



# CONTRACT FOR THE AMERICAN DREAM

**"I HAVE A DREAM. IT IS A DREAM DEEPLY ROOTED IN THE AMERICAN DREAM."**

– Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., 1963 March on Washington

We, the American people, promise to defend and advance a simple ideal: liberty *and* justice... *for all*. Americans who are willing to work hard and play by the rules should be able to find a decent job, get a good home in a strong community, retire with dignity and give their kids a better life. Every one of us – rich, poor or in-between, regardless of skin color or birthplace, no matter their sexual orientation or gender – has the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. That is our covenant, our compact, our contract with one another. It is a promise we can fulfill – but only by working together.

Today, the American Dream is under threat. Our veterans are coming home to few jobs and little hope on the home front. Our young people are graduating off a cliff, burdened by heavy debt, into the worst job market in half a century. The big banks that American taxpayers bailed out won't cut homeowners a break. Our firefighters, nurses, cops and teachers – America's everyday heroes – are being thrown out onto the street. We believe:

**AMERICA IS NOT BROKE.** America is rich – still the wealthiest nation ever. But too many at the top are grabbing the gains. No person or corporation should be allowed to take from America while giving little or nothing back. The super-rich who got tax breaks and bailouts should now pay full taxes – and help create jobs here, not overseas. *Those who do well in America should do well by America.*

**AMERICANS NEED JOBS, NOT CUTS.** Many of our best workers are sitting idle, while the work of rebuilding America goes undone. Together, we must rebuild our country, reinvest in our people and jump-start the industries of the future. Millions of jobless Americans would love the opportunity to become working, tax-paying members of their communities again. *We have a jobs crisis, not a deficit crisis.*

To produce this Contract for the American Dream, 131,203 Americans came together online and in their communities. We wrote and rated 25,904 ideas. Together, we identified the 10 most critical steps to get our economy back on track and restore the American Dream:

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- ★ **1. INVEST IN AMERICA'S INFRASTRUCTURE.** Rebuild our crumbling bridges, dams, levees, ports, water and sewer lines, railways, roads and public transit. We must invest in high-speed Internet and a modern, energy-saving electric grid. These investments will create good jobs and rebuild America. To help finance these projects, we need national and state infrastructure banks.
  - ★ **2. CREATE 21ST-CENTURY ENERGY JOBS.** We should invest in American businesses that can power our country with innovative technologies like wind turbines, solar panels, geothermal systems, hybrid and electric cars, and next-generation batteries. And we should put Americans to work making our homes and buildings energy efficient. We can create good, green jobs in America, address the climate crisis, and build the clean energy economy.
  - ★ **3. INVEST IN PUBLIC EDUCATION.** We should provide universal access to early childhood education, make school funding equitable, invest in high-quality teachers, and build safe, well-equipped school buildings for our students. A high-quality education system, from universal preschool to vocational training and affordable higher education, is critical for our future and can create badly needed jobs now.
  - ★ **4. OFFER MEDICARE FOR ALL.** We should expand Medicare so it's available to all Americans, and reform it to provide even more cost-effective, quality care. The Affordable Care Act is a good start and we must implement it – but it's not enough. We can save trillions of dollars by joining every other industrialized country – paying much less for health care while getting the same or better results.
  - ★ **5. MAKE WORK PAY.** Americans have a right to fair minimum and living wages, to organize and collectively bargain, to enjoy equal opportunity and to earn equal pay for equal work. Corporate assaults on these rights bring down wages and benefits for all of us. They must be outlawed.
  - ★ **6. SECURE SOCIAL SECURITY.** Keep Social Security sound, and strengthen the retirement, disability, and survivors' protections Americans earn through their hard work. Pay for it by removing the cap on the Social Security tax, so that upper-income people pay into Social Security on all they make, just like the rest of us.
  - ★ **7. RETURN TO FAIRER TAX RATES.** End, once and for all, the Bush-era tax giveaways for the rich, which the rest of us – or our kids – must pay eventually. Also, we must outlaw corporate tax havens and tax breaks for shipping jobs overseas. Lastly, with millionaires and billionaires taking a growing share of our country's wealth, we should add new tax brackets for those making more than \$1 million each year.
  - ★ **8. END THE WARS AND INVEST AT HOME.** Our troops have done everything that's been asked of them, and it's time to bring them home to good jobs here. We're sending \$3 billion *each week* overseas that we should be investing to rebuild America.
  - ★ **9. TAX WALL STREET SPECULATION.** A tiny fee of 1/20th of 1% on each Wall Street trade would raise tens of billions of dollars annually with little impact on actual investment. This would reduce speculation, "flash trading," and outrageous bankers' bonuses – and we'd have a lot more money to spend on Main Street job creation.
  - ★ **10. STRENGTHEN DEMOCRACY.** We need clean, fair elections – where no one's right to vote can be taken away, and where money doesn't buy you your own member of Congress. We must ban anonymous political influence, slam shut the lobbyists' revolving door in D.C. and publicly finance elections. Immigrants who want to join in our democracy deserve a clear path to citizenship. We must stop giving corporations the rights of people when it comes to our elections. And we must ensure our judiciary's respect for the Constitution. Together, we will reclaim our democracy to get our country back on track.
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