



Real Solutions For America

America Works Best When It Works For All Of Us

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Dear Fellow American,

I've spent the last year putting together a detailed plan to get our country moving again.

The heart of my plan is based on the simple promise of America that I learned growing up in a small town in North Carolina: if you work hard and do the right thing, America will give you the chance to build a better life for your family.

George Bush comes from a very different place and has a very different approach. He thinks if you just help people at the top, somehow the whole country will do better.

I think he's wrong. The hard work, determination, and ingenuity of middle and working class Americans built the great American economy. When they do well, we all do well.

But right now, they're struggling with real problems that this president doesn't even recognize, let alone understand – a growing tax burden that is the direct result of the president's tax cuts for the wealthiest; constantly rising health insurance bills and prescription drug costs; failing schools that don't prepare kids for college, and college tuition that's unaffordable.

America deserves better. America deserves a president who will offer real solutions to the problems people face in their everyday lives. I have a responsibility to tell you not just what I'm against, but what I'm for. That's what this campaign is all about.

I hope you'll read my plan - and when you're done, I want to hear from you, because this plan isn't a closed book. I want to keep improving it, and to do that I need your ideas, I need your suggestions, I need your thoughts – and I hope to earn your support.

Please send your thoughts to realsolutions@johnedwards2004.com or call 888-292-2004. Together, we can reclaim our government and restore our values to the White House. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

John Edwards

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JOHN EDWARDS' REAL SOLUTIONS FOR AMERICA

John Edwards believes that the way we strengthen America is to have a government that honors our values. Edwards understands that hard work, responsibility, faith, and family are the values that built America, and they are the values we should rely on to shape our future. John Edwards' plan offers real solutions for America.

His plans will renew our economy by rewarding work and providing tax breaks for working Americans to build their wealth. He has a detailed plan to restore fiscal discipline, return responsibility to corporate America, and rebuild confidence in our markets. He will keep manufacturing jobs in America, and revitalize our small towns and rural economies. And for the first time in history, every child will have health care, and he will bring down the high costs of health care.

These ideas are rooted in the values and principles John Edwards learned in Robbins, North Carolina. His father worked in the textile mills all of his life, his mother held a number of jobs, the last one at the post office, and he was the first member of his family to attend college. John Edwards believes that every American should have the same opportunities to reach his or her God-given potential, and believes that this plan is the right plan for America.

These are some of the proposals you'll find here:

Tax Reform to Reward Work. Edwards believes a millionaire should not pay lower taxes on his unearned income than a nurse pays for working overtime. While restoring fiscal discipline, Edwards will offer tax breaks to help working families own a piece of the rock—buy a home, save for retirement, or invest in stocks.

Good Jobs at Home. America has lost more than 2 million manufacturing jobs under George Bush. Edwards will create good jobs—negotiating only fair trade deals, closing loopholes for companies moving headquarters overseas, and creating tax breaks for companies that manufacture in America.

A Strong America. Edwards believes that American families are safer at home when we are respected abroad. He will lead by working with our closest allies to solve the world's toughest problems. He will create a global coalition to fight terrorism and combat weapons of mass destruction, promote democracy and freedom, and revitalize international institutions that make America stronger.

An America that is Safer and More Free. To track down terrorists within our borders, Edwards supports a new homeland intelligence agency. To protect basic freedoms that this administration has undercut, he will establish strong safeguards for our liberties that are missing today.

Health Care for Every Child. Edwards proposes that for the first time in history, America should require health insurance for every child, with tax credits to help families with rising premiums. He will take on insurance companies, drug companies, and HMOs to bring down health care costs for every American.

College for Everyone. Edwards will say to America's young people: we will pay for your first year of college tuition at a public university or community college, if you will do your part in school and work at least 10 hours a week.

A New Deal for Teachers. Because a great education starts with a great teacher, Edwards will increase teacher pay, especially in the areas that need good teachers most, and will offer scholarships for young people who commit to tough teaching assignments.

An Agenda for Rural America. While many in Washington just fly over rural America to get from one coast to the other, Edwards comes from rural America, and he offers real help for rural America—investing capital, introducing technology, and protecting the natural heritage.

Fueling America's Future. Edwards will set up new factories to convert agricultural waste, like corn stalks and wood chips, into energy products. These factories will create manufacturing jobs and reduce our reliance on foreign oil.

Worker and Shareholder Bill of Rights. Some CEOs have lined their own pockets while workers lost their jobs and families lost their savings. Edwards will crack down on outrageous CEO pay, require honest accounting, and ensure pension fairness for ordinary workers.

Relief for Working Parents. Today, parents are working longer hours and spending less time with their children. Edwards will offer relief to those families. He will offer a family leave tax credit so parents with newborns can afford to spend time with their children, and provide afterschool opportunities so children have safe, nourishing places to go.

Rewarding Work And Creating Opportunity

“Our ancestors came here to escape a world where birth was destiny, and to build a nation where all are born with the right to control their own destiny. For more than 200 years, our country has been propelled by this single, powerful idea: that all Americans should have the opportunity to rise as far as their hard work and God-given potential can take them.”

“And yet, in the first years of what ought to be America’s greatest century, too many of our leaders have walked away from the values that got us here: Work, responsibility, country, a fair shake for all and a free ride for none.”

“This administration’s economic vision has one goal: to get rid of taxes on unearned income and shift the burden onto people who work. They want a world where the only people who have to pay taxes are the ones who do the work.”

“I believe the backbone of the American economy is the hard work, determination, and ingenuity of the middle class, not the insiders. I believe the way to grow the economy is to grow and strengthen the middle class, not shrink its size and add to its burdens. I believe the way a rich nation gets richer is by giving all its citizens the chance to get richer, not by only helping those like me who’ve already succeeded beyond our wildest dreams.”

John Edwards' Plan To Reward Work And Create Opportunity

Summary

John Edwards believes it's time to restore our values to the economy, by rewarding those low-income and middle-class Americans who earn a paycheck every week. His plan asks the very wealthiest Americans to pay the same taxes on their investments that regular people pay on their salaries. And his plan provides tax cuts for working Americans so they can achieve their dreams – to buy a home, pay for education, save for retirement, and give their children a better future.

The plan also restores fiscal discipline so that this generation does not pass the buck to future generations.

The Edwards Plan to Reward Work and Create Opportunity

- ***Help poor and middle-class Americans build their wealth***—cutting taxes on home ownership and savings for these Americans.
- Create a ***tax code that reflects our values***.
- ***Restore fiscal responsibility*** so that this generation does not pass its problems on to the next generation.

Help Working Americans Build Their Wealth

“Every American should have the chance to own a piece of the rock. Under my plan, every American will have the chance to be an owner – to buy a home, save for college, invest in America, or put money aside for a secure retirement.”

The American Dream Tax Credit

Edwards' American Dream Tax Credit will offer a matching tax credit of up to \$5,000 to help those who need it to cover a down payment on a first home. This credit will give millions of Americans their first chance to own a home.

Incentives to Invest and Save

To help working Americans invest in American business, Edwards will cut capital gains taxes for 95% of Americans. For these taxpayers, he will create a \$1,000 exclusion from capital gains taxes, as well as \$500 dividend exclusion. He will also lower the long-term capital gains rate for middle-

**Matching
Savings
Accounts for
Retirement**

class families. These steps will simplify tax filing and eliminate two tax forms for millions of Americans.

Edwards will give Americans who have the most trouble saving today a chance to save through matching savings accounts.

He will match \$1 in private savings with as much as a \$1 refundable tax credit for savings, up to a limit of \$1,000 per couple, for Americans with incomes up to \$50,000. A working family that saves and receives the maximum under this plan every year from age 25 to retirement will have a nest egg of \$200,000, on top of other savings.

Create A Tax Code That Reflects Our Values

**Tax
Millionaires No
Less Than
Secretaries**

“Today, somebody who has worked his whole life to save for his son’s college has to pay taxes at more than twice the rate of his boss. Where I come from, that man’s hard work means at least as much to the future of the country—not half as much as his boss. Mr. President, I challenge you. Explain why you think a multimillionaire should pay 15 percent on his next million on stock profits, while a fireman has to pay over 30 percent for each extra dollar of overtime. Mr. President, explain how you square that with America’s values.”

Edwards will make the tax rate for the unearned income of the wealthiest 1 percent equal to the top income tax rate on earned income for middle-class families consisting of teachers, nurses, and secretaries. Edwards will set the top rate on capital gains at 25 percent for people earning over about \$400,000, less than the top 1 percent of Americans.

Edwards will also repeal the Bush tax cuts that benefit only the top 2 percent of Americans, including the new top two tax rates on income, and the new rates on income from dividends and capital gains for the wealthiest 2 percent of Americans. Only those earning about \$240,000 or more are in the top two income tax brackets. In addition, Edwards will retain the tax on very large estates.

Restore Fiscal Discipline

“This president has already turned over \$5 trillion in surpluses into nearly \$5 trillion in deficits. Under this plan, we get our budget and our priorities back on track.”

Eliminate Bush Tax Cuts for Wealthiest

Edwards will eliminate George Bush’s irresponsible tax cuts for the wealthiest.

Stop Excessive Spending

Edwards will:

- Reinstating real budget caps and permanently restoring pay-as-you-go budget enforcement rules.
- Using attrition to reduce the number of government employees and contractors, excluding defense and homeland security, by 10 percent over 10 years.
- Closing government agencies that have outlived their usefulness, such as the Office of Thrift Supervision.
- Opening more government procurement to competitive bidding.

Cut Corporate Subsidies

Edwards will:

- Ending the excessive profits that banks earn on student loans.
- Standing up to insurance companies, drug companies, and HMOs to reduce health care costs while improving the quality of health care.
- Cutting federal subsidies for major oil companies, mining on public lands, and millionaires operating farms.
- Creating a commission to examine and eliminate unneeded corporate subsidies.

Close Pointless Tax Loopholes

Edwards will:

- Eliminating tax loopholes that allow companies to avoid taxes by renouncing their U.S. citizenship.

- End corporate tax deductions for companies that buy “janitor’s insurance”—life-insurance policies on rank-and-file employees whose families never see a dime in benefits from those policies.
- Require companies to explain the differences between the profits they report to investors and those they report to the IRS, and crack down on peddlers of abusive tax shelters.
- Enforce our tax laws to collect from wealthy corporations and individuals who do not pay.

Edwards’ proposals will save more than \$2 trillion over the next 20 years. These proposals reduce the deficit, protect Social Security, and support the critical investments in education, health care, and economic growth that Edwards has proposed.

Creating Jobs And Helping Working Americans

“I grew up in a Southern mill town. My father worked in textile mills all his adult life. I know firsthand what impact the closing of these mills has on the town.”

“In Washington, you often hear people say: ‘well, they lost those jobs, but they can get better jobs.’ But the vast majority of these other, better jobs that you hear people talk about are not in that town. Those jobs are also often not the kind of jobs that a middle-aged ex-millworker, who may not even have a high school diploma or a GED, is going to be able to get.”

“I believe that we must turn our face toward the future. But Americans have always watched out for each other, and we need to do exactly the same thing here.”

“When a plant closes, it is not just the people who work there who are affected; the small businesses that used to sell groceries and clothes to the people who work in that mill suffer as well. The companies where the plant used to buy materials and equipment suffer. The city hospitals, the police force that depend on taxes from that plant and from the people who work in that plant suffer.”

John Edwards' Plan To Create Jobs And Help Working Americans

Summary

Under George Bush, America has lost more than 2 million manufacturing jobs. Edwards will revitalize our manufacturing base and strengthen the basic protections on which workers depend.

The Edwards Plan to Create Jobs and Help Working Americans

- *Create good jobs here* at home.
- *Bring jobs back* to communities that have lost them.
- *Strengthen the rights* of working Americans.

Create Good Jobs Here At Home

Negotiate Fair Deals for American Workers

“Instead of giving tax breaks to companies that move their headquarters overseas, we should offer tax incentives for companies to manufacture here in America. We should be exporting American products, not American jobs.”

Free trade has to be fair trade. As president, Edwards will be a tough negotiator on trade, and will only negotiate trade agreements that meet these basic principles:

- Agreements should be fair and enforceable.
- Agreements should have strong labor and environmental protections.
- Agreements should have real, tangible benefits for U.S. businesses and U.S. workers.
- Both sides should give up something, not just America.

Stand Up for U.S. Trade Rights

Our country needs to enforce the trade agreements that we have on the books.

For example, we run a \$100 billion trade deficit with China – the largest in history between any two nations – in part because of lax Chinese trade law enforcement. It’s time to hold other countries to their commitments.

Keep Companies at Home

Some in Washington are pushing tax proposals that could encourage corporations to move overseas at the same time as they protect tax cuts for corporations that renounce their U.S. citizenship.

Edwards believes that at a time when we have lost more than 2 million manufacturing jobs, we should keep jobs here at home.

He will give a 10 percent tax cut to corporations that produce goods here and keep jobs at home. Edwards will stop corporations from getting tax cuts for renouncing their citizenship.

Bring Jobs Back To The Communities That Have Lost Them

Get Our Economy Back on Track

"We need to create jobs in the places that are hurting."

The best way to create jobs is to get our economy back on track. Edwards will:

- Honor the values of work and opportunity that have helped our country become the most prosperous in history.
- Insist on a responsible budget.
- Invest in our future competitiveness through education and innovation.
- Stand up to crony capitalists who are putting their private interests ahead of the public corporations they run.

Provide Venture Capital

Edwards will enact the Rural Economic Advancement Challenge, or REACH fund, to bring venture capital and management expertise to entrepreneurs and small businesses in small towns and areas that are losing jobs today.

Create Economic Revitalization Zones

Edwards will designate towns and areas hard hit by foreign trade as Economic Revitalization Zones that are eligible for tax credits and other aid to encourage business investment.

Fuel America's Future

Edwards has proposed the Fueling America's Future program to promote renewable fuels. He will support the creation of new biorefineries to transform agricultural wastes - like corn husks, rice straw and wood chips - into energy.

In addition to helping end our dependence on foreign fuels, this plan will create good manufacturing jobs for working Americans.

Strengthen The Rights Of Working Americans

"Jobs are not just about paychecks. They are about respect and dignity. It is time for leaders to honor working Americans again."

Increase the Minimum Wage

When inflation is taken into account, the minimum wage today is more than 20 percent below its level in 1979. Edwards believes that low-income working people deserve better. He supports an increase in the minimum wage of at least \$1.50.

Extend Unemployment Benefits

Under George Bush, more than one million Americans have been looking for work for six months or longer. These Americans are trying to do right by their families, and Edwards believes they deserve unemployment benefits in the Bush economy.

Protect Worker Safety

Every year, millions of American workers are injured on the job. Many of these injuries could be avoided through small improvements in workplace conditions. Edwards supports real standards to protect against workplace injuries.

Reform America's Labor Laws

Working people deserve the right to decide whether to join a union without harassment or fear.

America's labor laws do not truly protect that right. In one-quarter of efforts to organize a union, workers are fired illegally. Edwards will overhaul our labor laws to make sure that Americans can make a free decision whether to join a union.

Returning America's Values To Corporate America

“America’s small businesses create jobs better than any government program. Our markets allocate capital more efficiently than any bureaucrat.”

“Yet our free enterprise system also depends on values: innovation, integrity, hard work, and great rewards for honest success. When those values disappear, our country suffers. The flood of corporate scandal in these past few years has not only torn at the roots of public confidence, but washed away the financial security of millions of Americans through layoffs, bankruptcies and destroyed pensions.”

“Our economy, our people, and our nation have been undermined by the crony capitalists who believe that success is all about working the angles, working the phones, and rigging the game, instead of hard work, innovation and frugality.”

“And these manipulators find comfort in an administration which, through its own example, seems to embrace that ethic.”

“We will never turn this country around until we put our economy and our government back in line with our values.”

“My ideas are based on principles as old as America. Corporate books should be honest. Rewards should be based on accomplishment. Executives and other insiders should be accountable. And businesses have responsibilities to their workers, not just the other way around.”

John Edwards' Plan To Return America's Values To Corporate America

Summary

The vast majority of businesses and business leaders still believe in America's values. But too many executives have forgotten those values. That is why John Edwards has proposed a Worker and Shareholder Bill of Rights.

At Enron, Tyco, and WorldCom, a handful of managers enriched themselves while working people lost everything. CEO salaries have increased even as ordinary working people have seen their paychecks decline.

At American Airlines, a CEO was demanding that pilots and flight attendants see their pensions cut at the very moment he was putting away \$41 million to protect executive pensions against bankruptcy.

John Edwards believes we must restore corporate responsibility to restore confidence in our economy.

Edwards' Worker and Shareholder Bill of Rights

John Edwards has proposed a Worker and Shareholder Bill of Rights to:

- Take on insiders to *restore honest accounting*.
- *Rein in outrageous CEO pay*.
- Empower owners to *hold managers accountable* for results.
- *Restore pension parity* to help regular workers.
- *Shut down tax gimmicks*.

Take On Insiders To Restore Honest Accounting

"First, we need to restore trust--trust in our markets, and trust that our political system won't stop our markets from working. That means a lot of things. The first one is this: Congress and the White House need to keep their hands out of options accounting."

Expense Stock

Stock options are a key tool, but they are not free. The

Options

failure to account for options played an important role in scandals like Enron. In 1994, Congress blocked a plan to require expensing of options. Edwards believes expensing of options should be required.

Better Disclose Pension Costs

Current rules allow companies to claim large earnings on their pension funds, even if those funds are losing billions. This can keep investors and employees in the dark about the health of companies and pensions.

Edwards calls for new rules to give investors and workers accurate, clear information about pension costs.

Rein In Outrageous Executive Pay

“Executives who create wealth and jobs deserve to be richly compensated. But taxpayers should not be subsidizing massive bonuses for CEOs who are driving their companies into the ditch.”

Eliminate Tax Breaks

Building on current law, Edwards will require that tax deductions for high executive pay be available only when that pay truly leads to productivity gains and sound growth over the long haul.

Pass a CEO Right-to-Know Law

Edwards believes companies should be required to tell shareholders and workers in plain English what they pay top executives and how that pay compares with the pay of ordinary workers.

Empower Owners To Hold Managers Accountable

“We need to make sure corporate directors and executives are accountable to the shareholders they work for. Corporate boards are supposed to represent shareholders, not management.”

Empower Shareholders

Edwards will allow shareholders to nominate board members without waging a costly proxy fight.

Stand Up for Investors

Mutual funds and pension funds have a duty to protect their investors' interest, but many funds have stood idly by while misconduct occurred. Edwards will strengthen enforcement of this obligation and will also require pension plans to disclose how they cast their proxy votes.

Put the "Public" Back Into IPOs

Some Wall Street bankers have been able to game initial public offerings, selling underpriced shares to friends and potential clients. Edwards will limit sales to insiders and their families.

Restore Pension Parity To Help Regular Workers

"It is a disgrace when executives walk off with huge pensions after running their companies into the ground. We need to bring back a basic principle of our pension laws: pensions should be protected on the shop floor, not just the top floor."

Restore Pension Parity

At a time when CEOs are enhancing their own pensions and cutting their workers' pensions, Edwards will strengthen the principle of fairness in current pension law. He will eliminate all tax breaks for executive pensions that are disproportionately large compared to rank-and-file pensions.

Protect Older Workers

Companies are converting pensions from guaranteed monthly payments to "cash balance" plans that accumulate earnings. These conversions can cut older workers' pensions by as much as 50 percent. Edwards will protect the oldest and longest-tenured workers from pension cuts due to conversions.

End "Golden Getaways"

Executives shouldn't be walking away with millions while companies are going bankrupt. Edwards introduced legislation to keep executives from safeguarding their own pensions in bankruptcy-proof trust funds.

Eliminate Pension-Based Tax Abuses

Edwards will enforce tax laws that require executive pensions to remain outside the beneficiaries' control and at risk of loss in order to avoid immediate taxation.

Shut Down Corporate Tax Abuses

“It is a disgrace that American companies renounce their citizenship to reduce their taxes. It is a disgrace that corporations can take out life insurance policies on their janitors, claim a huge tax deduction, and then keep the proceeds when that employee dies, rather than sharing them with his family. Our tax code is riddled with such loopholes, which waste our money and offend our values. This president has had several opportunities to close these very loopholes and he hasn’t. I will.”

Fully Disclose Book-Tax Disparities

Edwards will require corporations to disclose the profits they report to the IRS and explain why they differ from profits reported on balance sheets. This disclosure will make it far harder for companies to hide income in undisclosed shelters.

Close the “Janitors’ Insurance” Loophole

Today, corporations buy insurance on rank-and-file employees and get huge tax breaks—even though the employees and their families never see the benefits. Edwards will close this abusive tax loophole.

Close the Bermuda Loophole

Edwards will not allow U.S. companies to avoid taxes by setting up foreign “headquarters” that are little more than mailboxes.

Stop Sham Tax Transactions

Edwards will remove tax benefits gained from transactions that have no genuine business purpose other than tax avoidance or evasion.

Crack Down on Abusive Tax Lawyering

Today, some tax lawyers make millions through flimsy letters telling clients how to shelter their income. Edwards will stop these abuses.

Increase Penalties for Abuses

Abuse must have consequences. Edwards believes that we need stricter penalties for taxpayers who fail to properly disclose tax shelter transactions and underpay their taxes due to an abusive tax shelter.

Keeping America Safe At Home By Strengthening Domestic Defense

“The first and foremost responsibility of any government is to protect its citizens from harm. It is time for all of us, without regard to party, to say what every one of us knows: Washington is not doing enough to make America safe. If the administration continues to do too little, it will be too late again. We must do better.”

“Strengthening our domestic defense is a challenge, but Americans have always risen to great challenges. There is no cause greater or nobler than protecting the country we love from the challenges we face. I believe we can do it, and we will do it if we are determined and if we work together.”

John Edwards' Plan To Strengthen Domestic Defense

Summary

Edwards has outlined a strategy to strengthen America's defenses against the threat of further terrorist attack. In the first months of 2003, he introduced eight bills to improve our homeland security. Portions of these bills have already passed the United States Senate.

The Edwards Plan to Strengthen Homeland Security

Edwards believes we must pursue four basic goals:

- ***Tracking down and stopping the terrorists*** in our midst before they hurt us.
- ***Tightening our border security.***
- ***Strengthening security at the likeliest targets*** of terrorist attacks.
- ***Improving domestic readiness*** so we are always prepared to respond to threats.

Track Down And Stop Terrorists

A New Homeland Intelligence Agency

"Today, we have the worst of all worlds: an FBI that has done a poor job of identifying and stopping terrorists within the U.S., led by an Attorney General who is doing an even worse job of protecting our civil liberties. We can do better."

Edwards will establish a new Homeland Intelligence Agency focused entirely on intelligence gathering and analysis.

The new agency will:

- Contain all foreign intelligence operatives working in the United States.
- Protect the rights of all Americans with new judicial review requirements, new public reporting requirements, and a new office of individual liberties.

A Safe and Free America

Edwards has strongly opposed measures by Attorney General John Ashcroft that undermine our civil liberties without increasing our security.

Edwards has vocally criticized the administration policy which allows the indefinite detention of a United States citizen arrested on United States soil as an “enemy combatant” without access to a lawyer or a day in court.

Help for Front Line Officers

Police on the front lines need better warning information, more security clearances, and better access to newly combined federal watch lists.

Under Edwards’ Anti-Terrorism Intelligence Distribution Act, first responders in different regions of every state will be carefully chosen to receive classified information on terrorist threats.

More Secure State IDs

Because 7 of the 19 hijackers on September 11th had fake IDs, Edwards has called for stronger basic standards for state-issued IDs. He will give states money to help do the job.

Tighten Our Border Security

“We need to significantly tighten our borders against dangerous people and dangerous things.”

Borders

Edwards supports substantial increases in the ranks of the INS, Border Patrol, and consular officials. These officials will be specifically dedicated to fighting terrorism.

Seaports

Edwards has called for the use of more sophisticated screening technology at our ports.

Edwards will accelerate the move to an “EZ-Pass System,” so that shippers that improve their security will move through ports more quickly.

Protect The Most Vulnerable Targets

“September 11th awakened us to the massive damage terrorists could cause with airplanes, and we’ve taken good measures to harden airline security. Unfortunately, we have a dangerous pattern of closing the barn door after the terrorists have attacked. It’s time to get ahead of them. We know they want to cause the most death, destruction, economic disruption, and fear they can. And so while we can never predict just what terrorists will do, we have a pretty good sense about other likely targets. We need to harden those targets.”

Chemical Plants

At 123 chemical plants, a terrorist attack could kill or injure more than 1 million people. Security at many of these plants remains weak.

Edwards has fought on the Senate floor for tough new safety standards at chemical plants vulnerable to terrorist attacks. These efforts have been opposed by the chemical industry.

Skyscrapers and Arenas

Today, many tall buildings and arenas lack state-of-the-art security and blast-resistant materials. Edwards introduced the Building Security Act to support research into improved safety standards, building construction, and building security methods. The bill also establishes a new task force to develop improvements in a private security industry that is too often inadequately trained, screened, and supervised.

Cybersecurity

Edwards introduced the National Cyber Security Leadership Act to make the government’s computer systems less vulnerable to attack.

While today only a few federal agencies follow best practices for securing their computers against cyberattack, this Act requires all federal agencies to adopt those practices.

Improve Domestic Readiness

“The administration may think domestic defense is about changing the color code from yellow to orange. Let me tell you something: the colors that will make America safer are firefighter red, EMT white, and police officer blue.”

**First
Responders**

Edwards introduced legislation to provide \$50 billion for cash-strapped states and local governments. Included in the funding was a \$10 billion infusion for homeland security to be split between states and major cities. Then funds could be used to hire, retain, and equip police officers, firefighters and EMTs.

**Homeland
Security
Scholarships**

Edwards introduced legislation to offer college scholarships to students who commit to serving in shortage homeland security professions for at least five years after graduation.

**Improved
Emergency
Warnings**

The color-coded warning system is often more confusing than helpful and does not reach all Americans in the event of a nighttime attack. Senator Edwards' Emergency Warning Act requires the provision of better, faster and more practical information using all available technologies, including traditional telephones, cell phones, and pagers.

**Getting
Americans
Involved**

Edwards will support communities that encourage every citizen to serve — for example, for a weekend each year.

He has also proposed supporting neighborhood watches and enabling them to better address homeland security concerns. Edwards has introduced legislation to encourage the creation of thousands of neighborhood watch groups by 2007.

Strengthening America's Role In The World Through Principled Leadership

“American leadership is about more than our ability to dominate others. It is about convincing others that our power serves their interests as well as our own. We inspire others to stand with us when we show that we are willing to stand with them, to listen to them, to take their views and contributions into account instead of taking them for granted. Too often, this administration seems to confuse leadership with going it alone and engagement with the compromise of principle - but real leadership is about setting principles and rallying others around them.”

“Our greatest challenges require the active commitment of our friends, allies, partners, and in fact, the world. Unilateral action will not win the war against terrorism. It will not stop the spread of weapons of mass destruction. It will not produce thriving new democracies from the wreckage of failed or crushed totalitarian regimes. And it certainly won't protect the global environment, win the fight against global HIV/AIDS, or address the scourge of deep poverty around the world.”

“This doesn't mean we will never have differences with our friends and allies. We will. But what's important is how we resolve those differences – or agree not to. We should always stick to our principles, do our very best to bring others to our way of thinking, and remain committed to resolving disputes in a respectful way. Picking up and walking away is not an exercise of leadership – it is an abdication of it. A leader who has to go it alone is no longer leading anybody.”

John Edwards' Plan For Strengthening America's Role In The World Through Principled Leadership

Summary

John Edwards believes we should always maintain our military, economic, and political strength, but that we should use it to promote our values: democracy, freedom, and human rights.

A member of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, Senator Edwards believes we should lead in a way that brings others to us, not that drives them away, and that American families are safer in a world where America is looked up to and respected, not in a world where America is hated.

The Edwards Foreign Policy Agenda

Edwards' foreign policy agenda is based on:

- ***Protecting the safety and security*** of the American people.
- ***Winning the war on terrorism.***
- ***Maintaining the world's best military.***
- ***Winning the peace.***
- ***Forging a global coalition*** against weapons of mass destruction.
- ***Promoting America's highest values*** – democracy, freedom and human rights – around the world.
- ***Rebuilding relationships*** with America's allies and friends.
- ***Working to resolve conflicts.***
- ***Revitalizing institutions*** that make America stronger.

Edwards' Foreign Policy Agenda

“America’s greatness comes through the exercise of principled leadership – leadership that sets an example, leadership that inspires others to follow; leadership that will make others stronger and bring more countries by our side. It is the kind of leadership that presidents of both political parties understood and practiced. It is the kind of leadership we need today.”

Protect Safety and Security

Edwards believes that the first responsibility of any government is the safety and security of its citizens. He has a comprehensive strategy for domestic security, with the proper resources to back it up.

Edwards supports a far stronger commitment to eliminate the threat of chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons, better strategies to win the war on terrorism, and improving America’s global standing in the world.

Win the War on Terrorism

Edwards believes that America must do far better in the fight against terrorism, working with our allies to disrupt and shut down terrorist networks and prevent attacks.

This includes not only tracking down terrorists and bringing them to justice, but also working against those who give financial and material support to terrorists and provide them with safe havens.

Create a New Agency to Combat Terror

These efforts require new and creative leadership in diplomacy, law enforcement, intelligence, and military affairs.

As a member of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, Edwards has been at the center of the national discussion on how to best reform the intelligence community to meet the needs of the post-September 11th world, including his proposal to shift domestic intelligence responsibilities away from the FBI and into a new Homeland Intelligence Agency.

Maintain the World’s Best Military

Edwards believes that we need to maintain a strong commitment to national defense and continue to make sure that America’s military men and women and their families are treated with the respect they’ve earned.

Edwards is committed to maintaining a military with the most advanced training, the most sophisticated technology and adequate resources to accomplish their mission.

Edwards believes that national defense will also be strengthened by the policies we pursue in the world – policies that seek to solve problems before force is necessary and bring allies to our side.

The men and women of America’s military are the finest in the world, but we have to do better to help them surmount the special hardships of service.

Win the Peace

Winning wars is not enough; America must also win the peace. Leading the effort to help rebuild societies based on democracy and freedom is a solid investment in America’s security; it is also a test of America’s leadership. In the Senate, Edwards has proposed a bipartisan plan to improve America’s efforts to achieve stability, democracy, and growth in war-torn societies.

**Reconstruct
Iraq**

In Iraq, Edwards supported the war to remove Saddam Hussein from power, and he has been an outspoken proponent of a strong US commitment to help the Iraqi people rebuild their lives and develop rule of law and democracy.

Edwards believes that the United States cannot rebuild Iraq alone, and must bring other countries and institutions into this important effort.

**Secure
Afghanistan**

In Afghanistan, Edwards believes we must expand the size and scope of an international peacekeeping force beyond Kabul.

Edwards was one of the first Senators to visit Afghanistan after the Taliban was forcibly removed from power, meeting with US troops and visiting other nations and leaders in the region.

**Stop the
Spread of
Weapons of
Mass
Destruction**

Edwards believes that the U.S. must do far more to stop the spread of weapons of mass destruction. America should strengthen its commitment to the Biological Weapons Convention and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, increase support for the dismantling and safeguarding of

	<p>weapons-grade materials in Russia and the former Soviet states, and work with allies to solve urgent proliferation threats like North Korea.</p>
<p>Promote America's Highest Values</p>	<p>Edwards believes America must launch a far-reaching new effort to support democratic, just and lawful societies. This requires much more support for democratic assistance and requires a new approach to foreign aid.</p>
<p>Support Democracy</p>	<p>Edwards believes that we need to get serious about political reform and human rights in places like Cuba, North Korea, and throughout the Middle East.</p>
	<p>We should help give the people of these countries the same opportunities we all seek: to live with dignity and liberty; to live with hope and without fear; to live with opportunity and freedom.</p>
<p>Help Those in Need</p>	<p>Edwards believes that the United States should be a world leader in helping countries overcome hardships like hunger, poverty, and the scourge of HIV/AIDS and other public health concerns. This is especially true on a continent like Africa that has so much potential for growth and democracy.</p>
<p>Rebuild Relationships</p>	<p>To meet all of these goals, America needs strong allies. While the U.S. must maintain its economic and military power, Edwards believes that American leadership is about more than our ability to dominate others. It is about convincing others that our power serves their interests as well as our own.</p>
<p>Work to Resolve Conflicts</p>	<p>Edwards believes that the U.S. must be an active leader to help resolve conflicts, from reducing tensions between India and Pakistan to the peace process in Northern Ireland. Edwards is a strong supporter of Israel, and believes that the U.S. has a vital role in promoting peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians.</p>
<p>Make America Stronger</p>	<p>Edwards believes that we have to revitalize institutions like NATO and the United Nations. American leadership will be indispensable to helping these institutions transform. Such reforms are not just good for these institutions – by helping bring others behind our efforts to tackle today's challenges, such reforms are good for America.</p>

**Define
America's Role**

In the tradition of Presidents Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman, Edwards believes that we must seize this opportunity to define how America uses its power - whether it's defending against threats, promoting prosperity and freedom, or giving help to those who need it. We must strengthen international institutions and alliances to help America meet these challenges.

Health Care For Every Child

“America’s health care system is broken and everyone knows it. Premiums keep rising by 15 percent. Businesses can’t hire new employees because costs are soaring. And millions of Americans - including 12 million Americans under the age of 21- have no health insurance at all. We know that the time has come to fix it. The question is: how do we tackle this problem in a way that is responsive to the needs of the American people and responsible to future generations?”

“I am proposing a health care plan that offers a giant step toward providing universal health insurance for every American. The only way we can tackle the health care problem is to ask for responsibility from everyone: responsibility from parents to make sure their children have health care; responsibility from government to help families get insurance and deal with the rising costs, and responsibility from drug and insurance companies to bring costs down for every American.”

“Under my plan, for the first time in history, we will cover each and every child. My plan takes care of our most vulnerable adults. It helps regular Americans who work their hearts out pay for the high cost of health care. And it does so in a way that families and the country can afford.”

John Edwards' Plan To Cover Every Child And Cut Costs For All Americans

Summary

John Edwards has put forward a health plan that will provide health insurance for every child, cut health care costs for every American, and insure 21 million additional Americans in all. It is a responsible plan that America can achieve today.

The Edwards Health Care Plan

Edwards' health care plan will:

- ***Honor Our Responsibility to Cover Every Child:***
Edwards will make it affordable and easy for parents to get health insurance with refundable tax credits and automatic enrollment. Most families already insuring their children will get a tax cut. In return, parents will have a responsibility to insure their children.
- ***Help the Individuals and Businesses Struggling Most:***
Edwards will offer targeted help to uninsured adults and to small businesses, the unemployed, and adults under age 25 and ages 55-64.
- ***Cut Costs and Improve Quality for Every American:***
Edwards has spent his career fighting HMOs, drug companies, and insurance companies when their interests get in the way of ordinary Americans. Edwards now offers a detailed plan to lower costs and improve quality that includes bringing down drug costs; reining in abusive insurers and frivolous lawsuits to lower malpractice premiums; shifting to computerized medical records; and empowering consumers to make choices based on quality.
- ***Strengthen the Safety Net:*** Edwards will transform health clinics, strengthen public hospitals, and secure Medicaid.

Honor Our Responsibility To Cover Every Child

“If we’re going to fix our broken health care system, the responsible place to start is with the greatest injustice—uninsured children. More than a century ago, we

made sure every child in America could get an education. And 60 years ago, President Harry Truman recognized a responsibility that we've not yet met. He said, 'The health of American children, like their education, should be recognized as a definite public responsibility.' We can't reach that goal unless both government and parents take responsibility to put children first."

While more than 85 percent of parents cover their children today, we cannot achieve universal coverage of children unless both government and parents take responsibility.

Tax Credits to Make Quality Health Care Affordable

Edwards will offer tax credits for parents to buy insurance from their employers or the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP).

Credits will be available to all parents earning less than roughly \$75,000 and to parents in larger families earning less than \$100,000. Credits will be provided regularly whenever parents pay premiums.

- Edwards will require plans to qualify for the tax credit by providing high quality coverage and reasonable co-payments and deductibles.
- Edwards' plan offers low cost coverage:
 - For a typical family of four earning about \$60,000 per year and already covering their children through a parent's job, the plan will offer a tax break worth roughly \$300.
 - No lower-income family will have to pay more than 30 cents a day to insure all of their children. The very poor will be covered for free.

Easy Enrollment

Parents will continue to be able to get private insurance as they do today. If children don't have that insurance, they can be enrolled in CHIP or Medicaid when they are born, when they register for school, when they come to health clinics, or when a parent files a tax return.

**Health Care
for Every
Child**

Under the Edwards plan, parents will get affordable credits and easy access to insurance.

If parents find they still cannot afford coverage due to extraordinary circumstances, they will be able to apply for additional help. But parents will have a responsibility to cover their children.

Help Individuals And Businesses Struggling Most

“In addition to covering every child, this plan will also extend special help to the people and businesses who are struggling most with health care.”

**Uninsured
Adults**

Edwards will provide full funding so that states can allow adults with moderate incomes to buy into CHIP. For all these adults, with or without children, insurance will be free or subsidized.

**Small
Businesses**

Small businesses have fewer resources, and higher health care costs.

Edwards’ Small Business Support Program will give small businesses access to a range of high-quality health plans through purchasing pools that lower rates and reduce red tape.

All businesses with fewer than 50 employees (including the self-employed) will be able to join, and many businesses will be eligible for tax credits.

Young People

Edwards will require insurance companies to allow families to cover their children under age 25. He will allow states to provide added benefits for individuals under 25.

**55-to-64-Year-
Olds**

Adults between 55 and 64 are the fastest growing group of uninsured. Edwards will allow them—and the younger spouses of Medicare beneficiaries—to buy into Medicare.

**Workers
Between Jobs**

When workers lose their jobs, Edwards will allow them to extend their insurance through their jobs, with the federal government picking up 70 percent of the costs.

Cut Costs And Improve Quality

"I will hold insurance companies, drug companies, doctors, and lawyers responsible for keeping health care costs down. We can never meet our responsibilities to one another if the health care system isn't responsible about costs."

More Affordable Prescription Drugs

In the Senate, Edwards led the fight for the Patients' Bill of Rights and co-authored legislation to reduce drug costs by \$60 billion over 10 years.

As president, he will:

- Prohibit many of today's drug advertisements that mislead or overpromise.
- Establish an independent federal office to evaluate the effectiveness of prescription drugs and disseminate the results.
- Permit American consumers to reimport drugs from abroad, with strong protections for patient safety.
- Require the Justice Department to undertake comprehensive investigation and prosecution of companies overcharging the government.
- Establish a commission to study reforms in drug patent laws that will yield more breakthrough drugs.

An End to the Paper Chase

Edwards will establish an electronic medical record and billing system, with stringent privacy protections. This will not only reduce costs, but will also reduce the medical errors caused when doctors have inadequate access to patient records or misread or misinterpret handwritten notes.

Lower Malpractice Premiums

Edwards will take away antitrust and other special exemptions that insurers use to collude and drive up premiums. He will prevent and punish frivolous lawsuits, including a three-strikes-and-you're-out policy for lawyers.

He will strengthen medical disciplinary standards at the state level. Doctors still facing exorbitant premiums will receive additional help.

**Better
Decisions**

Edwards will support “consumer reports” for medicine, so patients have objective information about health care quality and cost.

To help doctors stay current, he will fund leading experts to objectively assess medical advances and support research into effective treatments.

Edwards will insist that federal programs establish payment systems that reward high quality. He will fund private organizations to follow suit.

100,000 Nurses

More nurses means better patient care, fewer medical errors, and reduced patient stays. Yet because of terrible working conditions, half a million nurses have left the profession.

Edwards will:

- Bring back 50,000 nurses by offering grants to hospitals that improve working conditions for nurses—lowering caseloads, providing better hours, improving safety standards, and giving nurses a voice in hospital administration.
- Draw 50,000 young people into nursing with scholarships for nurses who work in urban and rural shortage areas.

Equal Health

In America, the color of a person’s skin should never affect the quality of their health care. Edwards has proposed a national medical translation system to reduce language barriers, additional research on medical disparities, and a new health unit within the U.S. Department of Justice to address discrimination in health care.

**Quality Care
for Women in
Crisis**

Women must be given the needed support to survive assault both mentally and physically. Edwards will provide additional funding to treat mental illness for assault victims. Edwards is pro-choice and also believes that insurance companies have an obligation to offer a contraception benefit.

**A Fair Deal for
Consumers**

Edwards will enact a meaningful Patients’ Bill of Rights to make sure Americans get what they pay for from HMOs and insurance companies.

Reduced Waste

Last year, Medicare could not document \$13.5 billion in payments. Edwards offers a specific plan to reduce mismanagement that will protect taxpayers and give seniors, veterans, and low-income patients high-quality care.

Strengthening The Health Care Safety Net

“States are making deep cuts to Medicaid because of this president’s fiscal crisis. These cuts affect the poor and the disabled and his latest block grant plan will cause even deeper cuts. Our public hospitals and emergency rooms are understaffed and ove crowded and need more support not less.”

Invest in Health Clinics

Clinics offer a range of affordable, accessible primary care for many people who would otherwise unnecessarily go to emergency rooms. Edwards will create the Clinic Preservation and Improvement Program, doubling overall clinic funding, in order to help clinics extend their hours, become more accessible, and offer greater access to specialists.

Protect Safety Net Hospitals

Demand for public care is growing due to the weak economy. Edwards will preserve resources for hospitals that see large numbers of low-income and Medicaid patients.

Strengthen and Streamline Medicaid

Edwards will work with states to secure Medicaid. Under his plan, the federal government will provide the resources for states to simplify enrollment, control drug costs, and build partnerships with the private sector.

A Responsible Plan

“Instead of spending a fortune we don’t have, this plan is fully paid for and covers 21 million Americans. It leaves money for education, Social Security, and for paying down the deficit. And instead of pretending we can have something for nothing, my plan tells it like it is: we’ll never solve the health care problem until all Americans take responsibility to do their part.”

**Require
Responsibility
from
Government**

Edwards' plan will cover approximately 21 million Americans at a cost of about \$53 billion per year, with no new costs imposed on states. His cost-cutting measures will reduce federal health spending by roughly 3 percent, or \$17 billion per year in wasted spending.

He fully pays for his plan, and achieves deficit reduction, through savings steps such as:

- Eliminating Bush tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans.
- Cutting wasteful spending and outdated bureaucracies.
- Eliminating a range of subsidies for banks, life-insurers, millionaire farmers, and others.

Quality Schools And College For Everyone

“At the heart of the American dream there’s a simple bargain: if you work hard and play by the rules, America will give you the chance to build a better future for you and your children. Now as never before, education is the key to that opportunity.”

“Without the combination of support from loving parents, terrific teachers, and public schools at every level, I would never be standing here today. Unfortunately, that combination is getting harder and harder to find in America. Too many kids are trapped in schools that don’t work. Too many kids who beat the odds and succeed in school can’t afford to go on to college, even as kids with the most advantages get special privileges.”

“We must change that. In America, every child should be able to go as far as his God-given talents and hard work will take him. Our system of public education should be our sturdiest ladder of opportunity.”

“People who mow the lawn or change the sheets for a living deserve as much respect and as much opportunity as the most powerful people in the country. All our children deserve the same chance to make the most of their gifts, to rise as high and as far as their talents and work will take them.”

John Edwards' Plan For Quality Schools And College For Everyone

Summary

John Edwards believes we need leadership, commitment, and resources dedicated to the difficult job of helping every child succeed, one-by-one. Edwards supports fulfilling America's responsibilities to education, including preschool, special education, and the Title I program for low-income students.

In too many schools today, children are denied the chance to make the most of their futures. Only weeks after signing the No Child Left Behind Act, President Bush walked away from his commitment to invest more in our schools.

His budget cuts teacher-training programs and eliminates afterschool programs for 500,000 children. He has proposed fewer scholarships for needy students and higher interest rates on student loans.

Instead of making public school reform work, President Bush is now pushing his right-wing agenda of private school vouchers that drain resources from public schools.

The Edwards Education Plan

To strengthen our schools and colleges, Edwards will:

- ***Invest in teachers*** through higher pay and college scholarships.
- ***Create new afterschool programs*** to give children a safe place to go after school.
- ***Strengthen our high schools*** through a stronger curriculum and smaller communities.
- ***Make college affordable*** for every student willing to work for it through College for Everyone.

Invest In America's Teachers

"A school year spent in a classroom without a quality teacher at the blackboard can mean a child doesn't learn to read or doesn't learn basic math while other students his age are mastering those skills. Those early school years are critical."

A New Deal for Teachers

Teachers earn too little, and the schools that need good teachers the most pay them the least. Edwards will invest in paying teachers better and increasing pay for teachers who take on the toughest jobs.

He will target resources to the school districts with the greatest shortages and will support teacher quality reforms like those in North Carolina. Edwards' plan will double the \$3 billion that the federal government invests in teacher training today.

Scholarships for Teachers

Edwards believes we should launch a nationwide program that will pay for the education costs for students who make a five-year commitment to teach somewhere top-flight teachers are in short supply.

Create New Afterschool Programs

“As I speak, the Bush administration is proposing to cut afterschool opportunities. They say these programs don't work. Well, Mr. President, this is one of the many things you are wrong about. Instead of chopping down afterschool opportunities, we should be creating them for the kids who need them.”

High-Quality Afterschool Programs

Children with nowhere to go are more likely to find trouble or be victims of crime. Afterschool programs provide a safe, nourishing place for children. Edwards supports offering quality programs to millions of children whose parents want them. His initiative will:

- Provide opportunities at or near every school.
- Make the opportunities high quality.
- Build on successful programs at schools and non-profit agencies like Boys and Girls Clubs and YMCAs.

Strengthen American High Schools

“Today, federal policy is overwhelmingly focused on improving elementary and middle schools, even though our high schools have very serious problems. Just when our young people need to be doing better because they’re preparing to take on more responsibilities, the reality is many are doing worse. That has got to change.”

Create Smaller High Schools

Schools should be places where the adults know kids’ names, and know if they have a special talent or are on the edge of trouble.

Edwards will help districts where school size has grown out of control to build new schools, break up existing schools, or renovate and reopen old ones.

Support Diversity in Public Schools

While Edwards opposes vouchers, he supports proven methods of public school choice that require all schools to meet the same standards and employ highly qualified teachers.

Improve the High School Curriculum

Every child deserves a chance at a college-prep education, and so every child should be put on the college-prep track, although parents could still choose another curriculum.

Edwards will also ask every college to take responsibility for at least one high-poverty school and expand college outreach programs to give more than a million disadvantaged students a shot at a brighter future.

Support Community Service

Schools should reinforce parents’ efforts to teach values like responsibility and commitment to community. Edwards supports high schools that require community service as a condition of high school graduation.

Improve Career Education

Edwards values the work of all Americans, including those who don’t have a college degree. He will expand training opportunities, strengthen partnerships between high schools and community colleges, and modernize our vocational high schools so students get the training they need for the good jobs where skilled workers are in short supply today.

College For Everyone

“Providing a free year of college tuition will eliminate the sticker shock that scares off so many kids. It will simplify a financial aid process now so complex that getting a student loan can be tougher than getting a small business loan. After students get through that first year, which is the toughest, they’ll know financial aid is available, they’ll know education is an investment worth making, and they’ll have access to people who can help them pursue both. Maybe more important, if they work hard, they’ll know they can succeed in college.”

Offer “College for Everyone”

Edwards will provide one year of free tuition to public universities and community colleges.

In return, students will be required to come to college academically prepared and to work or serve their communities for an average of 10 hours each week.

End “Legacy” Admissions

Many colleges are more likely to admit students whose parents attended. The “legacy” admissions preferences stack the deck against students who may be the first in their family to go to college.

While strongly supporting affirmative action to open the doors of college, Edwards believes colleges and universities should eliminate legacy preferences.

Use Direct Student Loans

Each year, taxpayers spend billions subsidizing banks to make student loans guaranteed against default. If we made the loans directly through competitive contracts, we would save billions of dollars each year.

Revitalizing Small Towns And Rural America

“I was the first member of my family to go to college. During the summers, I swept floors at the mill, unloaded trucks at UPS, and worked at a mobile home factory to help out and to put myself through school.”

“It wasn’t a rich life, but it was a loving life. It was a time and a place where you could work, save your money and send your children to college. And the most important things parents could pass to their children were the values of hard work, family, faith, and community.”

“In small towns and rural communities, our lifestyle and all the values it represents, are under siege. While the rest of America grapples with an economic downturn, recession has become a permanent way of life for much of rural America.”

“This is where I come from. And I offer a real plan to save and strengthen rural and small-town America for ourselves and our children, and to honor the values of the heartland, which have made America great.”

John Edwards' Plan To Revitalize Small Towns And Rural America

Summary

Born in Seneca, South Carolina and raised in Robbins, North Carolina, John Edwards believes in rural America.

He offers a plan to revitalize and strengthen the rural economy.

The Edwards' Plan for Rural America

The Edwards' plan to protect and preserve Rural America will:

- *Encourage investment* in Rural America.
- Use the power of technology to *boost rural economies*.
- Help rural communities *restore support systems*.
- *Protect the rural way of life*.

Encourage Investment In Rural America

“Rural America’s economic potential is enormous; the ingenuity of America’s farmers, scientists and small town entrepreneurs creates new ideas and new opportunities every day. But as long as rural communities are shut out of the capital markets, good ideas can’t be harvested for good jobs.”

Venture Capital

Edwards will enact the Rural Economic Advancement Challenge, or REACH fund, to bring venture capital and management expertise to entrepreneurs and small businesses in small towns and areas that are losing jobs today.

Economic Revitalization Zones

Edwards will designate towns and areas hard hit by foreign trade as Economic Revitalization Zones that are eligible for tax credits and other aid to encourage business investment.

Simplified Grants

Edwards knows that many small towns are not getting the resources they deserve just because they lack the grant-writing operations that big cities can afford.

Edwards will offer a simplified, one-page grant application for small grants to towns and counties of fewer than 50,000.

Use Technology To Boost Rural Economies

Fueling America's Future

"We need to use the power of new technology to make the most of rural communities' extraordinary strengths."

Edwards has proposed the Fueling America's Future program to promote renewable fuels. He will:

- Support the creation of new biorefineries to transform agricultural wastes - like corn husks, rice straw and wood chips - into energy.
- Increase demand for ethanol and renewable fuels.
- Offer tax credits to reward investments in renewable fuels and require greater use of these fuels for electricity.

In addition to helping end our dependence on foreign fuels, this plan will provide new sources of income for farmers and create jobs in rural America.

A National Broadband Policy

Edwards recognizes that small businesses and farmers need access to the fundamental tools of competition in the 21st century. He supports a National Broadband Policy built on three pillars:

- Developing broadband infrastructure to support both wired and wireless service.
- Ensuring affordable access and supporting the Universal Service Fund.
- Providing technical assistance so rural businesses, schools, and hospitals can use the Internet to full advantage.

Help Rural Communities Restore Support Systems

"We have to help rural communities struggling to provide the basic network of services that every thriving community depends on."

**Support
Teachers and
Technology**

Rural schools have trouble attracting and retaining teachers. Edwards has proposed improving pay for rural teachers and offering college scholarships for young people who commit to teach in underserved rural schools.

He will also increase support for programs to ensure that teachers are able to use technology effectively to teach their students.

**Provide Better
Access to
Health Care**

Because the health care crisis in America hits rural communities the hardest, Edwards has worked to end the unfair Medicare and Medicaid funding formulas that punish rural states.

As a member of the Rural Health Caucus in the Senate, he also supports use of video hookups and “telemedicine” to give Americans in isolated areas access to specialists in America’s top hospitals.

Protect The Rural Way Of Life

“We all have a responsibility to safeguard the rural way of life. Today, the small farmers who are the heart of rural America are getting squeezed by big corporations. These farmers need help. And over the long run, we can only protect these farmers if we also protect the land. For generations, farmers have done that—they’ve earned a decent living and treated their land and neighbors with decency. We need to remain true to that tradition”

**A Safe, Clean
Rural
Environment**

Edwards believes that we can and must promote both a healthy farm economy and a healthy environment for our families.

He has introduced the Concentrated Livestock Existing Alongside Nature (CLEAN) Act to require tough new standards for clean air and clean water around large corporate farms and to ensure that small farmers have the resources to comply with these new requirements.

He opposes this administration’s secret negotiations with the livestock industry to create exemptions from clean air laws.

“Fairness for Farmers”

Edwards recognizes that small farmers are threatened by anticompetitive mergers, unfair pricing practices, and abusive implementation of sensible country-of-origin labeling requirements.

Edwards has proposed a “Fairness for Farmers” initiative to secure fair prices for small farmers through the strictest enforcement of antitrust and fair competition laws since Teddy Roosevelt.

Leading The Fight For Clean Air And Clean Water

“We have an obligation to do all we can for our environment. We owe it to ourselves and our children to preserve the land, air, and water we depend on. This is not an abstraction. This is about children who can’t play outside because the air is too dirty. It’s about families who can’t drink the water without worrying. It’s about moms who worry about the world they’re going to leave their children.”

“I have fought in the United States Senate to protect our environment from the administration’s shortsighted policies that risk the health of American families and imperil the security of this country. I will bring the same fight to the presidency. We have a responsibility to leave our children a world that is cleaner and healthier than we found it. People should be able to say that not only did we undo the damage caused by the Bush administration, but we also left a cleaner and healthier environment for future generations.”

Leading The Fight For Clean Air And Clean Water

Summary

Edwards has been a leader in the Senate on environmental issues. He has fought to undo the changes proposed by the Bush administration that would undermine our longstanding commitment to the environment. He has also worked to make our air and water clean, and to reduce this country's dependence on foreign oil.

Unlike the Bush administration, Edwards believes that conservation is more than just a personal virtue. He supports environmental protection and energy conservation as a national commitment.

The Edwards Environmental Plan

Edwards believes we should:

- *Preserve clean air.*
- *Keep water pure.*
- *Restore our national treasures.*
- *Achieve energy independence.*

Preserve Clean Air

"This amendment is about something very simple. It is about keeping our air clean so kids won't have asthma attacks, so seniors won't have heart attacks, and so Americans won't lose their lives before their time."

Lead the Fight Against the Bush Administration

Senator Edwards has led the fight against increased air pollution resulting from the administration's rollback of the Clean Air Act. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) moved to make it much easier for old factories and power plants to increase their pollution levels without having to clean up the air. Edwards led the fight on the Senate floor to block the Bush administration's rollbacks.

Reduce Smokestack Emissions

Edwards supports tough legislation that would drastically reduce power plant emissions of four major pollutants that cause smog, acid rain, mercury contamination and global warming.

**Work With
Our Allies**

Edwards supports U.S. leadership to establish international agreements to tackle world problems, including climate change, and to ensure that our competitors meet minimal environmental standards. Edwards opposes measures that empower closed tribunals to overrule America's environmental laws.

Keep Water Pure

"For years, dedicated Americans in both political parties were committed to protecting our air, water, and natural treasures from Yellowstone Park to the White Mountains. Under this administration, that spirit has been lost. Not only is our environment at risk, but so is our health. As president, I will protect our air and water from harmful pollutants and restore our environmental commitment."

Clean Water

Our health depends on our water supply. Senator Edwards strongly supports the Clean Water Act and opposes Bush administration efforts to undermine the law. He has fought to clean up toxics in our rivers and oceans, and he is a strong supporter of federal funding for restoration and protection of wetlands.

**Tougher
Standards On
Arsenic**

After the Bush administration shelved Clinton administration rules regarding acceptable levels of arsenic in drinking water, Edwards worked to require the administration to immediately issue new standards for arsenic in drinking water.

**A Safe, Clean
Rural
Environment**

Senator Edwards has introduced the Concentrated Livestock Existing Alongside Nature (CLEAN) Act to require tough new standards for clean air and clean water around large corporate farms and to ensure that small farmers have the resources to comply with these new requirements. He opposes this administration's secret negotiations with the livestock industry to create exemptions from clean air laws.

Preserve Our National Treasures

“Our national parks are our national treasures. We have an abiding responsibility to protect them.”

Protect the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

Senator Edwards has consistently supported designating the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge as a wilderness area to put it permanently off-limits to development.

Stop Inappropriate Logging

Edwards will prevent improper logging in the Tongass National Forest and other pristine areas.

Protect Our National Parks

Edwards believes that the National Parks system is one of the great treasures of this country. The National Park Service should have the resources to do its critical job.

Block Offshore Drilling

Edwards supports a continuation on the moratoriums on offshore drilling.

Achieve Energy Independence

“One of this administration’s biggest mistakes after September 11th was ignoring the country’s will to decrease our dependence on foreign oil. Energy independence must be one of America’s top priorities.”

Cleaner, More Efficient Cars

Edwards supports increased fuel efficiency standards for cars. He will also sharply increase research into alternative ways to power our cars—not just fuel cells, as the president proposes.

Renewable Energy

Edwards believes that we should set ambitious and achievable standards that will allow the country to move away from our dependence on fossil fuels. He has been a strong supporter of using cleaner-burning ethanol, and supports the creation of new biorefineries to transform agricultural wastes - like corn husks, rice straw and wood chips - into energy.

Empowered Consumers

Many Americans want to make more environmentally friendly choices—they just need information. Edwards will give consumers more information about total energy costs for particular products.

Fighting Crime

“Every day, in cities and towns across this country, Americans are victimized by brutal violence. We can’t maintain a true sense of community if people are afraid to walk on any street, in any neighborhood, at any time of the day or night.”

“During the Sixties and Seventies, the experts said we were helpless in the fight against crime. In the Nineties, the hard work of good people across this country proved those experts wrong. That work taught a clear lesson: If we stay on track, if we do the things that work, we can build a safer and stronger country for all Americans. This is a cause I hope we can all embrace, because the fight against crime doesn’t belong to a party; it is a part of the struggle for a civilized and decent society where all our children have the chance to make their dreams come true.”

John Edwards' Plan To Reduce Crime

The Edwards Plan to Reduce Crime

While the crime rate dropped dramatically during the 1990s, Senator John Edwards is concerned that under President Bush, this progress has stopped.

Edwards will:

- *Support cops on the beat.*
- *Reform probation and parole.*
- *Use strategies that work.*

Support Cops On The Beat

“The federal COPS program has helped police departments across America hire thousands of police officers. But the program’s been attacked repeatedly. The president and some in Congress have even tried to cut it. They argue that by giving you more money so that you can hire more officers, Washington is somehow monkeying around with local law enforcement. So I’ll be plain on this: when it comes to more money for more local law enforcement officers, I’m for a strong national role – and I’ll keep fighting for it.”

Support Cops on the Beat

Edwards will continue support for community policing and cops on the beat. While President Bush has failed to provide the money he pledged to help first responders after September 11th, Senator Edwards has proposed \$50 billion in aid to states, including \$10 billion specifically for homeland security.

Bulletproof Vests for Police Officers

The risk of fatality for officers who wear body armor is 14 times less than for officers who do not. Edwards supports efforts to provide more bulletproof vests to local law enforcement.

Cooperate with Local Police

Edwards will ensure that federal law enforcement officers work together with state and local police to prevent future attacks on our nation.

Reform Probation And Parole

“In my view, the toughest, most important problem in our criminal justice system today is the early release system. We have 600,000 people leaving prisons each year. We have about 4_ million people either on parole after jail or on probation instead of jail. And the system to track these folks does not work. It is overburdened, understaffed, inconsistent, and almost completely unsuccessful. Most of those 4_ million people on probation and parole will break the law again and end up back in prison.”

Edwards believes we must transform our broken probation and parole systems. He has offered a three-part plan to do so.

Hold Parole Violators Accountable

Nearly half the people in the probation system have violated the terms of probation, but only one-fifth get sent back to jail for doing it. Edwards believes that we need real punishments for people who violate probation and parole, combining strict supervision with swift, certain and graduated punishment.

More Support For Overburdened Corrections Officers

Today, some probation officers have as many as 200 people to look after. Edwards believes we need to increase staff, cut caseloads and give these officers the resources to get out of the office and onto the streets, more actively supervising probationers and parolees.

Stop the Cycle of Repeat Offenses

To make our communities safer, we need to take steps to stop those who leave prison from going back to a life of crime. Edwards will back community oversight and supports for former offenders, so that people leaving prison don't go back to lives of crime.

Use Strategies That Work

“We should think about what we did right in the 1990s and make sure we keep doing it to get the crime rate going down again. The decline in crime was the result of a new approach to crime fighting, led at the local level but supported from Washington, combining the oldest

American values with the newest American technologies.”

Increase DNA Testing to Catch the Guilty

DNA tests have already helped solve over a thousand crimes, but this technology is usually used only in a handful of big cases, usually only in bigger cities.

Edwards supports bringing DNA technology to smaller police departments, to lower-level crimes, and to cold cases.

He also believes we should clear the backlog of untested rape kits in unsolved cases, and make DNA testing more available to death penalty defendants to reduce the risk of wrongful convictions.

He will accompany increased DNA testing with strong protections to safeguard our civil liberties.

Increase the Number of Neighborhood Watch Groups

Edwards has introduced legislation to encourage the creation of thousands of groups by 2007. Under the Edwards approach, Neighborhood Watches would continue to be directed and driven at the local level; the federal funding would just help groups to start up, and participate in strengthening homeland security against terrorist attack.

Increase Resources to Find Missing Young People and Adults

Edwards believes law enforcement officials must have additional resources to locate missing young people and adults.

He introduced and won passage of legislation, known as Kristen’s Law, authorizing grants to public agencies and nonprofit private organizations that help find missing adults.

Expand Drug Treatment for At-Risk Youth

Edwards will expand drug treatment for at-risk youth. When drug-addicted criminals do not receive treatment, they are more likely to commit more crimes to keep paying for their habits.

Improve Drug Sentencing

Today, a drug user with the same amount of cocaine is punished very differently depending on the type of cocaine—for crack cocaine the penalty is 100 times greater than for powder cocaine.

**Fight
Methamphetamine
Production**

This disparity is not justified. Edwards will address this disparity while at the same time imposing harsher sentences on drug crimes involving weapons, violence, or other aggravating circumstances.

Methamphetamine is destroying many communities, especially in rural America.

Edwards has supported measures to stiffen the penalties for manufacturing methamphetamine and to give law enforcement more help in fighting “meth” manufacturing and trafficking.

Honoring Working Parents

“Every day across America, from the biggest cities to the smallest towns, millions of parents do everything they possibly can to care for their children and prepare them for the future. Every day, they get important support from teachers and clergy and employers. And every day, in spite of all these good efforts, many parents find they just don’t have the time or money to give their children the support they deserve.”

“Nothing has been more important in my own life than my family. My parents always put my brother, my sister, and me first, and we always had dinner as a family. When I was little and living in Seneca, South Carolina, my grandparents cared for me when our parents were working. For my wife and me, while we have had struggles, the joy of our lives has been our children.”

“Today, we need to renew our commitment to smart policies for strong families, and we need to start with bold moves in four areas: by cutting taxes for new parents to give them more flexibility; by supporting high-quality afterschool programs; by promoting good values; and by demanding responsibility from all parents.”

“A few precious things should be all too clear: life is fragile, families are joy, and children mean hope. It is time now to recommit this government to strengthening America’s future by strengthening America’s families. They are the solid rock that this great country was built upon, and they deserve the support of this great country. That is our responsibility, and I intend to do everything in my power to live up to it.”

John Edwards' Plan For Honoring Working Parents

Summary

John Edwards knows that being a parent is harder than ever. Today, 70 percent of kids do not have a stay-at-home parent, and parents now have 22 hours less to spend with their children every week than they did in 1969.

While parents have responsibility for raising children, Edwards believes the government can lend parents a hand. His proposals will help parents, offering them an opportunity to spend more time with their children, and helping parents instill strong values in our children.

The Edwards Plan for Honoring Working Parents

Edwards' plan for Work and Families will:

- Give *parents more choices* at work.
- Offer *quality afterschool* opportunities.
- Encourage *responsible parenting*.
- Support *parents' values*.

Give Parents More Choices At Work

"We need to give parents more choices on the job and more chances to be with their kids. Too many parents still can't take time off when their families need them. Too many women still give up great careers for low pay and no benefits in part-time work. It's a waste. We need an economy that supports loving parents instead of punishing them A new dad should be able to keep working and be able to see his kid more. Moms should be able to return to work part-time."

Offer Family Leave Tax Credit

Building on the Family and Medical Leave Act for new parents, Edwards has proposed a refundable family leave tax credit of up to \$2,500 for the working families of newborn children. Phased in over a period of years, this credit will effectively provide paid leave without hurting businesses.

Expand Family Leave

While the Family and Medical Leave Act helps many families each year, it is too limited in its scope. Parents of newborns should be able to take unpaid leave on a part-time

basis, provided they establish a real schedule with their businesses.

Edwards will also give parents unpaid leave for parent-teacher conferences and will guarantee unpaid leave to millions of workers at small businesses who get nothing now.

Support Elder Care

Edwards will help the growing number of working parents who are responsible for their own parents' or spouses' care by doubling federal support for respite care and adult day care.

Encourage Model Businesses

Many companies have proven that a business can be family-friendly and worker-friendly and still turn a healthy profit.

Edwards supports creating a new award to recognize excellence in family-friendly policies, as a way to encourage the business community to honor companies that are good to their employees.

Create New Afterschool Programs

"I know how important afterschool programs can be for young people. My wife and I helped start what's called the Wade Edwards Learning Lab, or the WELL, just across the street from the high school my kids attended. We started it because we loved the YMCA and other after school programs when our kids were little. I actually coached soccer and basketball for years. But we'd seen how when kids were older they didn't have places to go. The WELL gives teenagers a free afterschool computer center, a place to do homework, to study, to relax. Kids who could go lots of places go to the WELL, and kids with very few options go there, too. We get the whole community involved, and we see the whole child grow."

High-Quality Afterschool Programs

Children with nowhere to go are more likely to find trouble or be victims of crime. Afterschool programs provide a safe, nourishing place for children. Edwards supports offering quality programs to millions of children whose parents want them. His initiative will:

- Provide opportunities at or near every school.
- Make the opportunities high quality.
- Build on successful programs at schools and non-profit agencies like Boys and Girls Clubs and YMCAs.

Encourage Responsible Parenting

Encourage Responsibility from Dads

“I believe we have to do much more to make sure kids have two ready and responsible parents in their lives.”

While mothers receiving public assistance are required to work and get help in finding work, fathers often get neither the help nor the requirement.

In order to give fathers better means to support their children and to become valued members of their family and their community, Edwards believes we should require more fathers to work, give them help finding work, and make sure child support goes to the parent, and not the government.

Fight Teen Pregnancy

While the rate of teen pregnancy has dropped, there are still about half a million teen births a year. Edwards believes we must support successful teen pregnancy prevention programs, and support a national media campaign against teen pregnancy.

Support Parents’ Values

Fight Alcohol Industry Advertising

“Our schools and our culture should reinforce the good values parents try to teach their children, not undermine them.”

There are 51,000 alcohol ads on TV each year targeted to people under 21. Edwards has called on the alcohol industry to make stronger voluntary guidelines in order to prevent targeting children.

If this does not occur, Edwards will require the industry to change its practices.

**Make the
Internet
Friendlier for
Children**

Edwards believes we must stop junk mail on the Internet, particularly pornographic e-mail that children often receive without parents' knowledge or approval.

Today, unscrupulous "spammers" use fake names to escape detection and make pornography available to our children. Edwards supports a law blocking this sort of fraud.

**Encourage
Community
Service**

Edwards will help high schools require community service as a condition of graduation. Not all education takes place in the classroom--community service is one of the best ways to encourage our young people to get new experiences and become more involved in their communities.

BIOGRAPHY

John Edwards was born in Seneca, South Carolina and raised in Robbins, North Carolina, a small town in the Piedmont. His father, Wallace, worked in the textile mills for 36 years, and his mother, Bobbie, worked in the mills, ran a small shop and worked at the post office.

A proud product of public schools, John became the first person in his family to attend college. He worked his way through North Carolina State University where he graduated with high honors in 1974, and then earned a law degree with honors in 1977 from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

For almost 20 years, John dedicated his career to representing families and children hurt by the negligence of others. Standing up against the powerful insurance industry, John helped these families through the darkest moments of their lives. His passionate advocacy for people like the folks who worked in the mill with his father earned him respect and recognition across the country.

In 1998, John took this commitment into politics to give a voice in the United States Senate to the people he had represented throughout his career. He ran for the Senate and won, defeating an incumbent Senator.

In Congress, Senator Edwards quickly emerged as a champion for the issues that make a difference to American families. He has led fights to enact the Patients' Bill of Rights, reduce the price of prescription drugs, stop the Bush administration's rollbacks of the Clean Air Act, eliminate massive special interest subsidies, reform the way campaigns are financed, and impose stricter ethical standards on lawyers who represent public corporations.

As a member of the Select Committee on Intelligence, Senator Edwards has worked tirelessly for a strong national defense and to strengthen the security of our homeland. He has authored key pieces of legislation on cyber, bio, and port security.

Senator Edwards and his wife, Elizabeth, whom he met when both were law students at Chapel Hill, were married in 1977. They have had four children, including: Wade, who died in 1996; their eldest daughter, Catharine, a student at Princeton University; five-year-old Emma Claire, and a three-year-old son, Jack.

“Here in Washington, we like to think we’re important. But what’s great about America is that whether you’re a senator or a bus driver doesn’t make you a better person. You just have different jobs.

“We’re a nation where every person has equal value, every dream deserves an equal chance, and every soul should be as equal in the law of the land as it is in the eyes of God.

“I care deeply about this, because it’s the reason I’m standing here. My dad worked his whole life in the mill. When I was young, my mom folded sheets on the second shift. Both my parents started out with nothing, except a blessing that was worth more than diamonds and gold – the chance to live in a country whose dream belongs to anyone willing to work for it.

“A country where the sweat and toil of mill workers can give a boy the chance to one day run for president is a far different place than a country that says how you’re born, not how hard you work, is all that matters. I owe everything I am to the America I grew up in. I hope you’ll join with me and fight with all we’ve got to save it.”

- Senator John Edwards
Georgetown University
June 17, 2003



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