your stuff in this country, you're going to pay your fair share of taxes."

We should also consider a small tax on financial transactions. Currency speculation and day-trading is not investment. It is gambling. Tax it. The objective of our tax policy should be to allow the economy to function while slowing the enormous transfer of wealth from the poor and middle class to the super-wealthy.

The Center for American Progress has put forth some modest proposals for improving our tax system. They would end preferential treatment for income from capital over income from work by setting capital gains and dividend tax rates equal to those on ordinary income. They would eliminate the employee side of the FICA tax and remove the cap (currently \$90,000/yr) on income subject to corporate FICA contributions. They would return the top tax rate to 39.6% for those earning more than \$120,000 per year. They would eliminate the Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT). They would replace the regressive retirement savings deduction with a flat 25% refundable credit for retirement savings. They would eliminate loopholes and retain a reformed estate tax on estates above \$2.5 million (or \$5 million for a couple). I support these changes, although I would add a few more, such as indexing capital gains for inflation.

Tort Reform: This is Republican code for protecting giant corporations from being held responsible for damages to their customers. Without the threat of large jury awards for pain and suffering and penalty damages for negligence, corporations will not spend the time, effort, and money it takes to make sure its products and services are as safe as possible. Yes, trial lawyers sometimes make lots of money from their share of these awards, but they also perform many hours of pro bono work each year. The appearance of occasional abuse is no reason to discard necessary legal protections for consumers. Indeed, these few large awards serve as a valuable deterrent to reckless corporate behavior.

Trade Issues: I support trade; but it should be fair trade, not free trade. I oppose NAFTA, CAFTA, and the World Trade Organization (WTO). They are not really about free trade, but free investment. Everything about them favors the billionaire investors. NAFTA created 20 new billionaires in Mexico (and a bunch in the US). But it decreased the standard of living for workers on BOTH sides of the Rio

Grande. Rather than raise the standard of living in the third world to match ours, these agreements are decreasing our standards to match those in poor countries. The newly created transnational organizations (like the WTO) are run by and for the giant multinationals and banks, with no public accountability, no minutes of their meetings, no reasons for their decisions, no input from workers or their elected representatives, and no loyalty to any nation. They overrule our laws, ignore our courts, and force our workers to compete with Chinese slave labor. They destroy the quality of life everywhere except Wall Street. Now we have CAFTA, too. Enough is enough. There should be no trade agreements without protection for workers and the environment.

The destruction of the standard of living in Mexico caused by NAFTA has been a major factor in driving desperate workers into this country as illegal aliens. We should follow the example of the European Union. When countries like Greece and Spain wished to join, they were told that they would have to reform their social system to give greater protections to their workers, reduce the gap between rich and poor, and raise the standard of living of their workers before they could be admitted. European countries did not want the standard of living in their countries to be jeopardized by admitting potential sources of cheap labor. Unfortunately, the designers of NAFTA have different priorities. Being dominated by giant corporate interests, sources of cheap labor were exactly what they wanted, and to them the resultant reduction in wages within the United States was a desirable side benefit increasing their profit margins.

We desperately need a Congress which will protect the workers in this country and will only approve trade agreements which do so.

Transition from Space Shuttle to Next Generation Vehicle: The US space program has been built up over decades. We enjoy a position of world leadership in space. This position is dependent on our greatest asset - our people. We have outstanding scientists, engineers, technicians, mechanics, and workers. They have unparalleled experience, and represent our corporate memory. But we are not producing the young scientists and engineers we will need in the future. China and India are educating many times as many as we are. The LAST thing we can afford to do is to lay off the people who care for and maintain the space shuttle, then four years later try to assemble a team for the next vehicle. It is absolutely essential that we have an orderly transition from the space shuttle era to that of Orion. There MUST be an overlap between the "old hands" who have done such a fantastic job in the past and the new generation of space workers who must take us into the future. To have forced layoffs to save money on the space program is irresponsible, unfair to our people, and suicidal for NASA's future. It also jeopardizes flight safety. The reduction in manpower to that required by the new, more efficient, simpler Orion vehicles must happen gradually through retirement and natural attrition.

"Under God": I support the words "Under God" remaining in the Pledge of Allegiance. I also support a person's right to omit those words if they wish. The First Amendment to the Constitution guarantees our free exercise of religion and prohibits the government from establishing a state religious denomination. It does not promise to protect atheists from encountering religious expression. It does, however, protect their right to refrain from joining in religious expression. It is true that the words "Under God" were only added in Eisenhower's time. The Pledge would be fine without them. But to remove them now would be akin to making atheism the state religion. We must use common sense in achieving a balance between the competing rights of different groups.

Veterans: The government has broken its word to our retired combat veterans. They were promised free health care for life for themselves and their families in exchange for 20 years of service. Now they are kicked back and forth between the VA, Medicare, and Medicaid, and often wind up paying their own way or going without proper care. Our veterans have been lied to about exposure to nuclear tests, about Agent Orange, and about Gulf War Syndrome. Tens of thousands have been disabled by Depleted Uranium. They are not given the respect they deserve. They deserve better. Tricare for life is a good step toward keeping our promises to veterans, but it's not enough. It requires a veteran and his spouse to pay \$176 or more per month toward Medicare, and it still doesn't cover dental care or glasses, and only covers prescriptions partially. Besides, the Bush administration has voted to deny Tricare to Reserve and National Guard troops who fought in Iraq and Afghanistan. Many of us now know that we were lied to. We were sent to fight in wars that had nothing to do with American security. The best thing our government can do for its combat veterans is to quit making more of them.

The VA system should be fully funded. What's more, the care of our veterans should be considered

“mandatory” funding, not “discretionary spending.” The current administration is continually attempting to cut back on veterans’ benefits. They have set up a commission to study how to slash disability payments to our combat wounded veterans. One of their ideas is to “offset” Social Security receipts by subtracting them dollar for dollar from VA disability payments. Until Senator Barak Obama shamed them out of it, they attempted to reclassify thousands of disabled veterans, taking away their disability payments altogether. The Bush administration has opposed bonuses for troops fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan. They proposed reductions in combat pay and allowances for troops in Iraq - at the very time they were invading Iraq in 2002. Now they are attempting to defund the brain injury center of the VA. This at the very time that more brain injuries are occurring than ever before. The Bush administration and their puppets in Congress have an abysmal record on veterans’ issues. They give much lip service to calls to “support our troops.” But they deny the troops the support they need. We must recognize that when they say “Support Our Troops” what they really mean is “To hell with the troops ... just support our disastrous policies which are killing and maiming so many of them!”

The Disabled American Veterans scores the votes of members of Congress. The incumbent Republican I am challenging has received a ZERO score in each of the last two years. As a combat veteran and a member of the “Band of Brothers 2006”, I am committed to taking care of our own. We can and must do better by our veterans.

Welfare: Government welfare programs (including corporate welfare) should be eliminated. They should be replaced with a series of rights for all citizens, including the right to health care (including preventive care and long-term care), the right to a job at a living wage, the right to education (through college or higher for those who can hack it), and the right to a basic subsistence income. The latter can be achieved through an expansion of the Earned Income Credit (EIC) into a full-blown Negative Income Tax. With such programs in place, welfare will not be necessary. No longer will people be trapped into poverty by “benefits” they lose if they get a job.

Women's Issues: There are lots of issues in this category - each worthy of its own paragraph, but we will attempt to deal with most of them here. The overriding theme is the dignity and equality of women. Saying women should be equal with men is not to deny their obvious superiority in many ways. Indeed, if women ruled the world, there would undoubtedly be more caring, more compassion, more understanding, and a lot less greed. Still, it is a man’s world, and thus we are in the ironic position of having to seek “equality” for the better half of humankind. In particular, we insist on equal pay for equal work and on equal opportunity for women in the workplace for those who choose to have a career outside the home. At the same time, we proclaim that this should be a matter of choice and not of necessity. Some women will choose a career instead of marriage or instead of motherhood, and that should be their right. But for those women who choose to be wives and mothers, they should have the option of choosing to work in the home (and being a full-time homemaker and mother is hard and challenging work indeed). Unfortunately, the American economy makes this almost impossible except for the lucky few married to those earning huge paychecks. Today, most American women are forced to work outside the home. Single mothers are particularly downtrodden in our society. We must work toward a society in which women have real choices, and in which their contributions are properly valued. Those who choose to work outside the home should be provided reliable and affordable child care and a living wage.

In some other societies, it must be admitted, women are even worse off than they are in the United States. It should be the policy of our country to work through the United Nations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to eradicate the subjugation of women, female genital mutilation, the selective abortion of females, the murdering of infant girls, and other abuses of basic human rights worldwide.

X-Rated Video Games: Many video games are so violent that I have influenced my sons and daughters not to allow their children to have them. It has been proven that violent video games are dehumanizing. The Army uses them to decondition recruits from their natural reluctance to kill another human being. The percentage of infantry troops who actually fire their weapons in battle has risen markedly since World War II. The Army says this “improvement” is due to video games. Well I don’t want my grandchildren “improved,” thank you very much! I wish these sick “games” didn’t exist, and I feel sorry for the sick people who make them. However, this is a free country, and we can’t just prohibit things we don’t like. We can, however, require appropriate labeling so that parents can exercise their rights. We must also seek to have sales of these videos directly to minors prohibited. Much like cigarettes or x-rated movies, we must take the steps necessary to

allow parents to make the decisions, not the children. We can also (as we have done with cigarettes) educate people about the harmful effects of violent videos.

Yugoslavia: The illegal bombing of Serbia and Kosovo had nothing to do with ethnic cleansing, but money. We should end our occupation. See Kosovo article on www.rmbowman.com/ssn for much more.

Zero: The number of new combat veterans we should create with foreign wars having nothing to do with our national security.

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