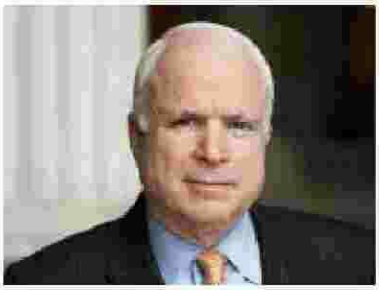
Side by Side

by Chris Hart Nibbrig
Lancaster Post

Side by Side is a regular feature of the Lancaster Post where our editors ask two or more parties on different sides of the same issue the same questions. In this edition we interview the candidates for President of the United States.

John McCain



Lancaster County, like the rest of the nation, is suffering from the troubled economy. What is your economic stimulus plan?

I will fight to cut taxes, stop wasteful pork-barrel spending, break down barriers to American goods overseas, and foster innovation to drive the American economy in the 21st century. I will keep taxes low and fight to prevent the Democrats from raising taxes. I'll eliminate the Alternative Minimum Tax, saving many middle class families with children more than $2,700 a year. Cutting the corporate tax rate – the second highest in the world – from 35 percent to 25 percent will provide incentives for businesses that will spur economic growth immediately and in the long term by making our tax code more competitive.

Please outline your health care initiative.

My plan to reform the American health care system will lower health care costs and harness market competition. I will reform the tax code to provide all individuals with a refundable $2,500 tax credit ($5,000 for families) as incentive to buy health insurance. I will lower health care costs for all individuals by: promoting open health care markets to encourage competition; passing tort reform to eliminate frivolous lawsuits; and making prescription drugs more affordable. I support making health care savings accounts more available and strengthening the State Children's Health Insurance Program. Families should be in charge of their health care dollars and have more control over their

Hillary Clinton



Lancaster County, like the rest of the nation, is suffering from the troubled economy. What is your economic stimulus plan?

I was the first to raise the need for economic stimulus last December. I also proposed a comprehensive stimulus proposal to inject $110 billion into the American economy that included tax rebates, unemployment insurance, assistance for home heating bills, investments in green collar job growth, and help for communities facing growing foreclosures.

While I support the tax relief provisions in the recently passed stimulus plan, I believe it was a mistake that we failed to include measures to help struggling homeowners. That's why I called for a second stimulus last month that includes $30 billion for communities to acquire vacant properties, undertake anti-blight initiatives, and help families facing foreclosure. Under my plan, Pennsylvania would receive $1.7 billion, with $26 million for Lancaster County alone. If we can extend a $30 billion lifeline to a Wall Street bank, we can extend a $30 billion lifeline to help communities in Pennsylvania and across the country weather the housing crisis.

Please outline your health care initiative.

My American Health Choices Plan covers all Americans and improves health care by lowering costs and improving quality. It offers more choices and lowers costs. If you like the plan you have, you can keep it. If you're one of the tens of millions of Americans without coverage or if you don't like the cover-

Barack Obama



Lancaster County, like the rest of the nation, is suffering from the troubled economy. What is your economic stimulus plan?

My economic stimulus plan will provide immediate, temporary, direct relief targeted to the people who need it and are most likely to use the funds to re-energize our economy. Building on my call for a stimulus plan in January, I recently called for a $30 billion second stimulus proposal that provides additional relief to struggling Americans and seeks to stem the housing crisis, which continues to drag down the rest of our economy. My package calls on the President and Congress to extend relief to state and local governments hardest hit by the housing downturn and expand Unemployment Insurance. I have also called for the immediate creation of a Foreclosure Prevention Fund to provide emergency assistance to families facing foreclosure and creating a new Federal Housing Administration program that provides meaningful incentives for lenders to buy or refinance existing mortgages and convert them into stable 30-year fixed mortgages.

Please outline your health care initiative.

I am committed to signing universal health legislation by the end of my first term in office that ensures all Americans have high-quality, affordable health care coverage. My plan will ensure that all Americans have health care coverage through their employers, private health plans, the federal government, or the states. My plan will save a typi-

Ron Paul



Lancaster County, like the rest of the nation, is suffering from the troubled economy. What is your economic stimulus plan?

To immediately strengthen the economy and lay the groundwork for continued prosperity, I have proposed a four-part plan that involves lower taxes, less spending, a sound monetary policy, and regulatory reform. We can take several immediate steps to reform our archaic tax system and give Americans their money back, and we can end the income tax and abolish the IRS by reigning in Congress' extravagant spending. As president, I will also veto any unbalanced budget and demand that Congress address wasteful spending.

Lower taxes and less government spending will put more money in your pocket. A sound monetary policy will increase the value of that

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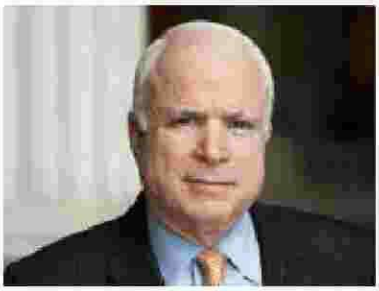
Side by Side...

John McCain



care. Patients should have a larger role in both prevention and care, giving them more freedom to make decisions about their health care needs.

What is your position on gun control, including an assault weapons ban?

I am a strong defender of the right to bear arms, having supported the restoration of Second Amendment rights where they have been eroded, and the right of law-abiding citizens to carry concealed weapons. I have consistently opposed and voted against: restrictions on so-called "assault weapons," the banning of certain types of ammunition magazines, waiting periods for law-abiding citizens' purchase of firearms and the confiscation of firearms from private citizens during a domestic crisis or emergency.

Please state your view on abortion, including partial birth abortion.

I am proud of my 25-year pro-life record in the Congress. I oppose partial birth abortion and support the reversal of Roe v. Wade. However, the reversal of Roe v. Wade represents only one step in the long path toward ending abortion. Once the question is returned to the states, the fight for life will be one of courage and compassion - the courage of a pregnant mother to bring her child into the world and the compassion of civil society to meet her needs and those of her

Hillary Clinton



age you have, you can choose from dozens of the same plans available to members of Congress, or you can opt into a public plan option like Medicare. Premiums will be capped at a percentage of income, and insurance companies will be prohibited from discriminating on the basis of pre-existing conditions. Insurance will be portable so if you lose your job or change jobs, you can take your health plan with you.

What is your position on gun control, including an assault weapons ban?

I believe that every citizen has a right to bear arms under the Second Amendment. I also believe that along with that right comes the responsibility to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and terrorists. We can take reasonable steps to protect Americans from gun violence, and at the same time, safeguard the right of law-abiding citizens to use firearms for hunting and other recreational purposes. I believe we should reinstate the assault weapons ban.

Please state your view on abortion, including partial birth abortion.

I am committed to protecting a

Barack Obama



cal American family up to $2,500 every year on medical expenditures by providing affordable, comprehensive and portable health coverage for every American; modernizing the U.S. health care system to contain spiraling health care costs and improve the quality of patient care; and promoting prevention and strengthening public health to prevent disease and protect against natural and man-made disasters.

What is your position on gun control, including an assault weapons ban?

I believe the Second Amendment creates an individual right, and I greatly respect the constitutional rights of Americans to bear arms. I also believe that the right is subject to reasonable and commonsense regulation that can help us keep guns off the streets and away from criminals such as closing the gun show loophole. I also support making the federal Assault Weapons Ban permanent, as such weapons belong on battlefields and not on our streets.

Please state your view on abortion, including partial birth abortion.

I understand that abortion is a di-

Ron Paul



money and drive down the costs of living by requiring transparency at the Federal Reserve. We must also be willing to undertake regulatory reform. I would put a high priority on repealing Sarbanes-Oxley, which has had an extremely damaging effect on our economy.

Please outline your health care initiative.

Health care should not be left up to HMOs, big drug companies, and government bureaucrats. I support making all medical expenses tax deductible, eliminating federal regulations that discourage small businesses from providing coverage, giving doctors the freedom to collectively negotiate with insurance companies and drive down the cost of medical care, making every American eligible for a Health Savings Account (HSA), removing the requirement that individuals must obtain a high-deductible insurance policy before opening an HSA, and reforming licensure requirements so that pharmacists and nurses can perform some basic functions to lower costs and increase access to care. By removing federal regulations, encouraging competition, and presenting real choices, we can make our health care system the envy of the world once again.

What is your position on gun control, including an assault weapons ban?

I share our Founders' belief that in a free so-

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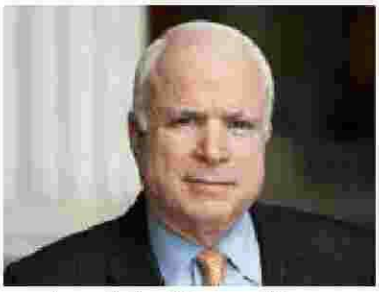
John McCain



newborn baby. The pro-life movement has done tremendous work in building and reinforcing the infrastructure of civil society by strengthening faith-based, community, and neighborhood organizations that provide critical services to pregnant mothers in need.

What can be done about the rising cost of gas?

Americans need relief from high gasoline prices. I believe we must act immediately to reduce the pain of high prices at the pump. We should suspend filling the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) to reduce demand. International demand for oil is bolstered by federal purchases for the SPR. There is no reason to continue filling it when oil is so expensive, the overall SPR is of adequate size, and when it places further upward pressure on prices. Beyond that, we must lower our dependence on gasoline by promoting alternative fuels. It is vital that we reduce our need for oil from governments that do not share our values of freedom and democracy. The price of gas is an issue that won't go away until we make a commitment to exploring new and innovative sources of energy that can be generated here in the United States. We should invest in research and development programs that will move us toward the goal of energy independence.

What is the number one foreign policy concern for Americans?

The battle against Islamic extremism is the transcendent struggle of our time. We must not lose our resolve in Iraq, where a retreat would have disastrous consequences not

Hillary Clinton



woman's right to make the most fundamental decisions about her life and health and have announced a comprehensive agenda to reduce unintended pregnancy and enhance access to reproductive health care. When I'm president, I will appoint judges who understand that Roe v. Wade isn't just binding legal precedent, it is the touchstone of our reproductive freedom and the embodiment of our most fundamental rights. Abortions should be legal, safe, and rare. In 2003, I supported Senator Feinstein's amendment to prohibit late-term abortions consistent with Roe v. Wade, protecting the life and health of the mother.

What can be done about the rising cost of gas?

As president, I would lead us on a path towards clean, renewable energy investments to reduce our dependence on foreign oil. I will: invest $150 billion in clean energy, including establishing a $50 billion Strategic Energy Fund to demand that oil companies invest in clean energy; working to increase vehicle fuel economy standards to 55 miles per gallon; increasing the production of biofuels to 60 billion gallons by 2030. I will stop filling the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, and implore the Federal Trade Commission to investigate market manipulation in wholesale oil prices to ensure that oil companies are not ripping off consumers.

What is the number one foreign policy concern for Americans?

Ending the Iraq War. As President, I will direct my senior military leadership to draw up a clear, com-

Barack Obama



visive issue, and respect those who disagree with me. However, I have been a consistent champion of reproductive choice and will make preserving women's rights under Roe v. Wade a priority as President. I oppose late-term abortions, but believe that there must be exceptions for the life and health of the woman. I support efforts to reduce unintended pregnancies, and in the U.S. Senate, I am an original cosponsor of the Prevention First Act to expand access to contraception, health information and preventive services.

What can be done about the rising cost of gas?

Unlike the Bush Administration which has let the oil companies write our national energy policy, I will crack down on oil companies that try to manipulate markets and force out cheap and clean renewable fuels from gas pumps. I will enact a windfall profits tax on oil companies, roll back all tax breaks and subsidies for oil and gas companies and invest the proceeds into helping Americans pay their energy bills and putting America on the path to energy independence.

What is the number one foreign policy concern for Americans?

Ending the war in Iraq so that we can effectively combat international terrorism and other national

Ron Paul



ciety each citizen must have the right to keep and bear arms. They ratified the Second Amendment knowing that this right is the guardian of every other right, and they all would be horrified by the proliferation of unconstitutional legislation that prevents law-abiding Americans from exercising this right. I oppose any federal gun control, and will oppose any attempts to reinstate an assault weapons ban.

Please state your view on abortion, including partial birth abortion.

As an OB/GYN who has delivered over 4,000 babies and early in my career decided to never perform an abortion, I have long been concerned with the rights of unborn people. I have introduced H.R. 2597, the Sanctity of Life Act, and H.R. 300, the We the People Act, to Congress. H.R. 2597 would define life on the federal level as beginning at conception, and H.R. 300 would end federal court jurisdiction over abortion matters, restoring the ability and respon-



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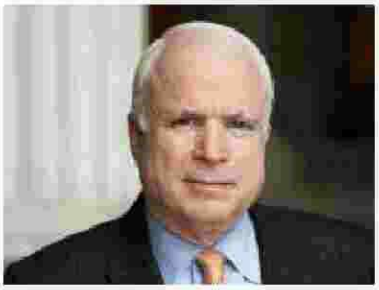
John McCain



only for the citizens of Iraq and the region, but for our own security. A timeline for withdrawal, as the Democrats advocate, would be the height of irresponsibility and would only foster chaos in the region. We can't afford to walk away from the progress we have achieved since the troop surge. Our goals in Iraq will not be easily achieved, but success is imperative.

What is your position on NATO expansion?

I have supported NATO enlargement since 1994. The accession of Central European democracies into the NATO Alliance has been one of the most successful policies of the United States in the post-Cold War era. NATO enlargement has advanced our strategic interests by stabilizing NATO's southern and eastern flanks and anchoring eastern European democracies firmly to the West. And it has put new members on a more secure and more prosperous course than most thought possible as communism began to crumble.

Do you support human stem cell research? Please explain.

While I support federal funding for embryonic stem cell research, I believe clear lines should be drawn that reflect a refusal to sacrifice moral values and ethical principles for the sake of scientific progress. Moreover, I believe that recent scientific breakthroughs raise the hope that one day this debate will be rendered academic. I also support funding for other research programs, including amniotic fluid and adult stem cell research which hold much scientific promise and do not involve the use of embryos.

Hillary Clinton



prehensive plan for bringing our troops home, beginning in 60 days. I will pursue a new diplomatic initiative in the region, including convening a regional stabilization meeting to develop and implement a strategy to stabilize Iraq. I will lead an international effort to address the major refugee crisis. My plan will ensure that the United States maintains a small and effective counterterrorism force in the region to ensure al Qaeda never gains a capability to attack the United States or its allies from Iraq.

What is your position on NATO expansion?

I believe our NATO allies should extend invitations to Albania, Croatia, and the Republic of Macedonia as part of a larger strategy to stabilize the Western Balkans after Kosovo's independence, provided these countries fulfill the same requirements met by previous new allies. Georgia and Ukraine have made real progress and clearly expressed their desire to anchor themselves firmly in the trans-Atlantic community through membership in NATO, and I enthusiastically support the extension of a Membership Action Plan (MAP) to both.

Do you support human stem cell research? Please explain.

Science, not narrow ideology, should drive our national research agenda. I have pledged to lift the ban on ethical embryonic stem cell research. I believe in the potential of stem cell research to both save lives and keep the United States on the cutting-edge of scientific advancement. Over 100 million Americans could benefit from the advancements

Barack Obama



security challenges. As president, I will immediately begin to remove our troops from Iraq so we can shift our focus to finishing the job in Afghanistan, taking the fight to al Qaeda, and restoring America's international partnerships. I will remove one to two combat brigades each month, and have all of our combat brigades out of Iraq within 16 months, which will finally apply meaningful pressure on the Iraqi government to take responsibility for their future. I will make it clear that we will not build any permanent bases in Iraq.

What is your position on NATO expansion?

I welcome further enlargement of the NATO Alliance, but believe we need to make sure that new members meet high standards on democracy and military readiness. I support membership for Albania, Croatia and the Republic of Macedonia. I support Membership Action Plans for Ukraine and Georgia – over time, it is up to the citizens of those countries and to NATO members as to whether they will obtain full membership, but that process should go forward.

Do you support human stem cell research? Please explain.

Embryonic stem cells remain unmatched in their potential for treatment of a wide variety of diseases and health conditions. I have been a long-term supporter of increased stem cell research. I introduced legislation while a member of the Illinois Senate that would allow embryonic stem cell research in Illinois. I have cosponsored legislation to allow greater federal government funding on a wider array of stem cell lines.

Ron Paul



sibility for the protection of unborn life to state and local governments.

I have also introduced HR 1095, the Taxpayer's Freedom of Conscience Act which ends all federal support for any organization that performs or promotes abortion.

What can be done about the rising cost of gas?

I have co-sponsored legislation in the past to put a moratorium on the federal gas tax, which is the most immediate step we can take to reduce prices. I also favor expanding domestic drilling, which will lessen our dependence on foreign oil.

The rising price of gas can be directly traced to our monetary and foreign policies. We must restore value to our dollar to increase our purchasing power, and we must end our interventionist foreign policy, which only contributes to the instability in the Middle East market.

What is the number one foreign policy concern for Americans?

I believe that our top foreign policy concern is whether or not America is going to continue an interventionist foreign policy that polices the world and stretches our troops too thin, or if we are going to follow our Founders' advice, which is to pursue peace and trade with all nations that wish to share such with us. We must return our focus to finding bin Laden, securing our borders, and preparing for any threats against our national security. An America-first defense policy will not go abroad seeking monsters to slay, but will deter through strength and lead by example.

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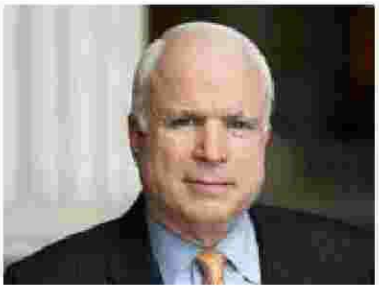
John McCain



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Hillary Clinton



that come from stem cell research. Although a majority of Americans support stem cell research, President Bush has placed severe restrictions on funding. In 2006, the President vetoed the bipartisan Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act that overwhelmingly passed Congress, and vetoed a new version of the bill that passed last year.

For more information, visit: www.hillaryclinton.com.

Barack Obama



I believe we need high ethical standards that allow for research on stem cells derived from embryos produced for in vitro fertilization, embryos that would otherwise be needlessly destroyed.

For more information, visit: www.barackobama.com

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Ron Paul



What is your position on NATO expansion?

U.S. national security will not be enhanced by expanding NATO. I do not think that we should commit American troops to defend countries like Georgia or the Ukraine. Providing these guarantees can only further strain our armed forces. Moreover, the "modernization" of these former Soviet militaries will mean a big bill for the U.S. taxpayer, as our government will subsidize most of their transformation.

Do you support human stem cell research? Please explain.

While I sympathize with those who see stem cell research as a path to cures for dreadful diseases that have stricken so many Americans, I strongly object to forcing those who believe stem cell research is immoral to subsidize such research through their taxes. I do not believe that the federal government has the constitutional authority to fund stem cell research and the debate over such research involves profound moral, eligious, and ethical questions -- questions Congress is particularly ill-equipped to resolve. I believe this issue should be settled on the state, local, and individual level.

For more information, visit: www.ronpaul2008.com

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