

The Frank Luntz  
Rethug Playbook

**UNAUTHORIZED EDITION**

**HOW TO SCARE THE AMERICAN PUBLIC  
INTO VOTING REPUBLICAN \***

\* (From the cover) This is not necessarily the official title of the original document, but rather is provided as an interpretive title for the document after the creator of this eBook read its contents.

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# INTRODUCTION

## LEARNING FROM 2004 ... WINNING IN 2006

So how does a President with a national job approval rating hovering at 50%, an economy that lost more than a million jobs over his four years in office, a war that has cost more than a thousand American lives and counting, \$50 a barrel for oil, and a national mood that is downright sour still secure more than enough votes to win reelection? And what does it portend for the Republican Party in 2006?

The answer? Credibility. George W. Bush had it. John Kerry did not.

The components of the Bush victory and Kerry defeat all boil down to a single candidate attribute that the President had in abundance but was AWOL from the Kerry campaign: "says what he means and means what he says." In every state and national survey we conducted in 2004, no desired presidential attribute ever scored higher, and nowhere was Bush stronger and Kerry weaker. In every focus group I moderated, voters would plead for candidates who spoke from the heart and not from some speechwriter's notes.

And nowhere does the image of straight talk matter more than in areas of security: national security, economic security and personal security. John Kerry had had two full years to articulate a concise position on terrorism, the economy, and issues involving values. He couldn't do it. George W. Bush and Dick Cheney did it every single day.

Even during the three Presidential debates, the Massachusetts Senator gave answers that left uncommitted voters in my focus groups both confused and mystified. His critique of the current Administration's failures clearly did political damage, but the electorate could not define exactly what he would do differently. What Kerry did not realize was that referencing "a plan" roughly two dozen times over 90-minutes is different than actually having one. In a post-9/11 world, voters simply could not elect a President whose position on the nation's most salient issues were unknown even to himself.

George W. Bush won because 9/11 had truly changed America and because he accurately reflected America's resolve that the War on Terror has to be won. Not waged. Won. Voters concluded that while John Kerry could adequately manage a terrorist attack, it was President Bush who was more likely to prevent one.

Two key campaign events enhanced Bush's role as America's Defender and Kerry as weak and/or indecisive. The first was the Swift Boat ads. In my focus groups, Kerry's convention performance was effective enough to change a few minds. But the blizzard of TV ads unleashed by the group of Vietnam vets blanketed the airwaves in swing states and undid whatever benefit the convention provided. True, the Swift Boat veterans never fully convinced voters that Kerry "betrayed" his country in wartime, but they did raise nagging and unresolved doubts about Kerry's character and judgment at the very moment that voters had begun to make up their minds.

The second key event was the Republican convention itself. Swing voters swung to Bush because of a powerfully delivered convention speech that was the right balance of domestic agenda and national security, and because he effectively communicated that he was truly a man on an unyielding mission. They heard a President who heard them, understood their concerns, addressed their fears, and made them feel safer and more secure in their homes and in their country.

The President stormed out of New York with a double-digit lead that helped him survive the first debate and sustained him through Election Day. It also helped that he had the best communication team of this era in his corner.

Sure, the Democrats have clung to a desperate belief that Bush won because he waged a campaign of fear. The exact opposite was the case. Americans turned to him precisely because they saw him as the antidote to that fear.

The results on Election Day illustrated an essential principle of electoral success: it is no longer enough to say no. Voters need someone who will say yes. John Kerry became a symbol for voters opposed to the President's policies and procedures, but not much else. Conversely, George W. Bush became the vehicle for those who wanted an affirmative, proactive, preventative approach to homeland security. Americans will tell you that it was Bush, not Kerry, who offered the hope that personal security could be restored. And in this election, hope won.

When it came to the war on terror, Americans knew where their President stood and exactly what he believed. They simply did not share the same level of confidence in John Kerry. The events and aftermath of 9/11 may not have changed everything, but it certainly changed the outcome of the 2004 presidential race.

In the end, hope won.

Turning toward 2006, it has often been said that those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it. That is excellent advice for the Republican Party, whose electoral position is eerily reminiscent of 1986 - when the GOP dropped seats in the House and lost control of the U.S. Senate in the sixth year of Ronald Reagan's presidency. The surprising electoral collapse crippled the Republican legislative agenda for nearly a decade - until the Contract with America reversed the Republicans' misfortune in 1994.

You cannot permit history to repeat itself. By carefully examining what happened the last time the GOP had an incumbent President at the sixth year of his presidency, it will hopefully serve as the first step in preventing a similar catastrophe.

Here then are the seven reasons why the Republicans did so poorly - and the Democrats did so well. In 2006, you will need to do things differently if you wish to deflect the infamous "sixth year itch."

1) **The 1980 election brought in weak Republican candidates that were finally swept out in 1986.** The Republicans made sweeping House and Senate gains during the 1980 election due to the coattail effects of Ronald Reagan. The House lost 26 of the weaker seats in 1982 thanks to a poor economy, but it took until 1986 for the Senate to catch up. The reason: weak Republican Senate candidates who normally wouldn't have won were elected and had six years before facing the voters again. In 1980, Bob Dole told reporters that *'had we known we were going to win control of the Senate we would have run better candidates.'* Said Charlie Cook, *"The crop of GOP candidates was the political equivalent of hothouse plants able to survive only under the most optimal conditions."*

**Strategy: Acknowledge the complexity of your district and the challenges you face should the political climate turn sour.** Too often Members in close elections acknowledge their electoral weakness after the election but don't address it until it is too late. If you received less than 57% of the vote, your campaign should begin today: a 20-month effort that includes fundraising, voter contact, message development and grassroots operations. And all of it should be measured on a monthly basis.

2) **Republicans stayed home.** Both in 1982 and in 1986, Republicans did not turn out in usual off-year numbers. So not only were there no presidential coattails but the inverse was true. Democrats turned out in greater numbers, and they turned out Republican Members of Congress.

**Strategy: Pick out issues that matter to the base and HOLD some of them until the second year of the Congress.** This is very important. Republicans will want to go to THEIR people with THEIR legislation 30-days before Election Day when it is still fresh and newsworthy. Rather than rushing to pass all the good stuff in 2005, you need to keep at least one major item that can be voted on by Congress and signed by the President in the waning days of 2006.

3) **There was no national theme. Local politics dominated the election.** There was no umbrella effort to unite voters across the country to keep Republicans in office. It was assumed that Reagan himself would be the unifying force and "stay the course" would be the message. Instead, an incredible 30% of those who voted for Reagan in 1984 actually voted for a Democrat Senate candidate in 1986 - and roughly 25% voted Democrat in House races.

**Similarly, there was no presidential "bounce."** President Reagan campaigned hard to help keep Republican control of the U.S. Senate about as aggressively as George W. Bush did in 2002. However, by the sixth year of his term, Reagan was only able to achieve a 3-point bounce when he visited a state and it dissipated within a week.

**Strategy: Do not depend on a popular president to bring home the votes.**

**House and Senate Republicans must establish their own identity in advance.** People have different reasons for casting votes in Congressional elections than in a presidential contest. **“Getting things done for America” is exactly what they want from the next Congress, and that’s why it should be at least a sub-theme of your efforts.**

- 4) **Democrats fielded unusually strong candidates.** Democrats afraid to run in 1984 lined up to take on Republicans in the off-year, and they had their best crop of candidates since 1974 (including Tom Daschle and Bob Graham). Democrat recruitment efforts started quite literally the day after Reagan’s landslide election, and by January 1, 1986, the seeds for a strong comeback had already been sewn. Moreover, the entire Democrat leadership was involved in the recruitment effort. Republicans took their strength for granted, and were surprised at the disaster that unfolded on Election Day.

**Strategy: Assume that your opponent will be the toughest you’ll face in your political career - and start planning your response accordingly.** Complacency is perhaps the biggest threat to an incumbent’s re-election hopes.

- 5) **The Gender Gap was a chasm.** Republicans won a barely tolerable 52% of the male vote and a disastrous 42% among women. In fact, it took eight years - 1994 - until the collapse among women was fully addressed. When asked why they abandoned the GOP, the Number One complaint was the tone: too harsh.

**Strategy: Republicans need to cultivate the so-called security mom with a legislative and communications agenda targeted directly to them.** Bush did better among women, particularly younger married women, than any GOP candidate since 1988 because of *security* concerns. Security will keep these women voting Republican if they are addressed directly and personally. And since women value *time over money*, your strategy should include your successful efforts to promote legislation that in some way provides women more free time.

- 6) **Republicans stayed in Washington while the Democrats beat them up at home.** In the Georgia Senate race, incumbent Mack Mattingly had a 24-point lead with three weeks to go. In Alabama, Jeremiah Denton was up 15-points. Jim Broyhill was leading by 16points. State after state, House and Senate Republicans had significant leads that evaporated because their opponents were on the ground running hard while Republicans were mired in useless debate a thousand miles away. The Democrat strategy was to emphasize face-to-face contact and contrast that with the *“out-of-touch Washington insiders.”* Republicans, stuck in DC, were dependent on paid media to get their message out - and it didn’t work.



Conversely, Idaho Senator Steve Symms simply left DC and flew home - telling constituents that they were more important than whatever was being voted on in DC. He was one of the few GOP incumbents reelected that year.

**Strategy: Go home. Stay home.** This is one of the most important lessons not just of 1986 but of the last ten years as well. The earlier and more often you get home to campaign, the better off you are. Every day you stay in DC after October 1st, the more vulnerable you are.

7) **The 1986 vote was a much older vote.** Voters under 30 simply did not participate in 1986, while voters 55 and older came out in larger numbers. This older shift and concerns about what Republicans might do to Social Security and Medicare helped swing a number of close races to the Democrats.

**Strategy: Republicans MUST do a better job communicating Social Security reform in 2005-06 than they did the prescription drug benefit in 2003-04.** The fact is, seniors who understood the benefit came to appreciate it - and Republicans did better among the 60+ electorate than in any presidential contest since 1988 - but too many seniors were too ill informed, and that created too much unnecessary confusion. The communication training process for Social Security must be as formal, mandatory and comprehensive as the Medicare reform effort that took place back in 1995-96. Members must make the rounds of senior centers with formal presentations to address the scare tactics sure to be employed against, them.

### **One final thought ...**

I was in high school when Ronald Reagan was elected. Throughout his first term, he did a lot to change the course of America, yet I still remember thinking of all he could have done if he had a Republican House to match a Republican Senate. That was my dream, but I, like millions of Americans, knew that a House majority was impossible.

Today, as I complete this document. Republicans are more firmly in control than at any time in my lifetime, with a courageous President, a solid House and a new class of reformer Senators ready to make real fundamental change. And I am reminded of the political chant so commonly repeated in the 1960s ...

If not us, who? If not now, when?

Now is the time. This is the place. You are the people. And these are the words.

**Frank Luntz**



# SETTING THE CONTEXT AND TONE

## OVERVIEW

*Although Republicans and Democrats share most of the same hopes and fears, they frequently look at issues from completely different perspectives. So what do the vast majority of Americas really want?*

## TEN CONTEXTUAL KEYS

- 1) **Symbols of America** are as important as words. From the Statue of Liberty to the Lincoln Memorial to the American Bald Eagle, what you show can be as important as what you say. Use symbols to help convey your agenda more powerfully.
- 2) **Talk about the principles of democracy and justice** and explain how they fit into your policies. The public is ready for a philosophical discussion if you link philosophy to their day-to-day concerns.
- 3) It's time for the GOP to tackle and own the principle of fairness. **Define fairness as "equality of opportunity."**
- 4) When you speak of American ownership, be sure to frame it with the lens of opportunity. Ownership is limited, but **THE OPPORTUNITY OF OWNERSHIP** is limitless and the very definition of the American Dream.
- 5) People want politicians who will **humanize, personalize and individualize** their policies, as well as politicians who **talk about "the next generation."**
- 6) It is perfectly acceptable, if not imperative, that you address this values debate. And yes, it is **FAMILY VALUES** that Americans want and expect to see in you and in your policies.
- 7) **Express the day-to-day concerns of your constituents on a local / neighborhood level.** No doubt you do, but you have to both show this and talk about it.
- 8) **You need to be FOR something** rather than just **AGAINST** something.
- 9) **Talk about "a more effective government"** rather than no government, as well as a renewed focus on "goals and results, not partisanship or politics."
- 10) **Start and end with ACCOUNTABILITY.** It matters most.

## THE TONE AND CONTEXT

This is different from all the other chapters in this New American Lexicon because it is meant to be more contextual than linguistic. It is my belief that if you get the tone correct, the words will surely follow.

- 1) **The Power of Symbols.** As you are well aware, communication does not exist solely in our words, either written or spoken. Americans draw upon a shared well of symbols, images that evoke concepts fundamental to our country. As our policies are produced with these concepts in mind -- freedom, liberty, opportunity -- there are timeless American images that match them. Communicating policies within their context and harnessing these symbols to match their principles is perhaps the most powerful form of communication there is.

When you speak of the 2005 legislative agenda, do not be afraid to wax poetic about this link between American icons of freedom and opportunity and the very legislation that you are discussing. It will not seem trite. It will not appear sordid. Indeed, it will resonate with a power that cannot match that of your words and phrases. Language is your base. Symbols knock it out of the park.

That being said, not all symbols are created equally. Some pack more of a punch than others, and our research has shown us precisely those that work, and those that don't.

First, you will never find any symbol as powerful as the American flag. The flag is in many ways an American Rorschach test - the inkblot upon which Americans project their ideals of America. It is both too easy and too vague at the same time.

Instead, you would do well to emphasize two other symbols of America that imply more specific ideals. The Statue of Liberty specifically symbolizes both freedom and opportunity -- two inherent principles of the conservative party, while also appealing to our nation of immigrants. When asked, 64% of Americans chose the Statue of Liberty as one of the greatest symbol of America and American patriotism. That is why we chose Lady Liberty as the cover picture of this document.

Next in preference is the American Bald Eagle. It speaks to American independence, American exceptionalism and American power. It too implies conservative philosophies of strength and self-sufficiency.

The American people cannot always be expected to directly grasp the connection between your policies and your principles. Symbols bridge this gap, so use them, and use them liberally.

- 2) **Get back to the fundamentals of America: DEMOCRACY and JUSTICE.** As important as American symbols are the core fundamental American principles -- those components of the distinctively American creed we set forth in Philadelphia. They too must be harnessed for their own power. At the top of the list in the American mindset are Democracy (52%) and Justice (40%). These principles above all others should be essential components of the communications agenda. You must explain to voters precisely how your policies fit into American ideals of democracy and justice. Whether it is Social Security reform or outsourcing, tax simplification or energy, you must be prepared to incorporate them into these principles. If you can't, you could lose the rhetorical fight before it has even begun.

**Now I'm going to list some of the most fundamental principles of America. All of these are very important, but which is the SINGLE MOST important principle? (Combined First and Second Choices)**

52%	<b>DEMOCRACY</b>
40%	<b>JUSTICE</b>
31%	<b>EQUALITY</b>
29%	<b>OPPORTUNITY</b>
22%	<b>SECURITY</b>
21%	<b>FAIRNESS</b>
4%	<b>DON'T KNOW / REFUSED</b>

- 3) **When you talk about FAIRNESS, talk about OPPORTUNITY.** Quite honestly, we expected the principle of fairness to test better. It didn't, but that doesn't mean you can dismiss it. Just because it isn't number one doesn't mean that you can neglect it. The Democrats have their fair share of communicators who can rally Middle America by appeals to fairness. Remove that capability and you will have the majority for a generation.

In a recent poll for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, we gave Americans three definitions of fairness and asked them to choose the one they agreed with the most. The Number One answer:

**"Fairness means that every American has the chance to succeed even if the ultimate outcome may vary."**

This underscores the common liberal/conservative debate over equality of opportunity versus equality of outcome. Americans believe in equal opportunity and reject programs that seek equal outcomes. The American people are, after all, realists at heart. So when you talk about fairness, talk about it in this context.

- 4) **The POWER of OPPORTUNITY: “THE OPPORTUNITY OF OWNERSHIP.** The Bush administration has wisely chosen to encapsulate their legislative agenda in a unifying theme of ownership. This is wise as it provides context and thematic undertones for their policies. However, there is a way to add to its inherent appeal -- add opportunity. The notion of opportunity tests better than ownership, and the two together test better than either individually.
- 5) **“Compassionate Conservatism” still works. And so does the appeal for limited government. But describe it, don’t say it.** President Bush’s convention address marked the return of his primary campaign theme of 2000 compassionate conservatism. But he added a twist that you should definitely consider: a definition of the role of government as both positive and limited:

### **BUSH WORDS THAT WORK**

**“I am running for President with a clear and positive plan to build a safer world and a more hopeful America. I am running with a compassionate conservative philosophy that government should help people improve their lives, not try to run their lives.”**

The days of the campaign against Big Government are over. Americans have come to accept and expect some positive role for government in making things better (we lost that one), but not at the expense of our personal freedom and choices (here, we won). And that’s the key to differentiating Bush’s success from Kerry’s failure. Compassionate conservatism speaks to both aspirations.

Our objective for and our vision of government offers **more choices, more opportunities, and more freedom.** Give them an example of where government doesn’t work and then one where it does - and all of it set in the context of the future. Consider the following;

### **GOP WORDS THAT WORK**

**The debate over whether government is the problem or the solution is old-fashioned and outdated. We have sought a new and better approach. Every day we ask ourselves how government can be of assistance in freeing and strengthening the AMERICAN SPIRIT.**

[EXAMPLE]

**We want to set free the hope and opportunity of American ingenuity and AMERICAN INNOVATION.**

And this concept can extend beyond the theoretical level -- it can be ably applied to Americans' everyday lives, as shown by (Maryland's) Lt Governor Steele's words to the Republican delegates in New York:

**STEELE WORDS THAT WORK**

**"I am, like many of you, a 20th century parent trying to raise 21st century kids. I realize that my responsibility for them doesn't end when I bundle them up, kiss their foreheads and send them off into the world.**

**If we expect to succeed, if we expect our children to succeed, we must look to ourselves and not to government to raise our kids, start our business, or provide care to our aging parent. What government can do is give us the tools we need and then get out of the way and let us put our hopes into action!"**

- 6) **The Democrats have attempted to redefine values and faith. - You can't let them.** Several speakers at the Democratic convention addressed the value of faith -- but without overt religious appeals. In fact, they specifically attacked those who speak of religion or spirituality, an indirect assault on much of the GOP base. A majority of swing voters do not attend church weekly, and this appeal was, well, appealing:

**DEMOCRAT WORDS THAT WORK**

**"My friends, we are constantly being told that America is deeply divided. But all Americans value freedom and faith and family."**

**President Bill Clinton**

Democrat Vice Presidential candidate John Edwards took an even more direct route and it ended up being one of the top five sound-bites in his speech.

**EDWARDS WORDS THAT WORKED**

**“Where I come from, you don’t judge someone’s values based on how they use that word in a political ad. You judge their values based upon what they’ve spent their life doing. So when a man volunteers to serve his country, and puts his life on the line for others – that’s a man who represents real American values.”**

**It is perfectly acceptable, if not imperative that you address this values debate.** Now it’s your turn. The best way to communicate values is to use words and phrases that no Coke-drinking, apple-pie eating American could disagree with. Family, Freedom, Opportunity, Responsibility, Community. These are the true American values, and they should be used as part of a larger personal message. I know you don’t like to talk about yourself, but if you get a values question, you need to explain what these “values” mean to YOU:

**“America is under attack from almost every direction. We have been attacked by murderous terrorists here in this great city. Our employers and Jobs are threatened by low-cost, highly skilled labor from abroad.**

**American values are under attack from within.**

**Hard work, personal sacrifice, education, integrity and the foundation of family have been and always will be the source of our strength.**

**Throughout our history, when our country needed us, Americans have always stepped forward, standing up to every challenge. That’s what our parent’s generation did on the beaches of Normandy. We must step forward again today.”**

**Mass. Governor Mitt Romney**



Republicans need to enlarge the debate to include two of Americans' biggest desires today: strong families and healthy communities. Similar to the desire of Hillary Clinton and many Democrats to talk of support for our troops, Republicans can talk confidently about these things because the public knows that the President's formulation of a "compassionate conservative" agenda speaks to what Middle America wants - and does not want - from government.

### **GOP WORDS THAT WORK**

**"Morals, values, decency - all are essential in a civil society. Strong families, healthy communities - all are essential if we are to enjoy the fruits of our success. All are essential to the American Dream. We must not dismiss them or diminish them. Goodness matters. After all, what good is a stronger economy at home or victory overseas if we remain at war with ourselves?"**

### **MORE GOP WORDS THAT WORK**

**"The greatness of America has never been measured by the Dow Jones industrial average, the gross national product, or the combined value of our individual and corporate checkbooks. The strength of America, the true greatness of America, is in the moral fiber of her people, in the integrity of her leaders and in how we treat those who are least and most vulnerable in our midst. That is the greatness of America."**

### **A GOOD GOP VALUES RESPONSE**

**It has often been said that America is great because America is good. And I believe that our goodness - our sense of right and wrong, our commitment to justice and equality - come from values. Values that are taught by parents to their children all across America. Values like opportunity and responsibility. Values like faith and community. And these are the values which our government must preserve and protect.**

**Throughout my life I have seen the wisdom of these values. As a husband, as a father, as a member of a strong and loving community, I have seen how these values**

**make America both good and great. My opponents seem to appreciate HOLLYWOOD VALUES. I guess I'm more old-fashioned. I appreciate American values.**

- 7) **Talk more about what you WILL do as much as what you have done.** Certainly, an incumbent administration must talk about its record of accomplishments. However, this cannot come at the expense of a future agenda. Americans fundamentally reject the status quo. They want change. They want something better. You have to personify that better future. This was a key component in the President's victory. George W. Bush had a plan for America's future. He focused on the future, not the past. He offered hope and solutions. All Republicans should take a leaf out of the President's book.

### **BUSH WORDS THAT WORK.**

**“This changed world can be a time of great opportunity for all Americans to earn a better living, support your family, and have a rewarding career. And government must take your side. Many of our most fundamental systems - the tax code, health coverage, pension plans, worker training - were created for the world of yesterday, not tomorrow. We will TRANSFORM these systems so that all citizens are equipped, prepared -- and thus truly free -- to make your own choices and pursue your own dreams.”**

- 8) **Make the GOP the Party of BIPARTISANSHIP.** If Americans love anything, it's bipartisanship. Anything described as “bipartisan” is an automatic winner with the American public, and any candidate who can effectively portray themselves as “bipartisan” will automatically have an advantage. Call the Democrats out on their partisanship and obstructionism.

You are blessed with a record of working across the aisle to achieve a number of important legislative victories: Leave No Child Behind, support for the troops and the war effort, even tax relief. Emphasize those examples.

- 9) **Americans are looking for ACCOUNTABILITY from their government before they even consider government programs or ideology.** Skepticism of government is still running high - with the biggest suspicion that government will not do what it says and take responsibility for its actions. Americans want their government to be accountable (33%) before they want it to provide lower taxes (14%) or better services (8%). So when you talk about government, talk about the need for accountability before tackling any issue.

- 10) **In the post 9/11 era. Americans want government to make them safe and secure.** Republicans can speak to that and still maintain a conservative, limited government approach. Providing safety and security is a higher priority than wanting government to stay out of their lives or to provide them with the tools to succeed. So remember that when you are talking about your agenda, think about communicating the principles of safety and security.
- 11) **It's LIMITED but EFFECTIVE government - Americans want and demand one to accompany the other.** It's a rhetorical wrong turn for Republicans to only talk about the negative aspects of government. Those things that Americans believe the government ought to be doing, they want done effectively. Effectiveness taps into a deep well of public approval. In our research, more "effective" solutions score higher with voters than "better," "more efficient" or "simpler" solutions.
- 12) **Empathize... personalize... humanize.** It's time to end the bad habit of talking dry economic statistics, budget numbers and the alphabet soup of government programs and departments. When you talk about the issues facing America, talk about what it means to real people - families, small business owners, employees, parents, children and grandchildren - their jobs, their lives and their hopes for the future. Take the time to show them that you understand their situation, that you are familiar with the problems they face and that you have solutions to offer.



# GROWTH, PROSPERITY & RESTORING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Recent economic numbers aside, the American people are still very concerned about economic conditions in general and the job situation in particular. There may be two million new jobs created over the past year alone, but the perception is that this is still a very tough job market and that job *insecurity* is warranted. That's why the language that follows is so important.

## THE TEN COMMUNICATION KEYS OF A STRONGER, HEALTHIER ECONOMY

- 1) **The War on Terror is inextricably linked with our Economy.** We still talk about 9-11 every day, but rarely in the context of its effect on the economy. To talk effectively about the recession and our strong economic recovery, you have to talk about the impact of the War on Terror.
- 2) **Empathize.** I've said this many times, but it's still so hard for business leaders and conservative politicians to show empathy when they talk about the economy and PARTICULARLY when talking about the economic recovery. Remember, this is an issue that strikes at Americans' hearts as much as it does their wallets. Too often Republicans offer emotionally shallow economic principles. Show them you care.
- 3) **Don't Assert An Economic Recovery. Prove it.** Ask any American whether they personally feel as though our economy is back to normal, and maybe 3 out of 10 will say yes. Unfortunately, too many in Washington don't seem to agree and gleefully trot out the latest numbers, facts and figures to show why. To voters, an economic recovery isn't found in a pie chart, it's found in their checking book. Don't make this mistake by asserting that the recovery is here. Always talk about *"an economy that continues to grow and the new jobs that are being created every day."*
- 4) **Have a LONG-TERM PLAN.** Rather than asserting a good economy, you must still talk about the pandemic issues that it faces and your solutions to them. No matter how good the economy gets, Americans will still believe that it could be better. In their hearts, they always believe there is more opportunity to instill and inefficiency to wring out.
- 5) **Don't talk about Tax Cuts, Talk about Tax Hikes.** Do not be too quick to cite the tax cuts for the economy's improvement. It is rarely believed even among your most fervent supporters. Instead, link potential tax increases to their negative economic repercussions and you will get a much more positive reaction. The difference between these two is truly amazing. *Americans oppose tax hikes even more than they support tax cuts.*

- 6) **Every one must benefit - particularly HARDWORKING OVER-BURDENED AMERICAN TAXPAYERS.** The public is looking for inclusive policies that lift up all economic boats. In this outsourcing debate, it really is essential that you make a commitment that all Americans will be helped by your efforts. That's why, when talking about the economy, you need to address personally the people who make it happen.
- 7) **It's Not about jobs. It's about CAREERS.** Job training and lifelong learning is at the core of a policy of long-term, sustained, genuine economic success. Job training and lifelong learning is at the core of the American Dream - the opportunity to grow a job into a career and the opportunity to grow a career into a business of your own. So even though you want to talk about creating jobs, you then want to add "... so that every American will have the career of their choice."
- 8) **American prosperity depends on INNOVATION and AMERICAN PRODUCTIVITY.** Americans have never been accused of being a humble people. So use this to your advantage - this country likes to think of themselves as hard-workers able to compete and win against any other country in the world. Tapping this spirit encourages voter alignment with a conservative solution to outsourcing.
- 9) **The root cause of outsourcing is the inhospitable business climate in the US.** And the best way to address this problem is found in reducing taxation, regulation, and litigation, which allows innovation and education to bring more jobs into America.
- 10) **"THE OPPORTUNITY OF OWNERSHIP."** This is the best way to frame the President's innovative Ownership Society message. Ownership in itself is perceived as being beyond the means of some Americans, but all Americans appreciate and value the opportunity of someday owning a home, owning a business, and owning their retirement savings - all essential components of the American Dream. Ownership means control - and getting control of their lives is an essential component of our day-to-day quality of life.

Yes, the public is concerned about deficits and the growing debt, but a strong economy and safe, secure jobs are higher priorities. The words that follow will help you explain in plain English why your solutions are the correct solutions.

## KEY FINDINGS

- 1) **Empathize. Don't Assert.** Americans don't want to be told that the economy is doing better, because most haven't seen any evidence of such. So long as they are out of work, or scraping through multiple jobs to make ends meet they don't see the economy improving at all. That's why it is best to stay away from assertive statements like the one below - people just plain don't believe it:

### GOP WORDS THAT DON'T WORK

**"I think the evidence is overwhelming that the economy is doing very well. We've come through the recession and the aftermath of 9/11. I think it's beginning to sink in with the public as well, too. I think anybody who looks at it objectively has trouble making the case that somehow this is a bad economy."**

The public absolutely positively NEVER wants to be told what it thinks. They want empathy rather than statistical declarations. They want to know that they are more than just a number, so give them something worthy of optimism rather than the latest economic results.

### GOP WORDS THAT WORK

**Considering what we have been through these last few years, it is remarkable that the American economy is doing as well as it is.**

**We came into office with a recession, and then we had 9/11. In light of both, we are actually doing okay - and it clearly looks like we will be doing better in the weeks and months ahead. There are still people out there in some industries bearing a heavy load because of the economic damage from 9/11 - and we are working hard to help them. But there is good reason to be hopeful. Every month we and jobs, sometimes in the hundreds of thousands. Every month more people are buying homes and investing in their future. It took a while, but we are getting back on track.**

- 2) **Draw the past-future context.** The Democrats are far too focused on the same old "people vs. the powerful" debate, pitting themselves as the defender of the common man against corporate America. You have to make clear that this is the politics of the past; that it's time to leave these petty debates behind and have a real, adult discussion about finding solutions for our future. Solutions that bring

benefit to all. Change this debate into the mature one that it needs to be. **Allow them to represent the past and hang themselves in the process. You are focused on the future; you are focused on solutions.**

### **WORDS THAT WORK: SETTING THE CONTEXT**

**“It is time not only to look toward the future, but also to begin planning for it. It is also time to leave the old-fashioned partisan politics and political negativity behind. Beating up on corporate America will not return American economic vitality and security. It will make some people feel good, and it may win a vote or two, but it won’t create a single job here at home or sell a single product to someone overseas.”**

- 3) A recitation of the latest employment figures will not win the jobs debate. Having a “long-term plan” is a better approach.** John Edwards attacked the Bush administration where it is most vulnerable claiming that the new jobs that have been created don’t compensate for all the jobs that were lost:

### **THE DEMOCRAT ATTACK**

**“They’ve lost over three million private-sector jobs, two and a half million manufacturing jobs. We have over nine million people who don’t have a job. We have over three million people who have slipped into poverty. Almost four million people have lost their health-care coverage under the president. We’ve still got an awfully long way to go.**

**It’s not just a matter of whether some of the millions of jobs that President Bush has lost are now being replaced. That alone doesn’t answer the question. What are the quality of the jobs? What are the incomes and salaries of those jobs?”**

In his case, the numbers worked because they confirm perceptions. Plants, factories and companies reduce their workforce so publicly, while the companies that have been expanding often don’t draw attention to themselves - and all the small business advances and expansion in self-employment often get no attention at all.

**Why not have 10 of the Fortune 100 CEOs come to Washington and announce that if the Senate will pass lawsuit abuse reform, they each will pledge to hire**



## **10,000 new employees in the next year.**

It is tempting to counter-attack using facts and figures. Resist the temptation. Several Republicans at the convention made the claim that our economy is chugging along just fine and used statistics to prove it. Well, I've got bad news for you - no matter who you are, if you try to link economic statistics with voter's pocketbooks, you fail - they just don't see it or believe it.

If you still feel the need to reel off statistics, then go right ahead, but understand that these cannot be the brunt of your argument.

A more effective message is to focus on why jobs have been lost and what will bring them back. Though the numbers are true, they're just not credible. Instead, focus on the future. Americans don't want to be told things are getting better. **They want to hear a plan of action to make them better.** The President's language works because it speaks to a series of individual proposals that common sense suggests will lead to job creation and because it identifies a series of specific obstacles that need to be removed.

### **BUSH WORDS THAT WORK**

**“To create jobs, my [LONG-TERM] PLAN will encourage investment and expansion by restraining federal spending, reducing regulation and making tax relief permanent. To create [GOOD] jobs, we will make our country less dependent on foreign sources of energy. To create jobs, we will expand trade and level the playing field to sell American goods and services across the globe. And we must protect small business owners and workers from the expansion of frivolous lawsuits that threaten jobs across America.**

**[Much of this we have already begun. and that's why there are almost two million new jobs created in the last year. And we plan to do even more.]”**

But telling people what you are for is not enough. You also have to tell people what you are against. The language below does just that:

### **GOP WORDS THAT WORK**

**I will not be satisfied until every American who wants a job can find one. But that requires us to stand up and SAY NO to the SPECIAL INTERESTS that stand in the way of creating new jobs.**

**Washington does not create jobs. The economy does. Washington doesn't give raises. Employers do. It's time for Washington to stop making life more difficult for employers and employees and give them the freedom to create jobs and provide raises for American workers.**

**A tax code that is too complex, lawsuits that are out of control, and too much bureaucracy destroys jobs and prevents raises. We need to remove these OBSTACLES to more jobs and higher salaries.**

**This is where my opponent and I fundamentally disagree. For the last four years, we have tried to remove the obstacles to more jobs and higher salaries, but both Senator Kerry and Senator Edwards have VOTED NO.**

**President Bush and I believe that when Washington sets taxes too high, and when greedy personal injury lawyers push frivolous lawsuits, Americans lose jobs. You can't say you're fighting for the American worker and support higher taxes and oppose lawsuit abuse reform at the same time. You have to choose.**

**4) September 11th changed everything. So start with 9/11.** This is the context that explains and justifies why we have \$500 billion dollar deficits, why the stock market tanked, why unemployment climbed to 6% and why we are still in a rebuilding mode. Much of the public anger can be immediately pacified if they are reminded that we would not be in this situation today if 9/11 had not happened, and that it is unfair to blame the current political leadership or corporate America for the consequences of that day.

#### **THE POSITIVE MESSAGE.**

**"The plain and simple fact is that American businesses, jobs, and consumers were all hurt by September 11, and some businesses are still suffering more than three years later. But we are fighting back. People are returning to work. We are returning to our daily lives. And in celebration of the American Dream, we are not just striving to recover that which was lost, but to rebuild our nation and ourselves even better than it ever was. And let me be clear: our best days are still to come."**

**Without the context of 9-11, you will be blamed for the deficit.** The deficit is a touchy subject for both Republicans and Democrats - your supporters are inherently turned off to the idea of fiscal irresponsibility, and Democrats see

nothing but hypocrisy. The trick then is to contextualize the deficit inside of 9-11 and the war in Iraq, which Republicans sometimes do, but not early enough in the answer.

### **GOP WORDS THAT WORK**

**In order to appreciate all that we have done, it's important to remember what we've been through.**

**As a country, we have faced a challenge unique to our generation - a devastating attack on our soil that severely constricted our economy. As a result, we've had to take some extraordinary measures that are quite costly. But our first priority is national security and we determined that it was necessary to invest in protecting the homeland. That was the right decision because homeland security is the right priority.**

**The next step is to get domestic spending under control. Frankly, you don't do that by adding dozens of new federal programs and raising taxes. You do that through discipline and accountability. The President has established a tough, but realistic goal of cutting the deficit in half over the next four years. With the right amount of restraint in non-defense discretionary spending and uncompromising accountability, we'll make it.**

- 5) Link the war on terror to the economy.** As the emotional reaction to 9-11 subsides, it is important to remind Americans of the more tangible impact the events of that day continue to exert on their wallets and pocketbooks. It's clear that they understand this even if it is something they themselves would rather not articulate.

### **CHENEY WORDS THAT WORK**

**The terrorists clearly have as one of their objectives trying to throw off the economy, trying to inflict economic pain, and it's important that we not allow them that victory.**

**The terrorists win if we end up so hunkered down that we have to fundamentally change our lifestyle, our open society, our free movement of goods and people and ideas back and forth across international borders. If we can't live the way we'd like to live, then the terrorists score a major victory. We can't allow that to happen.**

**6) Don't assert that the tax cuts caused the economic recovery.** This is probably heresy but we have never found a Republican who has effectively made the case for strong economic growth as a result of the tax cuts. It has been tried and tried and tried and it just doesn't sound credible. Claiming the tax cuts are working because economic numbers say so simply does not resonate - and repeating it often won't make it so. Worse yet, attempting to link tax cuts to an improving economy actually undermines the cornerstone of the administration's economic policy in their eyes.

Instead of linking the current economic situation with tax cuts, you would be better off linking tax increases to future economic hardship. In plain English, take credit for **"reducing the tax burden on hardworking Americans."**

Then talk about **taxes in terms of real people.** A personal, real life success story told in someone else's words is the perfect coda. Laura Bush's words work because they tell the story of the most popular employer in America: female small business owners.

### **LAURA BUSH WORDS THAT WORK**

**"I could talk about the small business owner and entrepreneurs who are now creating most of the new jobs in our country - women like Carmela Chaifos - the only woman to own a tow truck company in all of Iowa.**

**The President's tax relief helped Carmela to buy the business, modernize her fleet, and expand her operations. Carmela is living proof of what she told me. She said, if you're determined and you want to work hard, you can do anything you want to. That's the beautiful thing about America.**

## OUTSOURCING

Concern about outsourcing has not and will not disappear simply because John Kerry is no longer on the stump. Even now, in 2005, Americans are still concerned about losing jobs overseas, and let's face it: the Democrats have been controlling the debate. It's time for the GOP to take control of this tricky issue. This is a winnable issue so long as you communicate it appropriately. The principles below are a good place to start, but if you truly want to own this issue, read the following pages carefully.

**SOLUTIONS.** That is the word that encapsulates what Americans want most right now when it comes to the issues of jobs, outsourcing and the future of the American workforce. **Stop talking about outsourcing as an “economic reality or a natural progression of globalization” and START empathizing with American workers. And there is no better way to empathize than to provide them with a solution.**

The words you say will be just as important as the passion with which you say them, and what follows is a detailed and tested lexicon of the words, phrases, and chunks of language to make it happen. Message is essential here. Americans are listening very closely to what you have to say and how you say it. . Your language needs to be disciplined amidst your outrage, and your message must remain consistent in its appeal to the positive., vision you'll espouse. This memo won't provide you with specific policies, but it will help you to *communicate* the *core principles* of a return to American prosperity in the 21st Century global economy.

### **\*YOUR BEST 130-WORD RESPONSE\***

**Our approach offers a better solution because our approach offers less. Less taxation. Less litigation. Less regulation. And that means more innovation.**

**Less taxation, so that small businesses can hire employees rather than accountants. Less litigation, so that health care costs are spent in the operating room, not the courtroom, and the products you buy cost less because the predatory lawyers and frivolous lawsuits don't cost more. Less regulation, so that companies no longer have to file paperwork that no one reads or get caught between two mammoth bureaucracies that have conflicting rules and red tape.**

**And that means more innovation because more businesses and more people can be focused on creating a better future with better products and better services. When it comes to government, less IS more.**

Quite frankly, business leaders and conservative politicians often fail to show empathy. You can never have enough empathy, particularly when a person's livelihood is at stake. Remember, this is an issue that strikes at Americans' hearts as much as it

does their livelihoods. It threatens their dreams as much as it does theft checkbook. Too often Republicans offer principles that are only economic in nature. Voters and shareholders also need to know you share theft hurt and anxiety.

### **ANSWERING A TOUGH QUESTION: SHOWING YOU CARE**

**Q: “So I’m an employee. What do you say me? I’ve made sweaters for 25 years and I was darn good at it and my job until my factory just went away. What do you say to me and my kids because my company took my job away?”**

**A: “Above all else, we’re sorry for the situation that you’re in. No one should have to endure such hardships, especially after so many years of hard work -- and honestly, it’s hard for me to understand just how hard it is.**

**But what I do understand is that we need to work together to create an environment where we can create jobs so you can have work again.”**

- 7) **“We deserve a better approach.”** You will not win this debate by merely attacking the veracity or credibility of your opponents. The public rightfully sees a problem and they are looking for answers. You cannot spend too much time criticizing the opposition (no more than 2 minutes). Within the first two minutes you need to offer a summary of what you propose. No matter what they say, say we can do better. No matter what they do, it could have been done better. Everything we talk about should embrace “a better approach” and take the principle of improvement to the next level.

### **WORDS THAT WORK: OUTLINING THE SOLUTION**

**“You deserve a better approach — and we have one. If we want companies to stop sending jobs abroad, we need better policies right here at home. Reducing taxation, reducing bureaucratic inefficiencies, reducing litigation, and increasing education will restore our economic vitality, enhance our prosperity and make America more competitive.”**

- 8) **Everyone must benefit.** The public is looking for inclusive policies and responding best to inclusive language. While we are not a society prone to class warfare, there is a greater concern now than in the past that the poor are being left behind and that more needs to be done to protect their interests. In this outsourcing

debate, it really is essential that you make a commitment that all Americans will be helped by your efforts.

**9) It's not about jobs. It's about CAREERS.** Job training and lifelong learning is at the core of a policy of long-term, sustained, genuine economic success. Job training and lifelong learning is at the core of the American Dream — the opportunity to grow a job into a career, the opportunity to grow a career into a business of your own; The opportunity to work where you want and do what you want. So talk about “creating jobs so that millions of Americans can have the career of their dreams.”

### **WORDS THAT WORK: CAREERS, NOT JUST JOBS**

**“A career is something that you look forward to. It puts you on the path of life. A career is about pride, about self-worth, something you share with family and friends. A job is something you get after high school or college. At a job, you look forward to coming home from work. At a career, you look forward to going to work.**

**What we want to do in this American economy is give people access to careers, working for themselves and their future. If you're just going to a job and punching the clock, you're not going to be happy, you're not going to be prosperous, and you're not going to be looking toward the future. If you have a good career then you feel like you're making a difference, not only in your life but in lives of others, then you feel like you're apart of the American system of progress. That is a career, that is a good thing, and that's the American dream.”**

## GENERAL ISSUES OF OUTSOURCING AND PROSPERITY

**Never, never, never begin a response to outsourcing by saying it is beneficial to the U.S. economy. Never.** Outsourcing is nothing more than the impact of taxation, regulation, litigation, innovation, education and trade policy all rolled up into one. Each one of these issues needs to be addressed as a component of your message. We start with trade because that's the traditional Republican response. It is actually the weakest. The single biggest mistake proponents of the free market system make is to respond to an attack on outsourcing with a defense of free trade. It may be the right policy but it is most certainly the WRONG politics.

Nonetheless, there is a perception problem among Americans when it comes to outsourcing. We asked Americans what they thought to be the greater amount: the number of jobs American companies have outsourced to foreigners overseas over the past ten years, or the number of Americans employed in America by foreign-owned companies. 54% of Americans thought that the number of outsourced jobs exceeded the number of "insourced" jobs, while only 8% thought the opposite.

This is your core problem. Americans do not realize the value that foreign companies bring to this country. This must be communicated more often and more effectively. Outsourcing is a problem, but don't be afraid to talk about its flip side. Let's face it: Americans who work for foreign companies are not acutely aware of their own situation, particularly in the context of the outsourcing debate. They must be reminded of their place in the global economy, and in fact, of how it benefits them. It cannot be too crass, but this is an extraordinarily effective point and must therefore be emphasized.

**Still, this cannot be an issue about just "outsourcing;" it must be about identifying and solving the ROOT CAUSES of an inhospitable business climate.** This is how you set the context for why the Republican agenda is better for the American economy than the Democrat's plan. You can't rail against taxes, or rally for lawsuit abuse reform, or even clamor to cut red tape until you provide the context for those aggressive issues. Otherwise voters will think you are just pursuing your own pet projects. Rather, you must communicate that you want to identify and solve the problem for what it really is, not just offer short-term gimmicks in response to a very large-scale problem. Highlighting the root causes is the best way to turn a tough question on its head, while taking the positive route.

### WORDS THAT WORK: IDENTIFYING THE ROOT CAUSE

**"What we need to worry about is why it's profitable for companies to move jobs offshore. We should be looking to change the environment, change the rules, and enforce our trade agreements so that those gigs don't have to move jobs offshore."**



## A GREAT ANSWER TO A TOUGH QUESTION

**Q: “You come from a state that has been punished by major corporations moving jobs overseas, isn’t it time that we punish those corporations for punishing their employees?”**

**A: “Well a lot of people will tell you first it’s time for us to ask the question, “Why do these companies leave?” What is it that forces them to make the decision to leave the United States, the stability of our government and the rule of law and the protection of patents and everything else that goes along with it? I think that’s where Washington has missed it. We really need to look at the role of government in making a U.S. manufacturer uncompetitive in a global marketplace.”**

**10) It’s not the size of the business that matters. It’s the “entrepreneurial spirit” that moves people.** As a general rule, when you’re defending corporations, you must understand that it is literally impossible to score a language home run. But as unsympathetic as Americans are to corporate America right now, they are still totally supportive of the entrepreneurial spirit of innovation, discovery and success. It is here that your tax simplification, lawsuit abuse reform, and red tape cutting solutions will resonate most. Businesses will be the first to benefit from those solutions, and they’ll be the first to hire on more workers as soon as they get the hint from you that this country’s not going to be hostile to them any longer.

**11) Focus on INNOVATION.** In fact, break it down this way: Education—Innovation—Employment. Talk about the greatness of American workers with regards to innovation and discovery. Talk about how America’s utilization of technology has made us the envy of the world and how other nations send their best and brightest to America to learn. Then link innovation with education, and you have a very strong argument.

### WORDS THAT WORK: EDUCATION & INNOVATION

**“There is no question that without quality education, we may lose the Innovation that leads to full employment. When you look at the new careers, they’re coming from new technology. They’re coming from the most innovative fields. They’re inventing new products, new services, a better quality of life. They’re doing things differently — and better than its ever been done before. Those are the jobs we want to create; the career we want to encourage; the skills we need to teach. Those jobs become career, and a career allows a worker to Invest In themselves and their community. That’s what I mean by innovation.**

**“But in order to make innovation happen, we need to reinvest in education at all levels. The President’s Initiative of No Child Left Behind is a good start, but we need to add to that. We need .to add to it federally. We certainly need to add to it on the state level. We need a partnership between business, and government that insures that innovation will continue That’s something America needs to work a lot harder on.”**

**12) PRODUCTIVITY is a key principle of prosperity.** Americans love to work, and we love the idea that we love to work. More accurately, this nation is one that prides itself on productivity. It’s not just that we work for the sake of working, but that we work for the sake of PRODUCING. We love to be productive, and we love to be reminded of just how productive we are. Americans want you to know that they’re worth their wages, that there is more to them than a salary and an employment statistic. It is their productivity that makes them the unparalleled resource they truly are. Show them you understand both their hopes and their fears.

### **THE TRUE VALUE OF U.S. WORKERS**

**“Employees an capital assets. They’re not just a line on a ledger sheet. They’re not just an amorphous group of people treated the same way we treat machinery. They are people with dreams and hopes and visions. They have kids in college. They have mortgage payments to make. I care about them, I value them, and I am determined to help them succeed.**

**--Chairman Don Manzuflo**

**13) Americans will not accept second place or second best. When it comes to trade, we want to win.** While this language of competition and victory plays somewhat better among men than women, we react to international, trade the way some people react to the Yankees-Red Sox. The only acceptable outcome is a victory. Any mention of the trade issue should be accompanied by an explicit expression of support for the American worker and the American workforce, and a commitment to fight and win for them.

### **WORDS THAT WORK**

**“As a matter of principle, when Americans compete In anything, we must play to win, not to tie and most certainly not to lose. Trade is not a zero some game. What we need are fair trade arrangements**

that promote the needs and advantages of each nation. And as you and I both know, America has a lot of advantages. All we need is to enhance the ability of American businessmen and women to seize those advantages in the global marketplace.”

### WORDS THAT WORK & A SIMPLE FACT

“I reject the notion that we should shut out foreign countries and foreign products from American markets. I reject the notion that we should stop buying Sony, Panasonic, Volvo and VW. I reject the notion that we should kick out the Japanese and German automobile factories that operate in more than a dozen states and employ tens of thousands of Americans, As Americans, we should strive to produce the best and buy the best.

Economic Isolationism will not work. We cannot close our borders and pretend the rest of the world doesn't exist. The fact is, thanks to American innovation and productivity, American businesses produce a lot more than we could possibly sell in America.

We're five percent of the world's population. That means that 95 percent of the markets are outside the United States. We've got the best workers in the world, the best businesses. We can be competitive. We've got to make sure that the rest of the world is open to our farmers, our agricultural producers and our manufacturers, I think what we need to make sure of is there's a level playing field for our workers, that we're all playing by the same rules and we're enforcing trade laws, and this administration will work very hard to do that.”

### TAXATION LITIGATION. INNOVATION, EDUCATION: THE. POLICIES OF PROSPERITY

*“An out-of-work American has been denied the American dream of a steady paycheck and the satisfaction of a good day's work. Losing a job in the name of efficiency is no comfort to a displaced mother who needs to feed her children. We must therefore ensure a personal, compassionate response to this impersonal and callous global economy.”*

**Taxation. Litigation. Innovation. Education.** Remember those four words for they are at the core of your message, your policy and your response to critics of corporate America. Here is the policy answer to the outsourcing challenge that offers a solution

without selling out conservative free-market principles. The four words should be strung together, repeated often, with an adverb attached: too much taxation, too much litigation, not enough innovation and not enough education. That should be your mantra. Remember it. Fortunately, the words rhyme, which means your audience will remember it as well.

**14) Americans want you to define the role of Washington.** The problem is there is absolutely no consensus as to exactly what Washington should be doing right now. They just want something done. The most credible language has a pitch that resonates to all ears. For Republicans, it talks about limiting intervention. For Democrats, it talks about creating the right economic environment. And for both political partisans, it has an explicit focus on the future.

### **WORDS THAT WORK**

**Our job in Washington is to set the right course for the business community, but with an important caveat The true engine for job growth In this country will never be the federal government.**

**What the federal government can and must do is to foster the most fruitful economic environment possible so that those Americans pursuing their own entrepreneurial dreams can have the best possible chance for success We must prepare our workers for today's international marketplace with the skills for tomorrow's economy.**

**15) Stay on message! Focus on ROOT CAUSES... don't talk about "outsourcing" as an issue of "trade."** The moment the public bears you dismiss outsourcing as an economic reality or just a component of trade is the moment they will look to the Democrats as the party that speaks to their needs. To talk about this in terms of trade is to communicate without empathy for their individual concerns and without offering tangible solutions.

### **WORDS THAT DO NOT WORK**

**Q: "I watched the speech that the president made today in Ohio. Strong defense of his economic policies, and he went further in talking about fighting economic isolationism. But Secretary, he never used the word 'outsourcing.' Why is the administration shying away from this outsourcing issue?"**

**A: "Well, you know, Alan, all that is, is trade. He talked a lot about trade. He talked about the importance of free trade. He talked about the fact that presidents of both parties since World War II have moved**

**to expand and open trade around the world, and how important that is for creating the environment for better jobs here in America, for a more secure America.”**

**16) It’s about tax SIMPLIFICATION.** While most Republicans would probably prefer calling for tax relief, any battle over tax cuts immediately becomes partisan and that means you lose more than half your audience. Similarly, despite Kerry’s campaign, less than half of Americans would advocate a reduction in corporate taxes. However, what Americans do want — and what conservatives, moderates and even some liberals do support, is tax simplification.

### **WORDS THAT WORK: TAX SIMPLIFICATION**

**As a matter of principle, if we want American companies to create more American jobs, we need to have an American tax system that encourages employers to stay right here on our soil.**

**This is not a pitch for tax cuts. But it is most definitely a pitch for tax simplification. Too many companies have to hire too many accountants and too many lawyers to fill out too many forms to comply with a tax code that is simply beyond comprehension. By simplifying the tax code, companies can cut overhead, increase productivity, and hire more Americans to create more products, more services and more profit. True, a few lawyers might temporarily lose their jobs, but that’s one profession that always lands on their feet.**

**The current administration recently streamlined tax-reporting requirements for small businesses, helping 2.6 million small businesses save 61 million hours of unproductive work. That was a fantastic first step, but we need to do even more for all businesses.**

**17) Talk “tax rates” rather than tax cuts.”** Americans have had enough talk about tax cuts for a while. If you want to engage the public in a context that you can win, a better approach is to talk about over-taxation without specifying the solution or calling for more tax cuts. A lot more Americans believe companies are overtaxed than believe those tax rates should be lowered. The public wants something new and different. Drawing the linkage between too much taxation and the threat to prosperity surely has been said before, but it is less philosophical. For most Americans, it’s just plain common sense.

### **WORDS THAT WORK: OVERTAXATION**

**“What we need is some common sense here. If we want to encourage**

**US companies to employ US workers, it makes no sense to tax them to where they have no choice but seek cheaper labor. When it comes to job loss, we can't tax our way out of the problem... but we sure can tax our way into it. Too much taxation destroys innovation and destroys prosperity."**

- 18) Talk "tax fairness and "tax neutrality."** The public has no patience for a tax code that actually hinders American products sold abroad while helping foreign products sold here. Reducing taxes on exports and/or increasing taxes on imports begins to move toward complicated economic philosophy but the labels "tax fairness" and "tax neutrality" explain enough that you should not shy away from this argument if you believe it. The key principle in this tax adjustment debate is a phrase you've all heard before: "a level playing field." American products deserve exactly the same treatment abroad that we give foreign products at home.
- 19) Ending lawsuit abuse.** Please, please, please STOP saying tort reform. For too many Americans tort reform has something to do with a French pastry. Tort reform is legalistic, bureaucratic and definitely impersonal. But while a large segment of Americans don't know what tort reform actually means, virtually all Americans know what lawsuit abuse reform does TO THEM.

#### **LAWSUIT ABUSE WORDS THAT WORK**

**"As a matter of principle, companies should be spending less money on litigation and more money on innovation. The single greatest disincentive for America businesses to do business here In America is the absurdity of our legal system. We have become the lawsuit capital of the world. Some companies actually spend more money fighting off frivolous lawsuits than the gross national product of countries that belong to the UN. Other countries use their legal system only when necessary. In America, too many people see the legal system as a loose slot machine, and too many personal Injury lawyers see it as a potential jackpot."**

- 20) It's not just the legal system. It's the people who are abusing the system for their own financial gain. Once and for all, it's time to take on the PERSONAL INJURY LAWYERS.** Those on the outsourcing kick have personalized and demonized America's CEOs. To some degree that's a smart (though highly unjustified) strategy because it puts a human face behind the condemnation. You need to practice exactly what they preach — and the personal injury lawyer is the perfect foil. The truth is, GREEDY personal injury lawyers have cost more jobs than any CEO through their reckless abuse of the legal system.

## WORDS THAT WORK: PERSONAL INJURY LAWYERS

**“Everyone deserves their day in court, but the aggressive nature of the personal injury attorneys and their gaming of the system have ensured that companies spend almost EVERY day in court.**

**There is simply too much fraud and abuse within the legal system thanks to the unholy alliance of greedy personal injury lawyers and their irresponsible clients. Together, they are ratcheting up the cost of doing business in America while simultaneously driving down the integrity and consistency of our judicial system. As a result, the cost of doing business becomes so expensive that first the jobs go elsewhere, and then the company goes elsewhere.”**

- 21) No component of the Agenda for Prosperity is more popular than job training and lifelong learning.** The single most popular component of the President's 2004 State of the Union address was his call for increased focus on job training efforts. Republicans and Democrats alike feel that our society is not reaching its potential because of an education system that still doesn't deliver consistent quality. There are actually three component of this effort: First, the state of American schools is still of grave concern. Second, Americans axe not particularly aware of the concept of lifelong learning but they endorse it wholeheartedly. And third, Americans absolutely believe in the value of job training and see it as a joint responsibility and partnership between business and the federal government
- 22) Finally, challenge the premise of the question. Be aggressive. Seize the issue!** Don't let reporters corner you into answering their questions on their terms – especially on outsourcing. It's NOT outsourcing. It's the hostile business climate in America. It's NOT trade. It's about creating economic vitality. It's NOT about just jobs... it's about careers and the American Dream.

## WORDS THAT DO NOT WORK

**Q: “Another proposal talked about would require you, If you have a call center in India, that if somebody calls from there, they have to say, ‘By the way, I’m in Bangalore, India.’ What do you think of that idea?”**

**A: “Well, I think it’s a very inefficient way to run an operation. It’s going to take more time, and time means money to the American people and the American consumer. What we’re trying to do is make sure that prices are lower here in America.”**

## **A MUCH BETTER APPROACH**

**“Your question misses the point of this very serious issue. For a number of very specific reasons — taxation,, regulation, litigation, innovation and education — we have created a business climate here In America that has actually encouraged companies to move those jobs abroad.**

**What we need are solutions to those problems, like tax simplification, regulatory reduction, lawsuit abuse reform, and a renewed commitment to innovation and lifelong learning, right here in America, not cosmetic and superficial changes. It’s time to get serious about these very serious Issues. Too many jobs are at stake to be playing politics now.”**



# **THE WORDS AND LANGUAGE OF PROSPERITY**

**Economic (In)security**

**Economic Isolationism**

**Innovation**

**A Level Playing Field**

**Compete & Win**

**Trade Enforcement**

**Fighting for the American Worker**

**A Balanced, Common Sense Approach**

**Tax Fairness**

**Tax Simplification**

**Simplify & Streamline Regulations**

**Lawsuit Abuse Reform**

**Greedy Personal Injury Lawyers**

**Energy Independence, Diversity and Self-Sufficiency**

**A Smart, Flexible, Efficient, Effective Workforce**

**Real World Solutions to Real World Problems**

**We Can Do Better**



# INTERNATIONAL TRADE: PROMOTING AMERICA'S COMPETITIVENESS

*"Open trade is not just an economic opportunity. It is a moral imperative."*

-- President George W. Bush

## THE ELEVEN STEPS TO EFFECTIVE TRADE COMMUNICATION

There was a time when virtually all conservatives considered themselves "free traders." Today, views over trade are no longer so simple or easily defined -- and while a majority of Americans are still free traders in theory, their language and priorities have changed. For those who believe that an aggressive effort to promote exports is essential to an expanding American economy, the following communication recommendations should be helpful:

- 1) **It's "INTERNATIONAL" trade, NOT "foreign" trade or "global" trade.** For many reasons unrelated to this issue, the word "foreign" conjures up very negative images. Since Americans are more "pro-international" than they are "pro-foreign" or "pro-global" (globalization is a particularly frightening term to many Americans), we suggest you accept this terminology. INTERNATIONAL trade is favored over FOREIGN trade by 68% of Americans.
- 2) **"A level playing field" is what Americans want, expect and demand from international trade.** This is the only issue we have studied where the process is as important as the result. The level playing field concept is what Americans believe is the fundamental principle behind trade expansion and new trade agreement. This is how we currently define "free and fair trade."
- 3) **Jobs are what Americans most want from international trade.** Even though most companies and many in the Administration make the case for cheaper products and more choices, in the current economic climate, what matters most is the number of jobs created by trade and/or jobs lost because of it. If you are a proponent of greater trade, you will need to use employment facts/statistics to prove that trade yields a net positive number of jobs. A majority of Americans are still not sure.
- 4) **Appeal to America's greatness.** Americans love being told we're the best, that we're number one. We will do anything -- ANYTHING -- to remain number one, and will oppose anything that undermines that superiority. It is essential in any discussion of trade to declare that we are "the greatest economic power in the world" and that "we will remain the greatest economic power in the world only so long as we continue to do business with other nations."

- 5) **When it comes to competition, WINNING is the only acceptable outcome.** Other than the Germans, we are probably the most competitive population on the globe, and we take economic competition just as seriously as sports or politics. As long as Americans believe we can and will win in the global markets, they will want to play. However, winning is not defined by “balance of payments” or by “trade deficit figures.” The public does not care about how many foreign products are sold in America. Winning is determined by our ability to get our products into foreign markets and keep our economy healthy. And those who oppose international trade should be called “defeatists” for they have given up on our products and our workers without even a fight.
- 6) **The Overarching trade objective is “ENHANCEMENTS.”** Americans are skeptical of “trade expansion” because they’re not really sure whether our companies, products and employees are truly benefiting from additional trade, and “promotion” also fails to address the perceived systematic shortcomings. Enhancement is about the quality of the agreements, not just the quantity -- and that’s exactly what Americans want to see.
- 7) **“Fairness” is the strongest weapon in the anti-trade arsenal.** The primary reason why about a third of the population (and the percentage is growing) opposes free trade is because they think our competitors are not competing fairly. That’s why the “fairness” component must be a part of any communication strategy -- talking about putting U.S. businesses “on an even footing” or “guaranteeing a level playing field” or about “fair trade, NOT just free trade” is essential to winning the trade argument.
- 8) **The best financial statistic: expanding international trade is the equivalent of a \$1300 to \$2,000 tax cut for the average American family.** Americans like to save money, particularly those who shop at Target, Wal-Mart and the other stores most likely to offer foreign-made products. The problem is, while consumers see the benefits every day — right in their own wallets and pocketbooks — of less expensive imported products, they do not recognize why prices are cheaper and selection greater. You need to explain it better by making a DIRECT connection through the statistic above.
- 9) **High-wage Jobs, highly-skilled workers and high-tech products are more important than trade deficit numbers.** We asked Americans whether a country that has low-wage jobs, low-skilled workers, and produces labor-intensive products but has a large trade surplus is better off than a country that has high-wage jobs, highly-skilled workers, and high-tech products but a large trade deficit. The answer was a resounding NO for two reasons. First, many people confuse the trade deficit with the budget deficit (“they’re all just numbers ... big numbers”) and their eyes glaze over. Second, most Americans truly would rather live in a high-wage, highly-skilled, high-tech country. So don’t forget to name the many foreign companies that have opened facilities that employ significant numbers of Americans (Honda, Toyota, and BMW manufacturing plants, for example).
- 10) **Don’t forget American farmers.** No profession’s members care more about

selling American products abroad than do American farmers, because no one has more at stake. In fact, if we are to save the farm economy, it is essential that we expand markets abroad for American agricultural products. Let farmers know that you're fighting for them in the capitals of Europe and Asia, not just in Washington.

11) **Don't talk like economists.** Words like "protectionist," "capitalist" and "isolationist" turn the average voter off. In this case, I am sorry to say that emotion beats intellect. All your facts must ring true, but they should be couched in terms that appeal to our hearts as well as our heads.

## OVERVIEW

**"We need to showcase the promise and potential of open markets, highlight the perils of isolationism, and champion a level playing field for American interests. The American economy can be beaten by no one, but increasing trade is about more than just economic benefits. We are the shining city on the hill, and our freedom acts as a magnet for the best and brightest entrepreneurs of the world.**

**-- Robert Zoellick**

There is no issue we have ever messaged where both sides can legitimately use much of the same language yet come to radically different conclusions. From jobs to compliance to level playing fields, those that would slam the door on international trade often use exactly the same buzz words and occasionally even the same data as trade expansion advocates. George Orwell is alive and well.

Moreover, the day-to-day impact of international trade (or the lack of) is not immediately apparent to most Americans. For example, despite the best efforts of Democrats to obscure the financial bite of government, everyone can see and feel the imposition of taxes on a personal basis every time they purchase something or receive a paycheck. The benefits from trade are not so obvious. Americans can plainly see the sales tax penalty they pay on their cars and televisions, but there is no line item for all the dollars saved because American companies can produce and sell their products elsewhere. And the same people who decry the trade deficit during the day drive home in their BMWs at night listen to their Italian operas on their B&O speakers and fall asleep in front of their Sony TVs -- and they wouldn't have it any other way.

You start this debate at a disadvantage. Yes, the American people are generally in favor of expanding international trade -- but that is misleading. The moment opponents push back with any of several arguments in their linguistic quiver, trade support collapses. Consider the following polling results from late 2003 at the bottom of the economic cycle:

**\* 63% believe "We should slow things down and make sure others are playing**

**fairly before we negotiate any more trade agreements”**

- \* 63% believe “The United States should not pursue any new foreign trade agreements until we insure that the current trade agreements are fair to the U.S. and working effectively.**
- \* 66% believe “NAFTA and other foreign trade agreements have cost thousands of American workers their jobs, and right now we have a trade deficit of almost \$500 billion dollars. Before we pursue any new agreements, we need to guarantee that the U.S. is competing on a level playing field and these agreements are followed by other nations.”**

#### **TRADE PROMOTION: SOUND-BITES OF SUCCESS.**

- \* “Made in the USA” should be a badge of pride, not a mark of discrimination. When it comes to international trade, American products and American workers come first.**
- \* International trade means jobs -- good jobs -- in technology, computers, high tech and the other important industries of today and tomorrow.**
- \* Increased trade means more choices of products and lower prices for hardworking families International trade saves the average working family between \$1,300 and \$2,000 a year in lower prices.**
- \* American companies and products are losing sales opportunities and market share because we are competing at a disadvantage in the world marketplace. International trade agreements will create and ensure the level playing field we need to compete and win.**

#### **WORDS THAT WORK**

**Jesse Owens, Peggy Fleming, and the 1980 USA Hockey Team taught us that you have to go to the Olympics to win. In 1999, the U.S. Women’s National Soccer Team took on the world and finished on top. Row can the U.S. get the “gold medal” of better jobs, cheaper products, and a higher quality of life if we are afraid to compete and win in the international arena?**

**Millions of Japanese teenagers wear Levi’s. Russians and Chinese drink Coca Cola. American farmers feed the world. Movies from Hollywood and music from Nashville are as popular in Europe and Africa as anywhere, and software from Seattle and computers and data chips from California and Texas dominate the world.**

**Americans have nothing to be afraid of when we compete on the world stage. So long as the rules are fair and we prepare our work force to make products that the world will buy, we can win.**

Those polling results should be alarming to supporters of free trade. But there is good news for 2005:

- \* **69% currently believe that “the American economy benefits from international trade.”**
- \* **66% believe “when it comes to American products and services, America can compete and win against any country on the globe.”**
- \* **64% believe “when it comes to trade, America can compete and win against any country on the globe.”**

That's why the words and language you use are so important if you want to convince an increasingly skeptical American population.

## **THE LANGUAGE OF TRADE EXPANSION**

Trade is one issue where explaining the policy is as important as explaining the principles. We need an education effort that goes beyond language training right to the heart of good economic policy. The following trade agenda, as articulated by former Commerce Secretary Don Evans, serves as a good summary of policy and objectives:

- 1) We will seek the elimination of industrial tariffs. Ending industrial tariffs will decrease prices all the way down the line, with consumers benefiting the most.
- 2) We will place a special focus on eliminating barriers to exports of agricultural products precisely because it is the area most subject to government intervention that distorts markets, limits the opportunities for American farmers, and impoverishes farmers throughout the developing world.
- 3) We win press for the elimination of all barriers to the export of U.S. services, which now represent the largest sector in the U.S. economy. We have the best minds and abilities, and we must be free to compete on the world stage.
- 4) We are committed to keeping electronic commerce free of roadblocks on the global information highway.
- 5) We intend to ensure respect for intellectual property rights that protect the ideas that lie at the heart of the rise in American productivity.

6) We are committed to preserving our ability to deter unfair trade practices and to pursue the aggressive enforcement of our trade agreement rights.

*All of these objectives fall under the same basic premise - that governments should eliminate the barriers of free enterprise in order to offer their people the opportunity to define their own economic destiny.*

## **Fairness**

I begin with the “fairness” argument because it is at the very core of the anti-trade argument. Like clockwork, opponents to trade always return to the same refrain that recent agreements are unfair to workers, unfair to certain American industries, and unfair to America.

In some ways they’re right. American products ARE charged higher taxes at foreign borders. Yes, that’s unfair. Acknowledge their premise, but then challenge their conclusion and solution. You will win the fairness argument by demonstrating that it is actually the lack of trade agreements that is the cause of unfair practices against American companies, products, and most importantly, American workers.

And a villain always helps. Our polling indicates that 31% of Americans see China as the country that ignores agreements and breaks rules the most often. They are the number one response by a long shot, and it approached with some degree of sensitivity, could function as a stunningly effective foil when talking about fairness.

## **WORDS THAT WORK**

**When American products and services are treated unfairly, the answer is not retreat. The answer is not disengagement. The answer is not surrender.**

**The answer is to fight back with trade agreements that remove all these taxes and tariffs and put America on an equal playing field. If we retreat - if we surrender - we lose. But if we act quickly and aggressively, if we assert the right of America to compete, we will gain the higher ground - and that means we win.**

The language of “a level playing field,” though somewhat hackneyed and cliché, wins every time. It appeals to American’s sense of fairness - just look no further than the recent uproar over steroids in baseball. In the minds of this country, a fair playing field allows the best player to win. Furthermore, this language ultimately translates into an American win, because of our sense of America being exceptional. It is no surprise then that when polled, 48% of Americans believe that “a level playing field for every



trading nation is the most important outcome of America's trading policy with the rest of the world, beating two other arguments that encapsulate the concept of winning.

Thus, it isn't "winning" alone that motivates voters to free trade; it is instead fairness that sets the stage for a win.

### **Everyone Loves a Winner**

Once you have set up a fairness principle, you can then move into more salutary language centered upon winning. Of all the emotional arguments in favor of trade expansion, nothing ultimately stirs Americans more than an appeal to America's greatness. From the fundamental core belief in American exceptionalism to the enduring American Dream that is passed on from one generation to the next, there is something unique about America and our drive to be the best at what we do both as individuals and as a nation. Nothing is more pleasing to the American ear than to be told that we are the first and the best.

### **WORDS THAT WORK**

**Americans have always been at the forefront of international change and world progress and we have always prospered as a result. That is what has made us such a forward-looking nation. We must continue to lead in a world that is more active than ever in trade and commerce, and we should do this in a way that provides opportunities to all American workers, business owners and families.**

The key word is winning. **According to your opponents, the only winners over the past decade of trade expansion are foreign governments, foreign products, and multinationals. Everyone else has been a loser.** Nothing is further from the truth, of course, but Americans don't know this. It is essential that you capture the theme of winning and insert it into all your communication efforts. It is essential that you itemize and specify the real winners when we open the door to international trade.

In fact, **winning** is one of the top responses to poll questions asking Americans to identify the most important benefit to America from trading with other nations, second only to "creating more American jobs." Almost half of all American voters chose "enhancing America's ability to compete and win economically against other nations" as their first or second choice.

## WORDS THAT WORK

**Americans have nothing to fear when we compete on the world stage. So long as the rules are fair and we prepare our workforce to make products that the world will buy, trade will benefit consumers, employers, employees and all American families.**

**The President must be allowed to assert his leverage on behalf of America's farmers and ranchers, industries and service providers, small and large businesses, workers and families alike. When American businesses are able to engage and compete with the rest of the world on an even footing, everyone one is a winner.**

### TRADE OUTCOMES THAT MATTERS MOST TO AMERICANS

<b>Creating more jobs for Americans</b>	<b>49%</b>
<b>Enhancing America-'s ability to compete and win</b>	<b>45%</b>
<b>More choices of products and services</b>	<b>31%</b>
<b>Saving money on consumer items</b>	<b>27%</b>
<b>Creating higher wages for American jobs</b>	<b>25%</b>

### The Economy

The general economic impact of trade is rarely, if ever, a strong argument, but with Americans just barely receiving their first taste of a more robust economy, they are looking for any bright light to hold o,to.

The problem with the economic argument four years ago remains today.

- 1) First, the impersonal nature of "the economy" loses every time to the more personal appeal of (lost) jobs and (lower) wages.**
- 2) Second, a rather large number of Americans believe NAFTA and other trade agreements have actually had a negative impact on the economy. Sadly, 54% of Americans believe that overall, NAFTA has been a failure, while only 44% believe that overall, it has been a success.**

So while trade expansion may be the panacea the economy needs to right itself, the public is more likely to side with the textile and auto workers who lost their jobs.

Ironically, Americans agree that free trade agreements benefit both America (68%) and the American economy (69%), even though they have a negative impression of NAFTA. So when you talk about free trade, address the principle, not the specifics. And if you are faced with an economic challenge from the opposition" the 'correct' answer is to focus on building, increasing, expanding - moving forward, doing more ....

## WORDS THAT WORK

**This is the time to be opening new markets, not slamming doors on opportunities that could build on and rejuvenate our economic growth. To me, opponents of trade sound like defeatists. They want to retreat. We want to move ahead. We want to tear down the walls and move forward, building new markets, increasing economic opportunities; expanding our natural advantages.**

Of course, there are effective ways to talk about the economy's beneficial relationship with trade ... the only difficulty in it is matching the aplomb of the Governor himself:

### SCHWARZENEGGER WORDS THAT WORK

**There is another way you can tell you're a Republican. You have faith in free enterprise, faith in the resourcefulness of the American people, and faith in the U.S. economy. To those critics who are so pessimistic about our economy, I say: Don't be economic girlie men!**

**The U.S. economy remains the envy or the world. We have the highest economic growth of any of the world's major industrialized nations. Don't you remember the pessimism of twenty years ago when the critics said Japan and Germany were overtaking the U.S.? Ridiculous!**

**Now they say India and China are overtaking us. Don't you believe it! We may hit a few BUMPS - but America always moves ahead! That's what Americans do!**

In what was one of the most memorable moments of the convention, Governor Schwarzenegger combined a discussion of the economy with the language of winning, and thoroughly succeeded. This section consistently tests off the charts, and I assure you that it is NOT solely a response to the "economic girlie men" line. It is a response to Schwarzenegger's "pumping up" of American exceptionalism. So talk about the economy, but talk about it in terms of perseverance, stamina, and winning.

### **The Facts About Jobs**

Frankly, this is where trade advocates have fallen down. The facts may be on your side

but the perceptions are not, and this is exactly what Americans want to hear about above everything else. Remember half of Americans (49%) picked “creating more jobs for Americans as one of the most important benefits of trading with other nations - more than any other outcome. Of course this is not as easy as it sounds:

- \* **Trade may support tens of millions of jobs here at home**, but no one knows which jobs they are.
- \* **Trade may produce a net positive number of jobs**, but thanks to organized labor Americans think otherwise.
- \* **Trade related jobs may pay 12% to 15% more on average than other jobs**, but again, no one knows – including those who hold those jobs;

This is one area where you need a litany of facts to bolster your arguments. Rattle off four or five specific, relevant examples of how trade has increased not only the number of jobs but the quality of jobs in a specific industry. The key principle here is the future and can be stated in a single sentence that Americans win appreciate and agree:

### **THE TRADE PHRASE THAT PAYS**

**High wage, highly skilled workers producing high-tech products is the key to America's economic future.**

When talking about jobs, acknowledge that trade enhancement will mean importing more items like toys and clothes, but then emphasize that American consumers will benefit with more choices and lower prices. And then close with the following: **“But with trade enhancement, we will be exporting aircraft engines, tractors, heavy equipment, and advanced technology. That means more jobs, good jobs, better jobs for more people.”**

The key to the job argument involves two of the most popular and credible professions in America, farmers and small business owners. Both professions are considered the embodiment of the American Dream. Both professions depend on international trade for their existence.

### **WORDS THAT WORK**

**Trade agreements are particularly important to small businesses. They need straightforward rules because they don't have the lawyers to work through the bureaucracy. They need the power of the U.S. government because they don't have the infrastructure to fight for**

**equal treatment. They need the opportunity of open markets because they cannot afford to open them themselves. And no one understands this more than the American farmer - America's first small business owners.**

### **More Choices, Lower Prices.**

Trade enhancement advocates should be spending more time advancing the choice and price argument because opponents have no credible response. Use rhetorical questions:

- \* Should Americans be denied the right to choose the products that are best for them? That's what will happen if we discontinue international trade.**
- \* Should hardworking Americans pay more for their televisions, their computers, their clothing? That's what will happen if we discontinue international trade.**
- \* Doesn't the average American family deserve to keep \$1,300 to \$2,000 in savings because of international trade? That's the real benefit of international trade.**

### **International Impact**

Proponents of trade often turn to the international impact of trade on employment, opportunities, environmental quality, and even the spread of democracy and the free market system to other nations on the globe. You can emphasize this: "we pay higher wages, adhere to stricter environmental standards, and provide better worker safety and training than locally owned factories in poor countries." The fact that 140 million people worldwide have been raised from poverty so far is well worth mentioning. Furthermore the fastest reductions in poverty have come in those countries most engaged in trade, while countries that isolate themselves remain desperately poor.

BUT while the international argument sounds good and Americans of all stripes do approve, this is one of the weakest arguments in your communication arsenal. Americans do like to hear about how economic and political policies here can have a positive impact on people across the globe, but that will accomplish nothing if you are confronted with trade deficit numbers, job losses, or lack of compliance. The language below captures the best of the international impact argument, but beware -- this is not one that knocks it out of the park.

## WORDS THAT WORK

**By leading, the United States can shape the future. By leading, the United States is guiding the merger of regional integration within a new, open global system. By leading, the United States can help create models of liberalization that we can then apply elsewhere. We have an unparalleled opportunity here. By dint of size and ingenuity and creativity and capital markets, we can really influence the future of the international system. To have our hands tied at this moment would be a historic calamity.**

**-- Robert Zoellick**

### Trade Arguments That Don't Work

There are two particular arguments advanced by the Bush Administration in favor of trade that don't work among any audience - friend or foe. Those arguments are:

- \* **The number of agreements.** There are now more than 130 free-trade agreements in force around the world, and the U.S. is party to only a handful of them. This may have real, quantifiable consequences for American workers and companies, but absolutely no one cares. In polling, focus groups, and dial sessions, this is singularly the least effective method to sell enhanced world trade.
- \* **The role of Congress.** It is the result, not the process that matters to Congress. Trade advocates emphasize that Congress sets the negotiating objectives for trade agreements... Congress oversees the executive branch during negotiations ... Congress ultimately decides whether to accept or reject the agreement. And yes, the American people do want Congress involved. But they are much more interested in jobs, products and cheaper prices than what Congress does or does not do.

The "level playing field" argument is truly a double-edged sword. Both sides in the trade debate argue for a level playing field because it cuts to the heart of the "fairness" attribute and therefore to the center of the public opinion battle. Make no mistake: whichever side argues more effectively that its position will yield a level playing field will win the public opinion battle.

The best response is the language below. First, take the level playing field argument as your own. Assert that the lack of international trade is what creates an uneven playing field. Second, assert that through negotiations and agreements, we can and will establish a "fair" basis for competition. And third, with that fair basis for competition, America can and will win.

## WORDS THAT WORK

**The other critical ingredient is a level playing field and the need to keep competition truly competitive. If the playing field is tilted against our companies and our workers, as we're seeing in the steel industry, no matter how good the product, we won't be able to compete. We can't be playing in a zero sum game on the global stage. That's not what this is all about. Through international negotiations, we will forge agreements that create and ensure a level playing field, so that competition is fair and so everyone has the opportunity to win. We will accept nothing less.**

**-- Former Commerce Secretary Don Evans**

Enforcement and compliance also cut both ways. First, even though the words "enforcement" and "compliance" are used interchangeably, there is a different connotation to the American ear. While Americans are unhappy when they learn that other nations are not complying with the rules of international trade, they get outright angry if they are told that the American authorities are not enforcing those rules - to the detriment of U.S. workers, U.S. companies and the U.S. economy.

Let me be blunt. There is a real perception that our leaders, Republicans and Democrats alike, sell out American interests to foreign companies. The answer to this challenge is as much in the tone as in the language: pounding fists is as important as well crafted phrases.

Americans want crafty negotiators determining trade agreements and street fighters enforcing them. The following language will not work if delivered with a calm demeanor.

## WORDS THAT WORK

**When you enter into trade negotiations, there are three principles that must be established.**

**First, make sure that you fight and win on behalf of the American workers and American businesses.**

**Second, you have to make sure that all agreements are enforced and that all parties are compliant. There's nothing more important than insuring that when we sign an agreement, all parties are going to comply.**

**And third, we must have the teeth and the resources to guarantee that compliance.**

Creating effective trade language that avoids the subject's more arcane components is an enormous challenge even to the most skilled communicator. By relying on principles rather than punditry, you can rally Americans to your side.

**THE PERFECT SOUNDBITE**

**WITH THE BEST WORKERS AND THE BEST PRODUCTS ON THE GLOBE, AND WITH TOUGH NEGOTIATORS FIGHTING FOR THE BEST AGREEMENTS, AMERICA WINS.**



## **THE BENEFITS OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

*(A Republican speech about expanding opportunities)*

*The United States must retain its competitive advantage over other nations. We cannot withdraw from the international economy because of weakness or fear of competition. When American businesses are able to engage and compete with the rest of the world on an even footing, everyone is a winner.*

*Expanded international trade clearly benefits the American consumer through lower prices and greater choices. Think of all the products we consume each year. From cars to televisions, American families have limitless choices and save thousands of dollars every year because of international trade. Foreign products also force American companies to experiment and innovate in order to compete, and those innovations benefit everyone.*

*But perhaps most importantly, millions of American jobs depend on international trade - 11 million to be exact. That's 11 million families that depend on America to produce the best products at the best prices. Hardworking Americans have put this economy back on track. If we limit trade, ultimately, it is the American worker that will suffer the most. And when America's workers suffer, all of us suffer.*

*It is true that agreements like NAFTA do result in some job dislocation, particularly in older and low-skilled industries. However, new jobs inevitably arise in their place-, and the new jobs are most often in growing industries in which employment is more stable. The fact is, nations that have fewer trade barriers have lower unemployment rates than countries that impose higher barriers to trade.*

*The high-tech computer industry is just one recent example of how American products have flooded the globe, yielding more and better jobs, and a healthy economy based on international trade. Limit trade in any way and these jobs and this industry will be threatened. Being pro-trade means being pro-employment and pro-worker.*

*The American free market system works best when businesses are allowed to innovate and employees are free to enjoy the fruits of their labor. Our economic future is bright, but we will remain the greatest economic power in the world only so long as we continue to do business with other nations. If we are to unleash the full potential of the American economy--encouraging job creation and better pay--we need to encourage international trade.*

*We also need Washington negotiators who know how to fight and win at the negotiating table. Our products and our workers can compete and defeat those from any country on the globe, but we need equally tough negotiators as well.*

*With the best workers and the best products on the globe, and with tough negotiators fighting for the best agreements, the United States cannot lose. So let's not allow the old ways of thinking and the old politics of fear to hamper desperately needed and deserved progress. International trade doesn't depend on abstract economic theory. International trade is about more jobs, good jobs and lower prices, and is essential to retaining our economic leadership in the world.*



# THE BUDGET: ENDING WASTEFUL WASHINGTON SPENDING

## COMMUNICATING THE 2005 BUDGET IN EIGHT EASY STEPS

- 1) **“PUTTING OUR NATIONAL PRIORITIES IN ORDER.”** That is the top American priority right now. And that should be at the core of your communication efforts.
- 2) **“Common sense” and “accountability” are the two principles that matter most in the upcoming budget debate.** Yes, these attributes matter in every national debate, but they are particularly important to Americans who universally think you waste way too much of their taxpayer dollars and blame Republicans just as much as Democrats for the deficits. If you can demonstrate these two attributes, you win the communication war. If you don't, you won't.
- 3) **“PRINCIPLES” should be at the heart of an discussion about the budget.** At the outset of your speech, list numerically and then descriptively the process you follow in deciding how to spend the money of America's hardworking overburdened taxpayers.
- 4) **“Cutting wasteful Washington spending” has always had greater emotional appeal than “balancing the budget.”** This is still true today. Americans still believe the primary cause of the deficit is wasteful Washington spending, not the tax cuts. So tell them: “Americans aren't taxed too little. Washington spends too much.”
- 5) **“Economic growth” is the best way to balance the budget.** Remind people that raising taxes discourages work, investment and achievement, and it only gives the IRS a larger piece of a smaller pie. The economy is growing and expanding thanks to lower taxes and other policies that encourage job creation and innovation. And when the economy grows, the government collects more and we will be able to keep more.
- 6) **“Winning the war on terror is the first budget priority.”** As President Bush has said, homeland defense, rebuilding our military, and conducting the war on terrorism must be our top priorities. We must and will spend whatever it takes to keep this country safe.”
- 7) **Talk in real terms, not in terms of economic theories.** While the typical Republican spends too much time discussing procedural budget details, Democrats make a grand show of responding to everyday American concerns. Language that works: The budget isn't about numbers or about theory. Our common sense budget is about priorities and people - real people with real dreams of the future.
- 8) **It's about the future, not just the present.** What are we going to do to secure the

budget responsibly for the next generation? The choice is clear. Either we tie the hands of Washington and stop it from spending our money, or Washington will tie the hands of our children and spend them further into debt. That's an easy choice for me to make."

## OVERVIEW

**"Here's one good idea to make. sure we continue to grow our economy. Congress needs to restrain spending. The recession and the cost of war an-d the cost of home/and defense have increased our deficits. Yet I am determined to fund the great priorities of our government while exercising the spending restraint that will return America to the path of a balanced budget as soon as possible. More money spent in Washington means less money in the hands of American families and entrepreneurs, and less money in the hands of risktakers and job creators."**

**-- President George W. Bush**

That represents language perfection - but you will need more than just language. You need a few powerful facts. So when someone tries to pin the deficits on the Republicans, tell them the following:

According to the Joint Economic Committee in 2004, nearly 40% of the surplus was eaten up' by the recession, another 40 percent by new spending (the majority of which went to the war and homeland security), and only 24 percent by tax cuts and rebates (some of which were strongly supported by Democrats).

## What Happened to the surplus?

**(Changes to CBO's FY2002-2011 budget baseline from January 2001 to September 2004)**

<b>Increased Spending</b>	<b>39%</b>
<b>Weak Economy&amp; Estimate Changes</b>	<b>37%</b>
<b>2001 Tax Cuts</b>	<b>18%</b>
<b>2003 Tax Cuts</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>Economic Stimulus (Other Minor Tax Relief)</b>	<b>1%</b>

Source: Congressional Budget Office (Includes debt service costs)

Now, in the name of “fiscal responsibility,” Democrats are calling for repeal of the Bush tax cuts. But what that represents to the hardworking, overburdened American taxpayer is the single biggest tax increase in the history of America. So yet again, the Democrats are trying to balance the budget on the backs of the American taxpayer. We don’t agree. And here’s the ultimate sound-bite to articulate our differences:

### **The Overarching Message**

**“The Democrats believe we have deficits because Americans are taxed too little. We Republicans believe we have deficits because Washington spends too much.”**

Yes, the deficit is once again a political concern - and it is a greater threat to Republicans because their base is demanding greater spending restraint and more fiscal accountability. The deficit once again enrages Americans not because of what it is but because of what it represents: a Washington out of control, out of touch and out to undermine the hardworking overburdened American taxpayer. Conservatives also link Washington with the deteriorating national morality - the way Washington spends our money subsidizing anti-social behavior moves the American Dream further from our grasp.

The challenge is steep but success is imperative to everything else you wish to achieve. Wasteful Washington spending is the reason why Americans think Social Security is in trouble. Wasteful Washington spending is the biggest complaint Americans have with Congress. You become the party most opposed to wasteful Washington spending and you secure your majority through the next redistricting ... and perhaps longer.

### **COMMUNICATION KEYS**

It was the Republicans who produced balanced budgets in the late 1990s, yet it was Bill Clinton who got the credit. Why? Because we mishandled the public relations effort. We stood up for principle, but it came across as politics as usual. John Kasich had it right in the 1990s, and Jim Nussle has it right today. Now it’s up to the Republicans in both Houses of Congress and the White House to follow their lead.

Congressman Jeb Hensarling created a taskforce to identify and eliminate wasteful Washington spending. That task force should take center stage in 2005, but that in itself is still not enough. The language that follows can turn things around if we learn from our rhetorical mistakes and do it right this time:

**1) The moral force for a sensible budget must be stronger than that of the pseudomoralists who will decry specific budget cuts.** The media will always focus on the few who will be hurt rather than on the many who will be helped by

a budget that is under control. You need to fight back, and you need to name the debate in terms of a “moral commitment to our children, the next generation, and our future as a nation.” **You must match your opponent’s story for story - the personal and national immorality of passing along increasing debt to our children and future generations versus their budget cutting horror stories.** Otherwise, you may win the budget battle once again but lose the rhetorical war.

- 2) **People only understand the budget in their own terms.** No one knows what the national debt is because no one really comprehends trillions of dollars. Americans understand the cost of a week’s groceries, a quart of milk, a night at the movies (including popcorn). Big numbers are nothing more than big numbers. Personalize what wasteful Washington spending really means. Name the programs and the cost.
- 3) **Speak in threes.** Every fact and example must tie into the big picture, but too many can obscure the message. Fewer than three facts or examples are insufficient; more than three are confusing.
- 4) **Individual programs have friends and constituencies, Bureaucracies and bureaucrats don’t. Therefore, focus the general rhetorical attack on the “Washington bureaucracy.”** Americans constantly complain about the billions mismanaged and wasted by their government because of needless layers of administration and personnel. The greatest anger is directed at bureaucrats and waste rather than at the specific programs. Therefore, every budget statement by every Republican should include the words “cutting the unnecessary bureaucracy and ending wasteful Washington spending.”

[Exclusion of #5 is original author’s error]

- 6) **Political communication works only when it is played in context. STOP TALKING ABOUT PAIN. START TALKING ABOUT “SHARED SACRIFICE” and “GENERATIONAL FAIRNESS.”** The public does not want to see services cut, but the vast majority are prepared to make shared sacrifices “so that their children can achieve the American Dream.” If we talk about pain, we lose. If we talk about “strengthening the American economy and restoring fiscal accountability,” we win.
- 7) **Established (don’t say private) charities will deliver services better to those in need.** A majority of Americans believes the Salvation Army and Habitat for Humanity can deliver more efficient and better quality services to needy Americans than Washington ever could. Play up President Bush’s faith-based initiative and the help it would give to local charities at every opportunity. Remember, if you want to promote an end to Washington spending, you need to communicate an alternative to Washington spending.
- 8) **Stop talking about the process. No new acronyms.** Our communication efforts have always been hampered by too many acronyms, initials and mind-numbing inside-the-Beltway details. Even now, I already hear Senators talking about PRAs rather than Personal Savings Accounts. The public doesn’t understand the

acronyms and frankly, they don't want to learn. They're concerned with principles and values, not process.

### **TIPS FOR PRESS SECRETARIES**

**Bring a copy of the federal budget to use as a prop to demonstrate the massive size of the federal budget and the potential for cutting wasteful and unnecessary spending programs.**

### **KEY FINDINGS**

- 1) Budgets are about SETTING NATIONAL PRIORITIES before anything else.** New Democratic linguists like George Lakoff are currently trying to portray budgeting and taxation as the American government's form of investment. Fortunately, this simply doesn't jive with what Americans actually think. The following comes right from a 2005 national survey - even when you name the programs Americans want most, they still think we are overtaxed because they think you waste too much:

*“Based on what we want and expect from government, we are ...”*

<b>OVERTAXED</b>	<b>71%</b>
<b>UNDER TAXED</b>	<b>16%</b>
<b>NEITHER/DK</b>	<b>13%</b>

*“Based on what we want and expect from government, from education to healthcare, from national security to retirement security, we are ...”*

<b>OVERTAXED</b>	<b>66%</b>
<b>UNDER TAXED</b>	<b>14%</b>
<b>NEITHER/DK</b>	<b>20%</b>

**Americans look upon budgets as a political process firmly grounded in the present. In that case, you must emphasize the role of the budget in establishing our national priorities. It is here that the “rubber meets the road” and the hard spending decisions are made. They understand that ultimately budgeting is an exercise in priority-making and belt-tightening.**

*“When it comes to federal government spending, which of the following approaches would you most like to see? I do need you to choose just one ... would you like to see the federal government ...*

<b>PUTTING OUR NATIONAL PRIORITIES IN ORDER</b>	<b>66%</b>
<b>INVESTING IN THE FUTURE</b>	<b>23%</b>
<b>INVESTING EVERY PENNY NECESSARY BUT NOT A PENNY MORE</b>	<b>8%</b>
<b>DON'T KNOW/REFUSED</b>	<b>3%</b>

- 2) **COMMON SENSE** matters more than another descriptive attribute. We asked Americans in the 2005 survey what they most wanted. Fully 48% prefer a COMMONSENSE budget while only 26% preferred a budget that “reduces the debt burden for future generations.” Here again, we can see that setting commonsense spending limits is the best way to frame the upcoming debate.

Democrats have been most successful when they infuse budgeting rhetoric with lofty ideals and scare tactics. It worked because the only Republican response had been an emphasis on process. An injection of common sense puts you on the winning side:

- 3) **Emphasize the RISK to continuing ECONOMIC GROWTH if taxes are raised.** If the Democrats had their way, the impending budget battle would be fought exclusively on taxes.

You need to make this a debate over spending. Of course you know this and I know this, but the American people have to hear this from you. Communicating “commonsense budget priorities” and “tax permanence” go hand-in-hand. Making the case for tax permanence is outlined more specifically in this document’s section on taxes. But know this: the American public is fearful that allowing the Bush tax cuts to expire would negatively harm both their own finances AND the American economy.

### **WORDS THAT WORK**

**Some have suggested - of the other political faith - that now is the time to raise taxes. I must tell you the President and I think that’s one of the worst ideas we’ve heard in a long time. As we’re coming out of the recession, as we’re getting the engine of the economy driving again, for us to now raise taxes would be exactly the wrong response. We’d put at risk the progress we’ve made, and clearly, it would cost probably hundreds of thousands of jobs out there in the economy.**

**-- Vice President Dick Cheney**



**4) YOUR money is better spent in YOUR COMMUNITY than it is in Washington.** Everyone thinks that they take better care of their finances than the government. This is as close to a universal rule in public opinion. But not enough politicians talk about this. It is an easy way to connect with voters - to identify with their perceived plight as an American taxpayer as well as to their implicit distrust of government

This is also another opportunity to focus the debate on the revenue side rather than the spending side. You must constantly remind voters that this is THEIR money that they have given the government, and it is going to waste in Washington.

### **WORDS THAT WORK**

**I think the worst thing you could do for the economy is to raise taxes on the small businesses and families. The best thing we could do is to keep the economy growing and the theory is that if you want your community to grow Main Street, leave your money in Main Street, not in Washington. And in the end it is our spending that is the problem, it is not our economy, it is the spending and we have just, we're just out of control on it.**

**-- Congressman Kevin Brady**

**5) ACCOUNTABILITY. RESPONSIBILITY. DISCIPLINE.** Three words. That's what Americans want to hear: these three words. And when you put the word "budget" before it, their impact soars. And when you add Congress and Washington to the mix, you have perfect communication.

### **WORDS THAT WORK**

**We in Congress need to tighten our belt and restrain the growth of spending. It was Winston Churchill who said, "Trying to tax yourself into prosperity is like trying to lift yourself up in a bucket while you're standing in the bottom of it." It doesn't work that way. Any Democrat who thinks that the United States of America is somehow under taxed, here's good news for you: We accept voluntary contributions at the United States Treasury. Just send it in. I don't think we'll get many contributions.**

**-- Congressman Bob Beauprez**

You simply can't draw enough parallels to the family budgeting process. It forces

voters to evaluate the US budget for what it is, rather than as some abstract governing concept. It is too easy to get lost in procedural lingo and statistical one-upmanship. Don't let it happen. Keep it simple and force Americans to apply some common-sense kitchen-table economics to the budget process.

### **MORE WORDS THAT WORK**

**Why aren't we more competitive in the world? Why aren't there more jobs being created? Why isn't the economy bigger? To me, there's a simple, answer. I'm a businessman. I've been out there and done it. The reason is that we have overtaxed and over regulated ourselves to where we are less competitive. We need to untie that knot, reduce that burden, let the economy run like you would a young horse, and it will run and it will run.**

**-- Congressman Bob Beauprez**

### **THE COST CONTAINMENT COMMISSION**

I first proposed this in 1999 and I again offer it in 2005. Congressman Kevin Brady has taken a fantastic first step by proposing a "sunset" provision that would shut down programs after they have outlived their usefulness. This takes that approach one step further.

The objective of the Cost Containment Commission is to use an issue that unites all congressional Republicans (from both chambers) with the White House, and puts us squarely on the side of the American people -in contrast to congressional Democrats. Only one issue can accomplish all of those objectives: cutting wasteful Washington spending. Creating and then publicizing a Cost Containment Commission would allow Republicans to differentiate themselves (positively) from the Democrats and would get us talking about an issue that Americans deeply care about.

We need to learn from our one great political success of 1997-98 - the Senate hearings. Democrats were caught flat-footed by the public outcry against IRS abuses, but that outcry only occurred when Americans had the choice to watch and listen to the IRS abuses from the comfort of their own couches. Sure, beating up on the IRS is always effective, but the public hearings are what brought the story home.

Therefore, we should recreate the same political and communication environment:

**1) PUBLIC HEARINGS.** This is the most important component of the communication strategy. Most of our projects are conducted through C-Span, CNN, Fox News, or other "political" outlets. Public hearings, if they are sufficiently visual and sensational, can transcend politics and enter the day-to-day lives of average Americans. That's exactly what happened with the IRS hearings and what can

happen here.

- 2) **TOWN HALL MEETINGS.** This is how individual Members can link their own hostility to wasteful Washington spending to the commission's efforts. Each Member should hold multiple town hall meetings that replicate in a hundred districts (It's better when two or three Members work together) what is happening in Washington.
- 3) **TALK RADIO.** This is how we hit the grassroots home run. Imagine the political impact of Rush, Hannity, Liddy, North and Reagan reading lists of wasteful programs every day to about 35 million Americans. Let the Democrats defend them. Let the Republicans and our conservative allies attack. The Cost Containment Commission was made for talk radio.
- 4) **MEMBER NEWSLETTERS AND MAILINGS.** The simplest strategies can be the most important. Newsletters and franked mail filled with stories of wasteful Washington spending and what Republicans are doing to stop it is what we want constituents to be reading about from now through the next election.

There are two key legislative components:

- 1) **Every dollar of "waste" should be isolated and put forward to a vote on the floor.** Now I realize that there will be a "rationale" presented for each program, but few Americans will understand why cow flatulence or grasshopper mating habits should be the focus of a million-dollar study. The key is to win as many successful votes as possible to eliminate wasteful Washington spending.
- 2) **Every dollar from every program cut would then be put forward for a tax cut vote.** We need this component to link Washington spending with the tax burden on Americans. (Since the total amount will likely be minimal, you will probably want to allocate the entire amount to a tax credit of some kind that is used widely by Working Americans.) And that's the key - how Washington spending by Democrats and tax cuts from Republicans help working Americans.

To establish the GOP as the party of accountability, the Cost Containment Commission exercise should be done at the state and local level as well. This is the best way to demonstrate that wasteful spending occurs at every level of government.

### WORDS THAT WORK

**It's ironic that our congressional voting cards are about the same size as the credit cards we all carry in our pockets. The spend-now-pay-later credit card addiction runs rampant in Congress. Members of Congress just insert their cards in a slot and run up the nation's bills without worrying about paying them right now. Let somebody**

else worry about them later.

**Yesterday I brought my seven-year-old daughter to the floor. Looking ill her optimistic face, it troubled me to think that Congress is running up massive expenses that will burden her 20 years from now when she's starting her family and her career. Today's spending by Congress will be tomorrow's headaches for your children and mine.**

**I urge my colleagues to think about the future happiness of our children and the future strength of our country before they vote to increase spending. Let's stop using our voting cards like credit cards to run up the federal deficit. It's time to act responsibly.**

**-- Congressman Henry Bonilla**

## **SPENDING LESS, KEEPING MORE: TALKING ABOUT THE BUDGET**

For the past 20 years, America has engaged in a great national debate about the role and responsibilities of government. Republicans and Democrats alike have agonized over the proper scope of the state.

The question we have debated so furiously is how best to solve America's problems ... by ceding more power and authority to Washington, D.C., or by retaining it in states and local communities, churches and families.

As Republicans, we have always argued for less centralized, bureaucratic control and more individual freedom. We believe that in affairs of state, it is almost always preferable to err on the side of freedom. The bigger a nation's government, the more it taxes its citizens, the less freedom that society will enjoy. As Republicans, freedom has been our greatest cause, and freedom cannot coexist with a bloated; wasteful, corrupt Washington that inserts its tentacles into every corner of our lives.

It is wrong for the United States government to spend more and more money each year. It is wrong for politicians to load down our children and grandchildren with debt tomorrow so that they can avoid making the hard choices today. It is wrong to continue blindly down the same perilous path we have been on for almost 30 years.

In 1980, Ronald Reagan told us that government was not the solution - government was part of the problem. He pledged to get the government off the backs of the American people, to restore the freedom that alone could make the United States that shining city on a hill once again. He transformed not only the Republican Party but also the entire national debate.

And the basic question that has dominated American politics since Ronald Reagan's election has finally been answered.

We have won the battle of ideas. Political leaders across the aisle understand that while government does many good things, it cannot do everything. Even if big government could solve all of America's problems - which it can't - even if big government didn't threaten individual freedom - which it does - we can no longer afford it. A new consensus is emerging - a consensus of common sense and fiscal restraint, born of the realization that our children's future depends on an economy free of crippling deficits and a skyrocketing national debt. As Thomas Jefferson said, "It is incumbent on every generation to pay its own debt as it goes."

We have not been paying our own debt as we go. We have been shrugging it off on our children. But we must begin to pay as we go, before it's too late, before we have condemned our children to a lifetime of exorbitant tax rates and bankrupt entitlement programs. As President Hoover sardonically observed, "Blessed are the young, for they shall inherit the national debt."

It is incumbent on all of us that we step up to the plate and take responsibility for the nation's future.

We have come a long way, but we still have far to go. If we are to ensure the long-term solvency of entitlement programs like Medicare and Social Security, provide for homeland security and continue the war against terrorism, and begin to pay off our enormous national debt, then there is much work still ahead of us.

The time has come to set Washington right, now and forever. The time has come to get Washington spending under control, now and forever. To do it right, we begin with the following two principles:

- 1) Washington should spend less so that American families can spend more.**
- 2) If states, localities and non-governmental organizations can do something better than Washington can, they should be given a chance.**

Slowly, steadily, we are making progress. Faced with the prospect of government growing larger and larger each year, like a snowball rolling downhill, we have stood in its path, held up our arms, and demanded that it stop.

The passage of President Bush's tax relief program guaranteed that American families will keep more of their hard-earned dollars, that the tax code will no longer penalize couples for marrying, and that the onerous death tax will be phased out.

But everyone knows that more can and should be done. Americans are still taxed too much. Government spending is still wildly out of control. Washington, D.C. still wields too much power and influence over our lives, and the federal government is still far too large.

There is much work to be done, returning power and authority back to states, communities and individuals themselves.

Prosecuting the war on terrorism, providing for homeland defense, reducing the size of the federal government, reforming entitlements, simplifying the tax code -- all of these goals are extremely important, and none of them have been forgotten. But the importance of ending wasteful Washington spending and eventually returning to a balanced budget should not be underestimated.

Every American will feel the practical, real-world effects of a balanced federal budget, through lower interest rates, greater economic growth, and a higher standard of living. Remember, every dollar Washington spends represents a dollar of your hard-earned tax dollars. And every dollar we save means you can keep a dollar more.

## **WASHINGTON VERSUS HARD-WORKING AMERICAN FAMILIES**

*(A speech about who knows what's right for real Americans)*

*No matter how well intentioned, the federal spending programs in Washington, D.C. feed off your money. Sure, they may be designed in good faith by people who want to help you and think that they are spending those tax dollars for your own good. They think that they have a better idea of how to spend your wages than you do yourself.*

*I know they're intelligent, patriotic Americans. But for some reason they have more confidence in their own wisdom and their own ability to take care of YOUR family.*

*Basically, it comes down to trust. The advocates of big Washington spending don't really trust you. They may say that they're for the common man, but really, they think that they know better. They think they can take care of you better than you can take care of yourself.*

*They doubt the common sense and wisdom of ordinary people. They think that because they live in Washington, they have uncommon intelligence - an intelligence that gives them the right to take an awful Jot of your wages, and then spend them on your behalf, in the name of their version of the greater good.*

*That's the dirty little secret of the Democrats. They truly believe that the money belongs to the government, rather than to the taxpayers. And not just the money that's collected in taxes. All money. They believe that the taxpayers of this country should be bowing and scraping, thanking the federal government for the percentage of their income it allows them to keep for their families.*

*Pay attention to the words they use and you'll see what I mean. Their language gives them away every time. Big government advocates will say that "we" - meaning Washington can't afford to "spend" any money on tax cuts. To their backward way of thinking, it's spending when the government taxes Americans less. SPENDING. By their logic, I guess the Democrats would say that a burglar who changes his mind and decides not to rob you is giving you back your money.*

*It is downright immoral for the federal government to be living off the American people. It is crazy to think that some unknown bureaucrat in a Washington office building will do a better job than you will of deciding how to provide for your children and plan for your future.*

*This has always been a brave, self-reliant nation. We have always believed in the twin promises of liberty and responsibility. But how can we teach the next generation to take personal responsibility for their lives if the government treats all of us like infants?*

*Now, I don't know about you, but I find this all rather offensive. The humorist P.J. O'Rourke said, "Giving money and power to government is like giving whiskey and car keys to teenage boys." And I think there's a bit of truth in that.*

*The bureaucrats and the central planners in Washington may think they're smarter than you, and they may even think they have some kind of special right that entitles them to*

*spend your money, but - just between you and me - they're wrong,*

*Republicans believe families have a better idea of how to spend their money than does the federal government, thousands of miles away. Washington has a one-size-fits-all mentality. But different families have different needs. In the mind of Washington, every family is alike, and one Washington solution can serve every family equally well.*

*Well, that's wrong. The hardworking families of this country deserve better. Who cares more for your children, you, or some faceless Washington bureaucrat? Who knows better how to meet your children's needs?*

*It's difficult to raise a family these days, especially if both parents work. The world is a more complicated, threatening place than it was when I was a kid, and parents struggling to make ends meet and raise their children right deserve every break we can give them. Further tax relief is the least Washington can do to return power and responsibility to those doing the toughest job of all in this country - and the most important one - parenting.*

*So let me just say to all the parents struggling to make ends meet ... burning the candle at both ends to put food on the table and keep a roof overhead... sacrificing their own needs and giving everything they've got to make sure their children have every opportunity for a bright future we hear you.*

*We recognize that nothing we say or do here is as important as the daily work you undertake, the work of raising the next generation of Americans. We have no more right to take such a large chunk of your paycheck each month than we would to snatch the bread directly from the mouths of your children.*

*Being a mom or a dad is the most sacred obligation and the most awesome responsibility that anyone can possibly assume. Family is the backbone not only of this nation, but of all civil society. Aristotle observed that the state is made up of households. Without strong households, even a nation as mighty as the United States will surely crumble.*

*Nothing is more crucial to America's future than strong families. It's time for Washington to exhibit a little humility, and return a little bit of power and authority to these most basic units of society.*

*Let's put the days of Washington's one-size-fits-all philosophy behind us. Let's tell Washington to step aside and allow America's families to do their critical work, unhindered. And let's allow all mothers and fathers, when they crawl wearily into bed at night, to be secure in the knowledge that their government will support them rather than blocking their path, and that The American Dream is in reach for them and their children.*



## 10 “FUN” FACTS ABOUT THE NATIONAL BUDGET

- \* The National Debt is **\$7.6 Trillion**.
- \* In Fiscal Year 2004 the U.S. government spent **\$322 billion** of YOUR money on interest payments to the holders of the national debt.
- \* If we all decided to pitch in and pay off the first \$5 trillion of the federal debt at the rate of **\$1 per second** it would take us around **160,000 years**.
- \* A tightly packed stack of crisp new \$1000 bills, totaling \$5 billion would be 315 miles tall.
- \* The space shuttle, which orbits at about 240 miles above the earth, would have to go around this “debt stack.”
- \* If we lain 5 trillion dollar bills end to end, our national debt would circle the globe more than **21,000 times**.
- \* Each citizen’s share of the national debt is about \$25,828.68.
- \* Just the interest ALONE on the national debt is the **3rd largest expense** in the federal budget.
- \* In 2003, government spending exceeded \$20,000 per household.
- \* The national debt has continued to increase an average of **\$2.05 billion per day** since September 30, 2004.



# TAX RELIEF & SIMPLIFICATION

## OVERVIEW

- \* You may be tempted to talk about tax policy in terms of reform. Don't. When Americans hear the word reform, they fear that they will end up paying more. Far better for you to talk about simplification - which everyone supports and sees a benefit.
- \* You may be tempted to talk about making the tax cuts from 2001 and 2003 "permanent. It. Don't. It is a far more effective to talk about "the largest tax increase in American history if these tax cuts are revoked." Remember, the American public dislikes a tax hike more than they like a tax cut.
- \* You may be tempted to talk about how Americans are overtaxed overall, Do, but also emphasize that Washington spends too much as well. The more you link high taxes to high spending, the greater the support for tax relief.

If there is one debate where framing the issue is as important as the policy itself, this is it. So here's what needs to be said to set the context and begin the tax relief and tax simplification effort:

- 1) **Personalize tax relief. Don't talk in numbers.** Talk in terms of day-to-day life, and explain how your tax relief plan will leave more money in the pockets of hardworking Americans at the end of every week. Don't talk about the overall size of the cut. Focus instead on the marriage penalty, death taxes, rate reductions, and so on.
- 2) **"The only way to stop wasteful Washington spending now and forever is to keep the money with those who earned it"** Americans are actually willing to pay their current tax bill, but what makes them angry is how Washington spends that money. So tell them: "If Washington doesn't have your money, Washington can't spend your money."
- 3) **"It's the economy stupid."** The second strongest argument for maintaining the tax relief is to provide "economic security." Every day, more Americans are concerned about their personal job security and their individual financial situation. The economic recovery is well under way and jobs are coming back in record numbers, but uncertainty is still with us, "A tax hike will only hike uncertainty and anxiety."
- 4) **The IRS is still the most hated institution in government. You can not overdo it when' comes to attacking the IRS.** The single greatest public relations success of the Republican Congressional majority was the 1997 public hearings on the IRS. For about 11 days you were the talk of the country - true political heroes. History may not repeat itself, but why not try? The more you focus on continuing IRS abuses

and the need for one, the better,

- 5) **Americans are taxed to death. Literally.** Other than the IRS, nothing annoys Americans more than the thought of being taxed simply because you die. Years ago the death tax was thought of as a chance to recoup money from the richest Americans. Today it is one of the most unpopular taxes. Even a plurality of Democrats support its repeal.
- 6) **It IS an issue of FAIRNESS.** It's time for Republicans to talk about why the tax system punishes the successful. Is it fair to punish those who create jobs? Is it fair to overtax those who develop, create, expand and enhance? Is our current tax code fair? A majority of Americans would say no.
- 7) **Tax relief for business is tax relief for employees.** Americans need to be reminded that small and large businesses are made up of employees. In these tough economic times, when businesses are allowed to keep more of their profits, they can keep more of their employees.

For those who want to tackle the tax simplification debate now, you will be warmly embraced by the American people. But to achieve maximum support, effective tax simplification language **MUST** contain appeals to three specific principles:

- 1) **FAIRNESS.** Americans want to know that the guy in the mansion at the top of the hill is paying his fair share. Most agree that the poor shouldn't pay much at all, but those who can work should not get a free ride. Fairness does not mean soak-the-rich, but it does mean the wealthy must pay their fair share. Fully 73% of the American people believe "fairness" is either the first or second most important principle of tax relief and tax reform.
- 2) **SIMPLICITY.** People do not want to pay accountants to prepare their taxes, which even many less affluent taxpayers do because the system has become so complicated. Many Americans are also concerned they are missing deductions to that which they are entitled because the system is so complex. Another benefit to a simplified, tax structure is the large budgetary savings to be had by eliminating or dramatically reducing the size of the IRS. Either way, a majority of Americans (54%) believe simplifying the tax code must be part of tax reform.
- 3) **RELIABILITY.** Americans hate how the tax code changes from year to year - and they don't like it. They want a tax code that is free from incessant congressional tinkering each year based solely on the whims of a few special interests and their lobbyists. It is precisely this lack of reliability ... its inconsistency, which has contributed to the stunning amount of time that Americans must spend understanding and completing their taxes.

## **INTRODUCTION**

For most Americans, the point of least favorable contact between them and Washington occurs sometime late in the afternoon of April 15 when they deliver their tax return to the (comparably) friendly local post office. **(If we moved tax day to November 1 of each year and ended the process of withholding, conservatives would win permanent majorities all across the country.)** It is well past time for us to harness this enthusiasm for the good work that it can accomplish.

And with this opportunity, comes another - a chance at real, meaningful and lasting reform of our tax code - change that goes above and beyond making the presidents tax cuts permanent. Not since 1986, nearly 20 years ago, has there been such an opportunity for massive and meaningful reform.

Through a slew of post-Election focus groups, and two national surveys in the past two weeks, my firm has outlined the language landscape of the Bush tax program and how best to communicate those efforts to the American people. This is a worthy fight. It is a crusade to bring justice to the hardworking-overburdened American taxpayer.

## **THE TAX RELIEF TRIANGLE**

Anytime you talk about tax relief, you should frame it through the three points of what I call the Tax Relief Triangle: the Economy, the Taxpayer, and the Government. You may be tempted to highlight just one or maybe even two of these components, but voters will penalize you for any neglect that a tip of the triangle receives

Voters evaluate tax proposals simultaneously through these multiple lenses - there is no one frame that stands out at the expense of the others. They may not understand the complexities of the double taxation of dividends, but they know enough to realize that tax policy doesn't affect only their pocketbook. Voters understand and evaluate tax policy at both the micro- and macro-level, asking themselves how an issue will touch their own taxes and the economy at large, while also considering the impact it has on our government.

Talking effectively about taxes requires you to touch upon each of these components, but to be most effective. there should be certain nuances to your delivery:

**1) TAX SIMPLIFICATION TO BUILD A STRONGER ECONOMY.** You should talk about tax relief's economic impact in the strong forceful terms you usually reserve for national security speeches. The parallels are ripe for exploitation ... the American taxpayer to the American soldier. the President as Commander-in-Chief of our nation's economy ... Alan Greenspan as General Patton - well that may be a bit of a stretch, but the essential idea remains that the days of a more sensitive economic policy are gone. and that tax relief must be framed as the vigorous answer to our economic slumber.

**2) TAX RELIEF TO PROTECT THE HARDWORKING-OVERBURDENED**

**TAXPAYERS.** Never has there been a taxpayer who was not either hardworking, overburdened, or most likely, both. People identify with this language. Think of how beleaguered our nation looks, sounds and feels around April 15th -- think of the long lines at the post office that night ... think of your own parents sitting around the kitchen table going over bills ... and now you and your family ... then think about how thick and maudlin the pathos of the American tax-paying public is. Turn that taxpayer into the underdog hero that they are by evoking this imagery of hard-work and massive burden ..

**3) TAX LIMITS TO CURB WASTEFUL WASHINGTON GOVERNMENT SPENDING.** It seems that no matter how low taxes go, Americans still think that there is wasteful Washington spending. True, one man's steak is always another man's pork, but in the minds of Americans, taxes fuel this waste. Washington will always misspend the hardworking, overburdened taxpayer's money, and that's not fair. And that is the strongest argument for making the tax cuts permanent.

Finally, let's not forget that tax relief is an exercise of protection. Members of Congress are the American people's stewards, and as such it is their duty to protect the American taxpayer from harm. So say it: Allowing the tax cuts to expire would result in the highest tax increase in American history and result in the single greatest negative financial impact on hardworking American families that Washington could possibly impose.

#### **WORDS THAT WORK**

**Q: Why shouldn't we raise taxes to address the deficit?**

**A: Because raising taxes will kill this economy, they will kill the growth that we are enjoying right now. We're on a great glide path for growth, and we need to be encouraging more growth, we need to be cutting more taxes. We need to bring capital gains taxes to zero. We need to increase the dividends tax relief. And we need to completely reform the tax code. We need to do more on the tax front. We don't need to give the government more; we need to put the government on a diet.**

**-- Tom DeLay**

#### **BE BOLD: THE THREE PRINCIPLES OF TAX REFORM**

Perhaps more important than permanent tax relief is the President's clear desire to put our tax code through a more fundamental revision. The American people agree. What frustrates them about the tax code **isn't just about the amount of money Americans spend on taxes -- it's about the amount TIME Americans spend on taxes.**

Reform must be contextualized for what it is. I've said it before, but it's worth saying again, politicians are notorious for telling you what their plan is, but very few of them will tell you the WHY that underlies it.

It's the politician's Principle Paradox - all of you are in these positions because of your principles, so why don't you speak of them more often? Principles are hard things to disagree with, just look at the earlier list above and you'll see what I mean. How can you disagree with FAIRNESS, SIMPLICITY, and RELIABILITY? So create a direct link between these principles that resonate with the vast majority of Americans and the reforms you propose:

**FAIRNESS:** Always emphasize that tax reform is an issue of fairness. Admittedly, talking about fairness has never been the GOP's forte, but here (along with Social Security's generational fairness) is an opportunity to appeal to those who rank fairness as their highest priority.

It's time for Republicans to talk about why the tax system punishes the successful. Is it fair to punish those who create jobs? Is it fair to overtax those who develop, create, expand and enhance? Is our current tax code fair? Is it right to tax Americans almost literally to death? A majority of Americans would say no.

### WORDS THAT WORK

**"The most important thing about tax reform is fairness allowing people to realize their dreams. That's what our tax code has been preventing. We're the freest, most optimistic country in the world. We offer incredible opportunities to so many people, and yet we have a tax code and a tax system that penalizes people for working and penalizes people for being entrepreneurial. We have people who come to this country to realize their dreams, yet too often it's the tax code or other government regulations that prevent them from realizing those dreams. That's simply not fair."**

**-- Congressman Mike Ferguson**

There is nothing more fair than encouraging the uninhibited pursuit of the American dream. Punishing success is not fair, no matter the circumstances, and it's time for the GOP to say as much. Taxing the American entrepreneur into extinction is no way to invigorate this country, let alone its economy.

**SIMPLICITY:** When pressed for what they think would be a fair tax rate, most would readily agree to something in the neighborhood of 20 percent. But what frustrates Americans most is not so much the income tax rate as it is the complexity of the system and the perception that the rich have expensive tax attorneys and fancy accountants to navigate the 7,000-page Internal Revenue Code. Americans work day in and day

out to pay for Washington programs they would not wish on their worst enemies and feel shortchanged by not finding all the tax deductions they are entitled to.

### **GEORGE W. BUSH WORDS THAT WORK**

**“Another drag on our economy is the current tax code, which is a complicated mess - filled with special interest loopholes, saddling our people with more than six billion hours of paperwork and headache every year. The American people deserve - and our economic future demands - a simpler, fairer, pro-growth system.”**

There are a number of “fun” facts that you or your staff can dig up regarding the labyrinthine nature of our tax code. Use them to their fullest advantage. Voters will inevitably respond.

### **MORE WORDS THAT WORK**

**Do we really need a tax code that is almost 6,000 pages long?**

**A tax code that is 2 million, 800 thousand words -longer than the Bible, longer than the complete works of Shakespeare?**

**Is it fair that more and more Americans have to hire professional accountants because they cannot understand the tax code and they are afraid of being punished if they make a mistake?**

**Can we produce a better tax code, a tax code that is cleaner, simpler and fairer? I think so. I think it's time to restore common sense to the IRS and the federal tax code.**

One of the lessons of 2004 is that America is still ripe for fundamental tax reform and tax simplification, and no one will weep for the IRS agents, tax attorneys and CP As who would rather keep a complicated, confusing and corrupt tax system in place than go out and get another job.

**RELIABILITY:** The hallmark of any good policy should be reliability. It does hardworking, overburdened taxpayers little good to pass tax cuts today that mayor may not exist next year. As it now stands, our tax policy fails this commonsense test - it simply isn't reliable. How else can you explain a system in which there is an ideal year to die! Don't be shy about pointing out the absurdity of this. Taxpayers want to know that the rates they pay one year aren't going to suddenly go up in the next year,



## WORDS THAT WORK

**If someone pays higher taxes tomorrow than they're paying today, they got a tax hike, their taxes were raised and I think that's the wrong idea. We need to create an economy that lifts all boats, where everybody has an opportunity to succeed and grow and realize their dreams. If we're raising people's taxes we're taking more of their hard earned money.**

**I think people should be able to plan for the future and be able to plan for the future and be able to say that 5, 10 years from now they won't be paying more in taxes than they're paying today because of some artificial date that was created in Washington D.C. We should be able to ten people honestly and in a straight forward way 'we're lowering your taxes and we're doing it because we believe you can' make better decisions about how to spend your money than folks in Washington can,' and then say, 'well, we think you can spend your money well until this certain date and after that we think Washington can spend your money better.'"**

**-- Congressman Mike Ferguson**

If principles aren't enough, just apply them to these appeals. At their best, they will not only make your case for tax reform, but also make the case for a wholesale replacement of the federal income tax system.

- 1) The current system is too costly and too complex.** The income tax system is so complex that no one, not even the experts, truly understands it. Compliance is difficult and costly (estimated at more than \$225 billion), and the burden sits fully on the shoulders of American taxpayers. To make matters worse, Congress continues to alter the tax code, resulting in consequences that are not immediately obvious to the average American.
- 2) The IRS is an intrusive, unpredictable, threatening bureaucracy.** According to Democratic pollster Peter Hart, few things frighten Americans more than to receive an IRS notice in the mail. Democrats made it that way. Republicans can change it. Let's turn that public fear into a crusade for tax justice.  
  
Americans should not fear their own government, but millions of Americans are afraid of the IRS. With its virtually unchecked enforcement and audit powers, the potential of an IRS audit strikes fear into the hearts of honest taxpayers. That is simply wrong.
- 3) Politicians and lobbyists are allowed to pick winners and losers.** Politicians have filled the tax code with loopholes supported by high-priced lobbyists for their clients and other special interests. We need a new system that removes the politics from tax policy.

True, the Democrats will accuse you of “risky schemes.” Respond: “The only scheme is Washington’s insatiable appetite for more and more of your hard-earned income. The infamous “risky scheme” formulation comes straight from Democratic focus groups. But if you make the choice between the hardworking, overburdened taxpayer and the Washington bureaucrats, you win every time. They will end up defending the tax code, and you will be defending fairness, simplicity and reliability.

**Remember, by an incredible 4 to-1 ratio, Americans believe that deficits result from the government spending too much, not taxing too little.** Most American families balance their own checkbooks and live on limited budgets. What they wonder is: “Why can’t Washington?” The surest way to truly put the nation’s fiscal house in order is to fix the tax system. Our research finds enormous political support for sweeping tax simplification.

### **WHEN ALL ELSE FAILS, GO AFTER THE IRS**

**“I’m as mad as hell, and I’m not going to take it anymore.”**

**-- Howard Beal in Network -- written by Pandey Chayefsky**

Don’t forget the Internal Revenue Service. Nothing guarantees more applause and support than calls to abolish the IRS, and it fits PERFECTLY with the GOP’s agenda of tax simplification. If you have any doubt about the unpopularity of the IRS, consider the following:

- \* Most voters would rather have their purses or wallets stolen than be audited by the IRS. That’s correct. More than half of all Americans would rather be mugged than face an audit by this mysterious and hated government institution. And what’s more, over half (58%) of American voters considered an IRS audit more unpleasant than a root canal.
- \* No phrase by any political candidate registers a more positive response than the following nine words: **“We will end the IRS as we know it” None.** No matter who says it, it consistently scores off the charts!

Tax relief remains the bedrock of our party. In the past, Democrats have successfully co, opted many GOP issues, from ending big government to reforming welfare to reducing crime. The IRS is in some ways the last remaining symbol that differentiates the party of Lincoln and Reagan from the party of Hillary Clinton and Lyndon Johnson.

**Congress needs to shine a bright light on how the IRS operates.** We should focus on this agency that has a negative impact on our day-to-day lives. The IRS should be our symbol of what’s wrong with Washington. And we should emphasize the negative impact that our complicated tax code and Byzantine IRS has on our national economy.

In other words, frame a rally against the IRS inside of the tax relief triangle discussed earlier.

Imagine the public impact of exposing IRS practices and abuses. Consider the benefits of a new round of public hearings that highlight Americans that have been victims of the IRS. It worked before, and I guarantee that it will work again.

You cannot hope to simplify the tax code without publicly castigating the IRS. It should be a major focus of Republican efforts to simplify the code over the remainder of President Bush's administration. Allocate significant time and attention to this political winner - not just because it makes sense politically, but because it's the right thing to do.

## **THE DEATH TAX**

### **"The death tax deserves to die."**

While the general public is giving the economy mixed reviews, an overwhelming majority of people are sure about one thing. In no uncertain terms, they are opposed to the death tax as it stands today.

No tax reform proposal is easier to explain than repeal of the estate tax - which every reader should call the "death tax." From "taxing the American Dream" to "you shouldn't have to visit the undertaker and the taxman on the same day," the language of death tax repeal is easy for working and retired Americans to understand and appreciate.

## **WORDS THAT WORK**

**"Benjamin Franklin, perhaps the wisest of our founding fathers, said there were two certainties in life: death and taxes. But I do not believe even Dr. Franklin, with his prescience, could have told us that today, both would occur at the same time."**

At the outset, it is important to explain the principles behind your desire to repeal the death tax. In fact, nothing is more important to your argument than explaining why you wish to make this change in the tax code. If you get the principles right, public support will follow. Otherwise, you will open yourself to liberal accusations of selfishness and solicitousness toward the rich at the expense of everyone else. So start with four "**common sense**" principles:

## THE COMMON SENSE PRINCIPLES OF THE DEATH TAX

- 1) **The death tax is the wrong tax.** It accounts for just one percent of the nation's revenues, and dollar for dollar, it costs more to collect than any other federal tax.
- 2) **It comes at the wrong time.** A core principle behind repealing the death tax is the idea that people should not be further burdened at the most difficult times of their lives. Mourning families have enough grief when their loved ones die. The IRS doesn't need to pile more on by giving them something else to grieve about.
- 3) **It hurts the wrong people.** If you saved for the future, put away money for your children, built a small business, ran a family f, or achieved the American Dream in other ways, the death tax punishes you and prevents you from sharing your dream and hard work with your loved ones.
- 4) **It helps the wrong people.** The only people helped by the estate tax are the army of fancy lawyers, expensive tax accountants and IRS agents.

It is truly remarkable just how easy it is to convince people of the absurdity of the death tax if you stick to these principles. It's such a beautiful sentence: the Death Tax is the wrong tax at the wrong time and hurts the wrong people. As Tom DeLay likes to say, **"the family shouldn't have to visit the tax collector at the same time they are visiting the under taker."**

### WORDS THAT WORK

**The death tax is the wrong tax, hitting people at the wrong time. Consider the principle of it: if you've worked your whole life, worked hard, saved, built a business, and had a family farm; then, to have Uncle Sam step in at your death and keep your family from having it? That's just wrong -- the principle of the death tax is simply wrong.**

**-- Congressman Kevin Brad**

### WORDS THAT WORK

**To be taxed when you die is just flat wrong. People have worked hard all of their lives, saved all their lives and want to pass something on to their children and their grandchildren. They've already paid taxes that money. They shouldn't be taxed again just because they died.**

**-- Senator John Ensign**

## 2005 PUBLIC OPINION

- \* **64% of Americans support eliminating the federal estate tax right off the bat without hearing any pro or con arguments.**
- \* **The American public hates the Death Tax SO MUCH that 56% would support its repeal even if it meant a temporary increase in the federal deficit.**
- \* **81% agree that “inheritance taxes are an extreme form of taxation. The tax rate, as high as 470/0, is higher than even the highest federal income tax rates - and that’s unfair.”**
- \* **80% believe “inheritance taxes represent double and triple taxation. It is unfair for people to pay taxes on their income, and then more taxes on what they save, and a third time when they die.”**
- \* **70% agree that “Death taxes are unfair because they single out those who save and invest for no reason other than the fact that they became successful and then died.”**
- \* **Finally, after considering both sides of the issue, 85% favor a change in the status quo, advocating either complete elimination or reduction. Only 13% favor keeping the tax as is.**

## **OTHER TAX LANGUAGE**

- 1) **Personalize, personalize, personalize.** The best way to combat criticism of tax relief is through personalizing it; i.e., discussing real, down-to-earth families, small businesses and individuals that are hurt by over-taxation. And the best way to do this is to name every tax that every American has to face:

**“When you wake up in the morning and drink that first cup of coffee, you pay a sales tax. When you start your car, you pay an automobile tax. Drive to work, you pay a gas tax At work, you pay an income tax and a payroll tax. You get home at night, you pay a property tax. Flip on the light - you’re paying an electricity tax Turn on the TV - you pay a cable tax. Make a telephone call, you pay a utility tax. Brush your teeth, you’ll pay a water tax. Even when you die, you pay a death tax. We’re an overtaxed nation and hardworking Americans deserve a break.”**

- 2) **It’s not about what YOU may receive - it’s about others may be forced to leave behind.** Only 38% of Americans expect to be the beneficiary of an estate or inheritance, yet 85% want it eliminated or reduced. Americans don’t like it when life-long dreams are shattered by the taxman - whether they are farms or small businesses.

No one will worry too much about protecting America's wealthiest families. But everyone will want to help farmers and small businesses. In fact, other than teachers and druggists, no occupation is more popular than that of small business owner. Why? Because no other occupation involves taking more risks and putting in more hours than owning a small business does. **"And nothing penalizes the small business owner more than the death tax."**

### **WORDS THAT WORK**

**"Imagine owning a family farm that you have worked on for 30 years. You have built and developed the land with the hope of passing it along to your children so that they will have a better life. But after your death, your children tragically find that the farm will not be staying in the family, but will instead be going on the auction block to payoff the IRS. This is not a rare occurrence. Many family farms must be sold off to pay the federal taxes due on the property. It's just plain wrong.**

**"Death taxes hit the family farmer particularly hard. The family farmer may be cash poor, but he is tradition-rich. The value of a family farm lies not in the IRS valuation of equipment and land, but in the farm's ability to produce. Farmers make their livings growing food and fiber, not speculating in land and equipment."**

### **MORE WORDS THAT WORK**

**"The death tax most affects small business, farmers, and ranchers and that's where eight out of ten new jobs come from. It's the mom and pop businesses that close down.**

**Half of the value in a company is taken away in the death tax. Sure, if you die in 2010, that's OK because we've eliminated the death tax that year. But if you die in 2011 and we don't make the death tax relief permanent, you'll lose your company again. That's no way to run a government.**

**-- Congresswoman Heather Wilson**

## **JUST SAY NO TO NEW TAXES**

**President Bush came to the White House four years ago with a promise of tax relief for America's hardworking families. Since then, we have provided our nation with a tax relief package that has stirred the economy from its slumber, fattened our wallets, and put our government on a diet; making it leaner and stronger.**

**But 2011 is quickly approaching when the tax relief is set to expire and our hardworking, overburdened taxpayers will be faced with the single biggest tax increase in history. There is only one way to prevent this from happening: make President Bush's tax relief permanent.**

**Look, what differentiates me from most Democrats is that I fundamentally believe, America is already an overtaxed nation and we need to lessen that burden wherever and whenever we can. Taxes affect every American who works hard and they affect us every single day.**

**I've had enough.**

**It's high time for us to say no to the largest tax hike in history and make President Bush's tax relief permanent. Keeping our taxes down will continue to fuel our economy's steady comeback. Keeping our taxes down will allow America's overburdened taxpayers to keep more of YOUR own hard-earned money in YOUR wallet. Keeping taxes down will force Washington to trim the fat on wasteful government spending.**

**I firmly believe that America's working families have the right to keep more of their own money. President Bush's tax relief program, passed four years ago by bipartisan majorities in Congress, provides tax relief throughout your life, from helping you to raise your children to assisting in your preparations for retirement.**

**Thanks to President Bush's tax relief program, a young, recently married couple will not pay more taxes simply because they decided to get married. Government, through the strong arm of the taxman, should not penalize a man and woman simply because they choose to tie the knot and start a family. The marriage penalty is wrong - and now, thanks to President Bush, it's gone. Let's keep it that way.**

**Second, the president's plan increased the per child family tax credit, so that hard working parents can spend a little more time with their kids, and a little bit less time working for Washington. I happen to think that's a good idea, worthy of keeping in our tax code. Let's keep it there.**

**Third, since we believe the government should reward people for doing the right thing, we have expanded individual retirement accounts to help Americans save for and then enjoy their retirement years. Only in America would the government be fighting over whether to encourage or discourage retirement**

savings. Republicans believe you shouldn't be penalized for saving for your future, and we vow to continue this fight.

Fourth, Benjamin Franklin, perhaps the wisest of our founding fathers, said there were two certainties in life: death and taxes. But I do not believe even Dr. Franklin, with his prescience, could have told us that today, both would occur at the same time.

The death tax is simply unfair. It tells every American that no matter how hard you work or how wisely you manage your affairs, in the end the federal government is going to take it away. The death tax is double and, in some cases triple, taxation. It punishes hard work and savings, and it fails to raise the kind of revenues that might conceivably justify some of the damage it causes. It has been destroying businesses and ruining lives for four generations. Let us not make this mistake with our children, and put a stake directly through the heart of the death tax so it does not return to haunt us again.

Because we believe a spouse or a child should not have to visit the taxman and the undertaker on the same day, we will fight to put an end to the death tax once and for all. It expires in 2010. We don't want it reborn in 2011.

Finally, when I say April 15th, you should not shudder. The IRS is an intrusive, unpredictable, threatening bureaucracy and you should not fear your own government.

If we are going to effectively reform the complicated mess that is the tax code, then we have to reform the complicated mess that created it.

The fact is, a majority of Americans think that an IRS audit would be a more unpleasant experience than a root canal? That's not right. When Americans are as likely to believe that having their wallet or purse stolen is as personally painful as an IRS audit, it is high time we put 811 end to the IRS as have Come to know and fear it. It's time for a change. As a matter of principle, I believe that the federal tax code should be fair, simple, and reliable.

Why should a system punish the successful? Why should it punish those who create jobs? Why is it fair to overtax those who develop, create, and expand? I can't answer those questions, and neither can Washington. And that's why it's time for a change.

And don't even get me started on the complexity of the tax code! If ever there was an unfair shake for hardworking, overburdened taxpayers, this is it. We don't need a tax code that is longer than the Bible or the complete works of Shakespeare? We don't need a tax code that requires more and more Americans to hire a professional accountant to understand the tax code and spend money in order to correctly pay the government. And that's why it's time for a change.

American's know that in their personal lives, planning is the key to financial



**success. But how can Americans begin to plan their finances when the system is not reliable? Taxpayers need to know that the rates they pay one year aren't going to suddenly go up in the next year.**

**For these reasons, I think it is essential to produce a better tax code that is cleaner, simpler and fairer; a system that removes the politics from tax policy. I think its time to restore common sense to the IRS and the federal tax code.**

**We can count on the fact that those who are hooked on spending your tax dollars will not give them up easily. They will argue that, for your own good, you should let them keep what they have already seized by force.**

**Don't believe them. Families have a better idea of how to spend their money than does the federal government, thousands of miles away. By standing up to the taxman, we are standing up for hardworking, overburdened families.**

**It's hard to raise a family these days. The world has become a more complicated, threatening place, and parents struggling to make ends meet deserve every break we can give them. Some common sense tax relief is the least Washington can do to return power and responsibility to those doing the toughest job of all in this country: parenting.**

**It is possible to reform the federal tax code into a user-friendly system that is fair, simple, and reliable. If we wish to stand for what is right, we can do nothing less.**

## 14 “FUN” FACTS ABOUT THE FEDERAL TAX CODE

- \* The federal tax code is more than **7 times longer than the Bible**.
- \* The tax code itself contains **2.8 million words**
- \* There are **17,000 pages** of tax regulations
- \* All together, it contains **45,662 pages** of tax laws, regulations, and related documentation
- \* The Tax Foundation estimates that tax code compliance costs amounted to about **\$200 billion** in 2002. That means it costs 20 cents to collect each dollar of taxes.
- \* By 2007 the compliance cost is estimated to be at **\$350 billion**.
- \* Over half of individual taxpayers now use a paid preparer for their income tax returns
- \* In 1954 there were 103 sections of the tax code; today there are 725... **That’s an increase of 604%**
- \* The Federal Tax Code is lengthier than the Encyclopedia Britannica
- \* The IRS has more employees to interpret and enforce the tax code than the Environmental Protection Agency, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, the FBI, the Drug Enforcement Agency, the Food and Drug Administration, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms **COMBINED**
- \* The IRS receives more than **110 million** phone calls a year for help by taxpayers.
- \* In 1999 the IRS was only able to answer 73% of the inquiries correctly
- \* Complying with the federal tax requirements wastes **6 billion** hours each year as families and businesses fill out tax forms, keep records, and learn tax rules.
- \* The federal tax code has endured more than **6,000** changes since 1986.

# SOCIAL SECURITY = RETIREMENT SECURITY

## THE SOCIAL SECURITY 10--STEP LANGUAGE LADDER

**IF YOU READ NOTHING ELSE IN THIS CHAPTER, READ THIS.** Remember: when we are talking about Social Security, we are really talking about retirement security.

- 1. It is a fundamental principle that “Americans have a right to a safe, secure retirement.”**
- 2. Our current and near retirees deserve the “peace of mind” of knowing they will get full benefits for their entire retirement.**
- 3. To achieve “generation fairness,” we have a responsibility to save Social Security RIGHT NOW so that our children and generations to come receive the same benefits we have enjoyed.**
- 4. It would be easier to turn away and leave the tough decisions to others down the road. But we do things in life not because they are easy but because they are necessary — no matter how hard they are. And delay just makes the solution more difficult and costly.**
- 5. Social Security is a financially broken system; it will start going bankrupt in 13 years and will be completely bankrupt in a matter of decades. For the tens of millions of Americans who depend on Social Security, this is simply unacceptable.**
- 6. Washington has done a terrible job managing the Social Security Trust Fund. A 1.6% return on your Social Security dollars is unacceptable. It's time to give the American people a say in how THEIR money is invested and the opportunity to do better.**
- 7. Improving our Social Security system CANNOT be a partisan issue. We must all work together and put the partisan bickering behind us.**
- 8. Remember, it's YOUR money. It's YOUR future. It's YOUR life.**
- 9. You should have the right, if you wish, to invest YOUR Social Security taxes in safe, diversified funds like a thrift savings plan because the return has been proven to be better than with any government fund.**
- 10. I ask you to focus on the facts, study the issue, and then make up your own mind. When it comes to financial literacy and Social Security, the more you know, the better off we'll be.**

## **OVERVIEW**

***Those who define the issue will determine the outcome.***

This chapter is unlike any language text I have ever written because Social Security is unlike any other government program. Sure, you will find the traditional “words that work” boxes sprinkled throughout the document and handy helpful hints about what phrases to emphasize and language to avoid. But this is a much more conversational document because Social Security is so personal and so much a part of the American psyche that it simply can’t be dealt with in traditional political manner. It is not enough to say the right words. You need to feel it as well.

Do not underestimate the personal bond between the American people and their Social Security check. As a Republican talking about “strengthening Social Security” (which is better than promoting “Social Security reform”), you should emphasize a commitment to maintaining the **promises** we have made to **protect** and **care** for current recipients, while **strengthening** the **long--term health** of system in order to **guarantee benefits** for future retirees.

But effective communication of retirement security in general and Social Security in particular will come up short if you cannot convince Americans that they can and should invest in their future. It is amazing to me just how few Republicans have as their core message a truism as sure as night follows day:

### **THE FORGOTTEN MESSAGE OF SOCIAL SECURITY**

**“It’s YOUR money. YOU earned it. YOU sacrificed for it. The government TOOK it from you. Now it’s YOUR chance to take control of YOUR retirement. Remember, it’s YOUR future. It’s YOUR life. And from now on, it should be YOUR Social Security.”**

President Bush deserves considerable credit for his bold proposals for Social Security reform during the 2000 and 2004 presidential campaign. His approach to Social Security is the kind of leadership the American people are seeking. It is a perfect example of straight talk, putting people before politics. He has even successfully injected a moral component into what was once only an entitlement issue.

True, Democratic talking points insist that Social Security is only a small problem that does not need to be addressed now. They could not be more wrong, and the American people know it. But 76% of Americans believe that Social Security is either “in crisis and must be solved now” or “a challenge that must be solved very soon.” Only 19% put it off as “a problem that eventually should be solved.” Never in modern history have the Democrats been so badly misguided and so off on the wrong side of history.

Still they've got their vocabulary well prepared, and they are looking to use Social Security to replicate the success they had with Medicare in the mid--1990s. Expect to hear the word "privatize" over and over and over again. Let them use it, but not you.

## **SURVIVING SOCIAL SECURITY**

**"DUMP the word "privatize" from your lexicon forever, but always link reform options to the success of programs such as The Federal Thrift Savings Plan, IRAs and 401(K) plans."**

Social Security is consistently a high priority for voters ---- and not only among seniors. The retired and the soon--to--be retired know they've been promised something and they demand to get it. Those in "mid--life" know they are paying into a program that eats up a significant portion of their paychecks, and they aren't so certain they will get their money's worth. And those in their twenties and thirties are just as cynical, if not more.

In fact, as it now stands, 48% of Americans believe that people retiring before they do will benefit the most from Social Security, while only 17% believe that they personally will benefit the most. **That's why it is so important to replace the word "privatize" with the word "personalize."** You're on their side, fighting on their behalf to help them get control of their retirement security.

**Remember, this is not just about Social Security. This is about retirement security — and here you have the advantage:**

- In principle, Americans agree with you that the current system is unsustainable;
- In principle, Americans want to control their retirement savings;
- In principle, Americans support your idea of personal retirement accounts.

But voters continue to trust the Democratic Party to handle Social Security, because they think Republicans lack the compassion and concern to find an equitable solution that benefits everyone.

You need to **SHOW** voters that you are concerned -- and not just about the Social Security system as a whole, but about **THEIR** retirement security. And the best way to communicate your concern is to **HUMANIZE** the problem. The problem with Social Security is not the trillions of dollars in revenue shortfalls. The problem is not worker--to--retiree ratios. The problem is whether Social Security will be there when **YOU** need it

Illustrate how the dismal facts leading up to the problem lead to one common sense solution. Talk to voters about how personal retirement accounts will improve **THEIR**

retirement security. Talk about how **personal accounts will give THEM a sense of ownership, control and freedom.** And don't forget the essential rhetorical questions.

**Everything depends on asking the right questions:**

- **“Who do you trust more?”**
- **“Who can help you earn more?”**
- **“Who can deliver more?”**
- **“Don't you deserve more?”**
- **“Can't we do it better?”**

### **DICK CHENEY WORDS THAT WORK**

**The Social Security system is in trouble. It's been a fantastic program. It's been there for 65 years. It has provided benefits for senior citizens over that period—for my parents. And it means a great deal to millions of Americans. I want to make absolutely certain that the first thing we do is guarantee the continuation of those benefits and keep those promises that were made.**

**But I have two daughters, and they seriously question whether or not there will be any system left for them. And that's because of the demographics at work.**

**We know how many people are going to reach retirement age. We know when that Baby Boom generation is coming along. We know its going to drive .the system into bankruptcy unless we reform it.**

**The reform we will offer will allow our young people to begin to take a portion of the payroll tax, two percent of it, and invest it in a personal retirement account. It gives them a stake in the Social Security system. It becomes their property. They own and they can pa on to their kids if they want.**

### **THE DEATH OF “RETIREMENT” AS WE KNOW IT**

**“The choices seniors make in retirement should not be limited by arbitrary dates or obsolete stereotypes. Because the nature of retirement is changing, the needs of retirement are changing as well. Older Americans now require a retirement nest egg large enough for decades of enjoyment and ambition. As medicine increases the length of life, adequate savings must increase the options we have**

**on longer lives.”**

**-- President George W. Bush**

“Retirement,” as such, no longer exists. The chapter in life once universally understood as the end of work and the terminal winding down now means countless different things to different people. The so-called “Golden Years” are now “Working Years,” as almost half of all Americans (49 percent) plan to continue working in some capacity after age 65, and nearly one in three (29 percent) will still be at work after age 70, health permitting.

Some still aspire to a “traditional” retirement, but many of them doubt they will ever reach it. Others define “retirement” as nothing more than a chance to change jobs or careers. They will continue to work, by choice or necessity, until the day their health gives out. And there are those, too, who love what they do and wouldn’t dream of giving it up for the world.

To some extent, the re-defining of retirement is a recent development. In an era of rising expectations and expanding stock portfolios, consider the following polling data from the past few years:

- \* **Over the past two years alone, more than 20 percent of all workers and 35 percent of all adults aged 50 to 64 have acknowledged postponing their anticipated retirement.**
- \* **Half of all Americans aged 30 to 69 are now more concerned about protecting their retirement nest egg than about strengthening Social Security.**

American attitudes and expectations about “retirement” challenge many of the conventional myths. Modern science, medicine and technology have opened up vistas for all of us that only the most wild-eyed poet ever dreamed of in days gone by. They have given us remarkable new choices, options, possibilities. Social Security must be a system that reflects these new possibilities.

And that’s why Social Security must be a system that keeps pace with American life.

In this period of economic instability, “**financial security**” has clearly become a higher priority than “**financial freedom.**” Americans are searching for assurances that their investments and their retirement nest eggs are safe and secure ---- and they are increasingly turning to professionals to give them help and guidance.

There is an insatiable desire for information and education about retirement financing — even among those more than a decade away from anticipated retirement. Everyone agrees that when it comes to achieving financial security in retirement, Americans are uninformed, misinformed or both, but the newfound desire to learn from the experts is almost universal, Americans are asking a lot of questions and they demand the right to receive the correct answers.

- \* By a 2 to 1 margin, Americans still want to keep Washington’s regulatory hands

off their accounts and would prefer education and information to any further government restrictions.

### **The pre--retirement population craves financial retirement education and information without regulation and limitation.**

People's assumptions about how soon they will actually begin their retirement are changing as well. **Not only has the economic turmoil of the past few years changed Americans' financial positions and depleted their nest eggs, but it has also led an incredible 28 percent of us to postpone the day we expect to retire.**

When it finally does come, Americans nevertheless look forward to enjoying long retirements. Forty--six percent (46 percent) expect their retirement to last at least 20 years — and 26 percent of them think it will last for at least 25 years or more. In fact, **the average expected length of retirement is just shy of that, at 24 years.** That's a long time to live off of investment income or the wages of a lesser paying job than they had in the prime of their careers. Certainly nothing could be further from the situation when Social Security was created in the 1930s ... in those days, most Americans didn't even live long enough to qualify for benefits.

Not surprisingly, Baby Boomers still, see a financial crisis looming for everyone in their generation, even though a majority feels that they themselves will escape it. In fact, a majority of Americans fear for others but not for themselves. **A remarkable 79 percent of Americans expect future retirees to face a personal financial crisis once they retire, but only 43 percent think they themselves will experience that crisis.**

### **PRIORITIES OF THE NEW, RETIREMENT**

In this time of economic uncertainty, President Bush has made it a priority to restore both economic security and retirement security to all working Americans. The objective of the Bush administration over the next four years is to provide options, not restrictions, in order to allow individuals to better manage **their own** retirement security.

**Americans reject the notion that Washington should have complete dominion over how individuals save or invest their retirement savings.** People want a sense of control over their 401(k) plans, their pensions, and their other retirement vehicles -- and Washington should be careful not to limit, restrict or regulate anyone's retirement nest egg in a way that seems to arbitrary. Americans, particularly seniors and near--seniors certainly want the government to stop Americans (and particularly their children) from making foolish investments, but in the end, they personally would like to have an element of control over their savings.

For example:

\* 60 percent of Americans say they should have complete control over their 401(k)



plans, even if their decision could harm them financially.

- \* A mere 25 percent say there should be laws to prevent people from putting too much of any one stock or investment into their 401(k). Of course, this number would likely change if we added a caveat about government prevention of overly foolish investments.

**People are saying loudly and clearly that the way to protect their nest eggs is NOT for the government to impose new rules and regulations that limit their choices, but rather to close the “advice gap” and make it possible for all workers to receive sound investment advice. Here’s what they tell us:**

- \* Americans say that “financial security” is more important to them than “financial freedom” by more than 3 to 1 (66 percent versus 20 percent). This preference for financial security holds true across all demographic subgroups.
- \* Americans are just as concerned about protecting their personal retirement nest eggs as they are about strengthening the Social Security system. 49 percent say strengthening Social Security is a bigger priority to them, while a statistically equal 47 percent make the protection of their own nest egg the higher priority.

### **THE PERFECT STATEMENT**

**Under the current system, people who are just entering the work force today will earn almost no interest on the money they put in over their lifetimes. That’s right, almost no interest. And even workers in their forties will receive a paltry two percent return on their Social Security benefits. That’s less than the inflation rate.**

**Think about that. If your financial advisor earned you zero money on your investment, you would fire him. If you had a stock with no growth, you would sell it. But that is all Washington offers. This Social Security system is antiquated and ineffective. We can do better. Our nation’s workers deserve better.**

**I’m hopeful that we can sit down in a bipartisan way and say NO to benefit cuts, NO to future tax increases and YES to seniors who want their benefits protected, YES to pre--retirees who want the program guaranteed, YES to the opportunity for younger workers to put some money aside, so that money will grow over time and help give them a better retirement in the future.**

### **THE LEXICON OF RETIREMENT SECURITY**

The changing definition of retirement has led to a change in financial priorities

leading up to retirement. You will see the following sentence repeated again and again and again because it cannot be repeated enough:

**This is not just a debate about Social Security. It is also a debate about RETIREMENT security.**

From today forward, we should be talking about “retirement security,” in helping all Americans increase their wealth and truly improve their retirement years. Through improving our Social Security system, we can work together to make retirement security DEFINE Social Security.

Even so, from the outset, your plan must address the fear that retired Americans have about any change to Social Security. Many elderly people fear that Social Security reform could jeopardize their monthly checks, and pre--retirees (those aged 55 to 64) worry that the reformed system might not provide the benefits they have been expecting all of their working lives.

### WORDS THAT WORK

**In the end it is your money. You paid it, you’ve earned it, and it comes out of your paycheck. Why can’t you get it back? Why can’t it be invested in a way that you feel secure so that when it is time for you to retire, you don’t have to hope that the government still has it, you know that you still have it. It is still your money.**

**-- Congressman Brady**

The following key findings from our research (both qualitative and quantitative) show you how to do this:

**1) Get your FACTS straight.** You don’t need to marshal every available fact and figure on Social Security to win the support of your audience. But do explain why we are where we are today. As it now stands, Republicans lack factual discipline. Figures, dates, and even analogies are woefully all over the place. It is time to focus the party on four specific facts. If the following four facts are cited consistently, they will be taken on by the American people and work in your favor.

**There are four key facts, straight from the Social Security trustees, Republican and Democrats alike, which are crucial to any discussion advocating a need to modernize Social Security. Your audience must know if they are to understand that Social Security is a broken system and it is morally imperative we fix it NOW.**

**REMEMBER: Social Security was built for a different America. As a nation, we have grown stronger, and so we need a Social Security system that keeps**

**pace with us.** Critics will argue that we are planning to tinker with a system that has worked well for decades. They will say it is not broken, so why fix it? There are four straightforward facts:

- \* *First, when Social Security was first created, men made up the vast majority of the workforce and had a life expectancy not much more than 60 years. Today, in a majority of households, both men and women are working, and our life expectancy has risen more than 10 years. We are living longer, healthier, more productive lives...and that trend is going to accelerate as we continue to lead the world in medical breakthroughs. But while that is great for us here today, that's not great for an antiquated Social Security system.*
- \* *Second, it is a fact that in the 1950s Social Security had about 16 workers paid in for every person drawing out. Today, the ratio is just 3 to 1, and when our kids retire, it will be down to two workers for each beneficiary. The burden we will be placing on the workforce is unimaginable, and it's getting worse. Think your taxes are too high now? Imagine what they will be in the future if we don't make the necessary changes in the present.*
- \* *Third, it is a fact that the expansive Baby Boom generation continues to age ---- and the oldest of them turn 60 next year. Because of that, the number of workers in America has increased since the 1950s, but the number of retirees has increased much faster.*
- \* *And fourth, it is a fact that the return on your Social Security dollars is a paltry two percent (actually 1.6%). That's it – two percent. That's not even more than • inflation! That's not enough to retire with a nest egg. That's not enough to retire with a sense of security. To me, depending on a two--percent rate of return over the lifetime of paying into Social Security is more of a risk than trying an alternative approach.*

When Americans are offered a number of strong reasons to “maintain” Social Security, by far the number one reason they choose is that they have **“paid into the system and therefore have a right to that money.”** Given an answer like that, you cannot touch Social Security without expecting a passionate response.

That's also why you have to remind people: **“It's your money.”** Any suggestion of changing Social Security must include a reference to protecting the individual worker's investment in the program. **If Americans think you want to protect and enhance their retirement security, they'll back you. If they think you want to reduce their benefits — for ANY reason — they'll oppose you.**

**2) Make sure your audience knows and believes their Social Security contributions are THEIR MONEY, and they have a basic right to expect it back when they retire.** Many Americans, particularly those just entering the workforce, have little faith that they will ever see their Social Security contributions again. They think of it as yet another tax. In order to convince this group that personal retirement accounts are their best option, they need to relearn what Social Security means. They need to know that Social Security SHOULD ---- and CAN ---- mean retirement security.

The majority of individuals in older generations think of Social Security as part of the American dream. Our younger generations need to believe this, too. When Americans believe Social Security contributions are their own, they will be much more willing, and even excited, to get more for their contributions.

### **WORDS THAT WORK**

**That's such a misconception out there in the minds of the American taxpayer. The money that goes into Social Security does not belong to the federal government. It comes from the individuals themselves or a combination of the individual employees and their employers. It's their money. It belongs to the employees, the workers. They're the ones that deserve to determine how this money is going to be invested in safe and sound investments for the long term so that they can have the assurance that their retirement benefits will be there.**

**-- Senator Saxby Chambliss**

Again, it is important to make your argument PRACTICAL, especially with younger individuals. Talk about the impact on their day--to--day life of paying into the Social Security system.

### **WORDS THAT WORK**

**If you weren't required to give it to government, you'd maybe spend it on your child, maybe spend it on your spouse, maybe spend it on yourself, or maybe even invest it. So in fact, it is your money. The question is, "What's the best way to invest your money for your future?" Social Security has got to be a part of it because we have made a pact with generations in this country and so we have to continue that. And so the question is, is that the best way to provide the future for the younger generation?**

**-- Congressman Dan Lungren**

I want you to see as many examples of the ownership issue as possible because this is SUCH a critical component of any Social Security communication. Hammer away at it until it is an absolute fact in their minds!

## WORDS THAT WORK

**Social Security is a basic right that the American worker has paid for. They paid money in and they expect a decent retirement and expect it to be there when they need it.**

**It's their money but the problem is the federal government has spent it. Now we need a tangible asset alongside Social Security so people can point to it and say "that's MINE, and if I don't live to collect my Social Security that's inheritable wealth". It's something that they can depend upon in their old age.**

**-- Congressman Clay Shaw**

Again, PRACTICAL facts are extremely effective to your audience. OBTUSE facts, of course, are not. Social Security in this light is a difficult subject because there are many obscure facts and figures. Stay Away From Them!!!

## THE WRONG ANSWER!

**The Social Security system is a FICA tax system, it's a payroll tax so it's money that comes out of your paycheck. If you're a worker out there in America today you're told you have to pay 6.2% whether you're making \$10 an hour or \$100,000 a year, plus your employer has to pay 6.2%, which really comes out of your salary so 12.4% of your wages everyday are taken out for your retirement. Shouldn't you be able to have something to say about where that goes?**

If you are going to use facts, stick to the basics, and contextualize each fact with a practical, down to earth example. To dwell too long in numbers will ultimately lose the interest and passion of the audience, and sink your argument

**3) Everyone is eager for Social Security reform —but seniors are wary.** To seniors, Social Security is as American as apple pie. The mere mention of even tinkering with the system threatens them. They become much more open to reform though when you talk about its impact on their children and grandchildren. And it doesn't hurt to emphasize that it will not impact their benefits.

Let's face it — seniors love to talk about their kids and grandkids, so talk about them. Tell them about the opportunity America has to insure their retirement security. This point, though simple, is extraordinarily powerful, ESPECIALLY with older women. It is this message point that serves as the most efficient opening to having an honest dialogue with seniors about reform. It is the ONLY way that you

can sell them on this proposal.

Furthermore, it is absolutely essential to constantly reassure seniors that you would never, never, NEVER touch their benefits. Stress your respect and gratitude for their years of hard work. Affirm that they deserve guaranteed benefits. Emphasize that personal retirement accounts will be strictly voluntary and will have NO effects on their current benefits.

- 4) Younger generations need to know how personal retirement accounts would work.** While the generation about to enter retirement wants to know that their pension will be there, the younger and middle-aged audience must know the practicalities of a personal retirement account, and be assured that this new system would not be too cumbersome or confusing.

### **WORDS THAT WORK**

**Every two weeks, the same amount will be taken from your paycheck as it is now. But instead of going to the government, the money will go directly to a personal retirement security account with your name on it. You will not be allowed to touch the money. Just as with an IRA, you will not be able to cash out until your retirement.**

**The bottom line: older generations need to know their benefits are secure, while the younger generations need to know how the new plan will work to their benefit.**

- 5) Current and near retirees must KNOW their benefits are secure.** Most Americans, including seniors, are unaware that Social Security is not currently guaranteed. You can imagine the outrage if seniors and pre-retirees were to be told they had no ownership rights to their benefits. You must reassure them their benefits will be there when they retire, and MOST IMPORTANTLY will not be reduced by this proposal.

This sort of guarantee should NOT be in the form of a written statement or contract, but should be implied in the words you communicate to your audience.

### **WORDS THAT WORK**

**As Members of Congress, we have a duty to our seniors to ensure that their retirement security will not be jeopardized. At the same time, we cannot lose sight of the overall goal of reforming the Social Security program so that today's workers will have the retirement that they deserve as well.**

- 6) **Use personal examples to illustrate your message more effectively.** By now, this should be old hat, but Americans respond much more effectively to a speaker to whom can relate: when they see them as him or her as a person who is going through the same challenges that they are.

#### WORDS THAT WORK

**My father has been self-employed his whole life. I was self-employed in the private sector before I was In Congress. When you're self-employed you know it more keenly than if you worked for someone else.**

**So that's one thing the people need to realize. It's not the government's money. It's your money. The government is taking it, now the question is "are you going to make the government accountable to give it back to you in better standing then you gave it to them or worse?"**

-- Congressman Zach Wanimp

- 7) **Talk about GENERATIONAL FAIRNESS, but do NOT engage in generational warfare.** Expectations of bankruptcy alone will not lead young adults to call for reforms in programs like Social Security and Medicare. Programs that benefit seniors have the full support of their children and grandchildren (in fact, if these kids had the opportunity, they would actually increase Social Security and Medicare payouts). Therefore, if Social Security reform is seen as an attack on Social Security (as the AARP will obviously suggest), you will lose.

Unfortunately, seniors don't feel the same way about their children and grandchildren. In fact; the older people are, the less likely they are to believe that their kids "will be facing a financial crisis and significantly higher taxes because of current and future government spending on older generations.

Seniors are also least likely of any age group to believe that parents have a greater obligation "to ensure that their children have the same opportunities that they had" and most likely to believe that children have a greater obligation "**to see that their parents have a comfortable retirement.**" **The myth that young people are selfish and seniors are compassionate is just that ---- a myth.**

#### WORDS THAT WORK

**The net result is that we will guarantee the retirement, not only for**

**our parents, and the baby--boomers, but also more importantly for our kids. I think for too long we have thought about this as a them versus us kind of a debate. Ultimately we're all in the same boat, and you can't sink half of one of these boats. We need to come up with a system that's fair to everybody. And I think we can.**

**-- Congressman Gil Gutknecht**

Right now, young people don't think it is a fair system. They are cynical about their chances of receiving the benefits that they have paid for. On the one hand, the youngest adults ---- those who will pay the most in taxes but eventually receive the least in benefits ---- believe they will be stuck with higher taxes and a dreadful financial situation because the government is spending **THEIR** money on today's old folks, yet they somehow think they will escape the crisis personally. On the other hand, they think their grandparents are getting a raw deal from the government and that they should actually be receiving even more in benefits.

Why the contradiction? Because **young voters have still not learned that Washington's spending habits and the taxes they personally pay are directly related.** Until these blessed twenty--somethings get older, wiser and link spending and taxes, forget about any generational uprising.

- 8) Financial literacy brings security, accountability, and empowerment to the American people.** The public needs to be educated on financial literacy. The American people need to know there are other financial options than simply letting Washington handle their Social Security contributions. Through financial literacy, many of the public's fears towards the idea of personal Social Security accounts will wash away, and the public will be empowered. In so doing, Americans will come to the conclusion that personal retirement accounts are in their best interest, and choose this as the best Social Security policy. The more Americans know about the financial options there are out there, the more they want to explore in an effort to get more bang for their buck.

But financial literacy means much more. It means giving Americans the reassurance and comfort of knowing that they will be educated and aided in making the right investment choices. It is far too easy to only focus on the "trees" of this debate at the neglect of the "forest." In this case, the forest is American financial literacy, providing Americans with the tools, choices, and education to make informed decisions about their retirement security.

## **WORDS THAT WORK**

**Q: You are giving Wall Street the opportunity to make literally billions of dollars off of senior citizens and they don't need the money, senior citizens do.**



**A: Wall Street is not the argument; the argument is how do we want people to lead their lives in their senior years? Investment is one of the most important things we can teach our children. We have to talk about financial literacy as well. In many cases this is an educational issue as well as a Social Security issue.**

**We need to make sure that wrong decisions aren't made and therefore, financial literacy must be a part of any kind of a discussion that comes with changing Social Security.**

**---- Congressman Denny Rehberg**

**\* THE PERFECT SOUNDBITE \***

**THIS IS NOT ABOUT GETTING YOUR MONEY INTO WALL STREET.  
THIS IS ABOUT GETTING YOUR MONEY OUT OF WASHINGTON.**

In letting your audience know the facts, they will see your plan as exactly what it is: a common sense solution. Your audience will be EMPOWERED to see your plan as the right course of action; as a course of action they WANT to pursue, without apprehension.

## **SAVING SOCIAL SECURITY:**

A large percentage of Americans believe Social Security needs major reform or a complete overhaul. Few (seven percent) believe the system is “financially secure” as it now stands, while 71 percent think it needs a major retooling. Age is again the greatest divider of opinion. Everyone is anxious for Social Security reform -- except seniors.

From the facts about the Social Security system as it stands today, we can conclude only one common sense, meaningful solution: personal retirement accounts. While this is a communication minefield, you can win this one. By more than a three to one margin, (66 percent to 21 percent), Americans believe they could make more money investing themselves than what they get from Social Security. More importantly, by more than an incredible four to one margin (76 percent to 18 percent), Americans believe the private sector can deliver more money than Social Security.

Let the other side argue that the American public is stupid. Be on the side of the clear majority of the American people. ***Some have argued that many workers are ill-prepared to have a greater say in the investment of their Social Security dollars. Americans, however, do not believe that to be true. Eighty-five percent (85%) say they are confident in their ability to manage their own retirement accounts, and more than half (54 percent) believe politicians underestimate the public's ability to manage individual accounts.***

This must be brought into line with our previous point regarding financial literacy. In order for the public to be properly equipped to manage a personal retirement account financial literacy needs to come into play. In discussing the common American's ability to manage a personal retirement account, emphasize how you are committed to making financial education and access to information a key part of this larger effort.

People have little confidence in Wall Street these days, but even LESS confidence in Washington. Many critics of personal Social Security accounts say that contributions will go into the hands of greedy Wall Street fat cats. An extremely effective response to this argument is to state that right now, our benefits are being controlled by Washington bureaucrats, and it boils down to who you think is better handling YOUR money,

Washington or the American people? The latter will always be overwhelmingly chosen. In addition:

- \* The popularity of IRAs and 401(K) plans is evident in the overwhelming support for converting Social Security to a personal pension system similar to individual retirement accounts. Every income group -- poor, middle-class and wealthy -- supports this proposal.
- \* On the negative side, the idea of a tax increase divides the nation: 48% **oppose** increasing payroll taxes two percent now to prevent a cut in Social Security

benefits in a few years, while 47% support the idea.

When the question is put in the context of preventing Social Security bankruptcy, the results are exactly the same.

Three operative phrases placed in any statement regarding Social Security and Congress will earn it overwhelming support:

- 1) **“Non--partisan” is absolutely essential in the Social Security debate.** You will not make any progress unless Republicans and Democrats are lined up two--by--two and side--by--side. Insisting on a bipartisan solution is an essential component of your communication efforts.
- 2) **The public wants “experts,” not Members of Congress, dealing with Social Security.** Congress does not have a great degree of credibility today in regard to Medicare or Social Security. In fact when we asked whether Members of Congress should sit on such a panel, just 26 percent said yes. Even Republicans want Congress away from the process.
- 3) **Fixing Social Security “once and for all” will be the driving force behind any reform effort.** The public wants a solution “that will last forever,” not a short--term fix.

In talking about personalizing Social Security, many traps await you. It is far too easy to fall into them. The above recommendations are good and can get you through some of your simpler communications challenges, but we have expanded upon these below in a way that fully equips you for the difficulties ahead.

- 1) **Americans have little faith or trust in Washington’s fiscal management abilities.** Personal economic fear for the future won’t do by itself. It’s just not enough to convince a majority of Americans that we need to reform the Social Security system. You must also address their anger and distrust toward Washington. (Americans may approve of Washington’s handling of the war on terrorism, but they are hardly confident in politicians’ ability to protect and manage their retirement funds.) **Ask again and again and again: Do you trust WASHINGTON to manage YOUR retirement funds, or is it possible that you or your advisor could do a better job?**

## WORDS THAT WORK

**Imagine how much better off you would be in your retirement years if Washington would let you invest a small percentage of your Social Security contributions? in a personal retirement account that YOU controlled. The government wouldn’t be able to spend your retirement nest egg because YOU would be in charge. After all, it’s your money.**

2) **Talk about the RESPONSIBILITY of a good RATE OF RETURN.** This is a simple, but powerful concept. A good rate of return can be thought of as a responsible rate of return if it is enough to provide security to the American people. The 2% return that Social Security currently yields is obviously not responsible. In fact, it is frighteningly paltry. TWO percent is less than the inflation rate. Just putting \$1 in the bank in a long-- term account and letting it sit there for a decade or more would have yielded a higher return. The American people deserve the right to do better.

During the last 65 years, Social Security has been a responsible program, providing its retirees with a return on their contributions that provided responsibility. Because of the dramatic shift in demographics that is occurring (44 workers to 1 retiree vs. 2 workers to 1 retiree), the return is being drastically compromised. It is our responsibility to provide future generations with a rate of return that matches the return our current and previous generations received from their Social Security.

To fix this, we need to look at retirement strategies that are tested and are proven to work, such as 401(k)s, IRAs and Thrift Savings Plans. This gives us a perfect example of the type of responsible rate of return America should expect from Social Security.

And remember this **IMPORTANT FACT**: we currently are being **FORCED** into accepting today's Social Security as our retirement security. **WE HAVE NO OTHER OPTION.** Personal retirement accounts will be just that: an option for the American people. Your audience needs to know they are not being forced to put their money into the hands of Wall Street Fat Cats. In fact, just the opposite: we are taking their money out of the hands of Washington Bureaucrats and giving it back to them to decide how they want to invest it.

It is always important when discussing this to BE SPECIFIC. Real examples always help solidify and clarify your argument. Always when numbers are involved, your argument needs to be PRACTICAL as opposed to THEORETICAL.

As well:

\* *The personal accounts that will be offered will be diversified, employing a variety of financial products including bonds, treasury bills, and stocks. This diversity is the strategy that has been used successfully by millions of Americans in the form of IRAs and 401(k)s.*

### **SHORT & SIMPLE WORDS THAT WORK**

**People put their money into 401Ks and IRAs everyday. They're safe, they're reasonable, and they have a much better rate of return than the money that we're forcing people to put into their Social Security accounts now. 85/60**

There is, however, a difficulty in talking too much about the stock market. The American people are sensitive to the ups and downs of the stock market. By a slim margin, Americans are more likely to characterize the stock market as generally VOLATILE (47%) rather than stable (44%). That's the bad news. The good news is that the Democrats' communication strategy of portraying this move as a big gamble does not hold with most Americans. By a slightly larger margin than the previous question, Americans look upon buying stocks more as investing (51%) than gambling (45%). However, women, especially those with no investment experience are more likely to consider it a form of gambling.

In talking about the return of the stock market you CANNOT blindly advocate its stability. Instead, focus on other components of investment --- CDs, bonds, T-bills. You must reassure Americans that investing in American enterprise is better than investing in Washington.

- 3) Your audience needs to know their contributions are AT RISK AS WE SPEAK.** As of now, the common perception people have of Social Security reform is that while the reform in question is desirable, it is risky. Of course, there are challenges, but your audience needs to know that there are MUCH LARGER risks in doing nothing.

These risks are larger not just monetarily, but because they are longer. We are in harm's way the longer we do not act. There is a tidal wave of risk slowly approaching our shores, and so we have a responsibility to incur some short-term pain? to avert this disaster.

The status quo is risky precisely because of Washington's handling of our Social Security Trust fund; they spent it all. The crisis that is headed our way is evidence enough that our current system has risks: BIG RISKS. We need a system that puts the money of American workers back in their hands.

It boils down to a choice: a long term, financially crippling Social Security system, or a vastly improved system with short term belt--tightening?. The choice becomes common sense.

- 4) For the people to trust Wall Street, Wall Street -- and Washington -- must be put in their place. "Wall Street" is America, and Washington will just spend it all.** Amidst all the scandal and corruption within the Financial Services industry, it is important that Wall Street be seen as the driving force of the American economy, and as far removed from scandal as possible.

If you must address these scandals, then bring Washington into the mix, Make it a choice: Wall Street or Washington. Neither should control our money. We should make the choice ourselves. And any new system should enforce the principle of accountability.

- 5) Personal retirement accounts will foster personal security.** Financial markets

have made America the most financially secure nation on the globe, yet tens of millions, of Americans have not had the opportunity to invest. Personal accounts present an enormous opportunity to spread financial independence to millions of Americans. Finally, Republicans have a retirement issue that specifically targets and benefits working class Americans.

### WORDS THAT WORK

**Opponents of personal accounts are denying the right of EVERY AMERICAN to grow their nest egg. They are denying every American the right to own and control his or her own Social Security savings. And that is denying every American the right of retirement security. After all, it's your money.**

And PLEASE remember that you are NEVER talking about privatizing Social Security, nor are you advocating INDIVIDUAL accounts. You are talking about creating PERSONAL retirement accounts. So far, there has been generally strict message discipline here, but every now and then I still catch members and staffers slip up. If you don't believe me, let the numbers convince you:

- \* *Personalizing Social Security has a 17% higher favorability rating than privatizing it. That is, 51% of Americans believe personalizing the program is a good idea, while only 3.4% believe privatizing is.*
- \* *41% of Americans prefer a PERSONAL retirement account to an INDIVIDUAL retirement account. If necessary do what I do, and institute a strict policy among your staff that anytime someone uses either "privatize" or "individual" in the context of Social Security they must pay you \$50. It works.*

### PERSUADING SENIORS

**Seniors trust newspapers more than television to deliver accurate and unbiased news. Since Social Security is primarily an older issue, you must make a special effort to ensure positive coverage of the Republican position in print as well as on the tube.**

To seniors, Social Security is as American as apple pie. Even though they reluctantly acknowledge the necessity of reform to ensure the program's longevity, all things considered, they would prefer the status quo to remain. As one senior offered: **"Anything would be for the better if it would maintain Social Security the way it's going now. But if you want to decrease the amount, that would not be good."**

Seniors believe that younger generations may need retirement security even more than they did. But reform proposals of "less government involvement" and more

“individual control” leave them shaking their heads, doubting the financial prudence of their own offspring.

While most seniors are highly skeptical about government (to the point of highly tuned sarcasm) older Americans have an abiding faith in Social Security. **“I’m very grateful for having had Social Security,”** said a woman at a focus group. **“They’re [Social Security] gonna take care of you the rest of your life,”** whispered another. They believe that the system has taken care of them and, as a result, they think future generations should want and deserve the same. In other words, Social Security may be collected by the government, administered by the government, and undermined because of the government ... but don’t tell that to America’s elderly. **To America’s elderly, “Social Security” and “government” are completely unrelated.**

**What seniors hate about government is exactly what they love about Social Security, and it can be summarized in one word: SECURITY. Give seniors security and they will follow you anywhere.**

## **FACE THE CHALLENGE**

There is no question this reform, like any other reform, will come with its set of challenges; While the Democrats are factually off-base on when Social Security will become bankrupt if we continue our current system, they will enjoy a field day of outlining how expensive our reform is. This is a challenge, and this is what life is all about. The bottom line is: **Social Security as it stands today IS SIMPLY UNACCEPTABLE.**

The Democrats will show that our reform comes at a high price (**a trillion dollars or more**). The perfect response is to show that yes, we know that, and look at how doing nothing is **MUCH** more expensive (**11 trillion dollars**). With the facts as clear as they are, we have a responsibility as stewards of the generations to come to face the music and end this crisis ---- before it grows too far out of control. We have the ability to prevent countless generations from ever having to worry about retirement security, yet it will come at a price in the form of short-term costs.

## **WORDS THAT WORK**

**It’s our opportunity and frankly, it’s our responsibility, to do the right thing for today’s generation — for our children have four little children at home. I want to make sure they have the same opportunities that my parents and grandparents had and it won’t happen unless we do the right thing now. We have a plan, a responsible plan, that won’t put their savings and their resources at risk but will be safe and valuable for them in the future.**

**-- Congressman Mike Ferguson**

Your audience needs to know this is not about partisan politics. This is about our responsibility to our children. This is about doing what's right even if it's difficult, because not doing anything is sheer negligence. Americans see the need to protect the next generation. The last thing they want to do is leave them in the cold.

**\* 43% of Americans believe that our children and our grandchildren should receive the highest consideration when debating Social Security reform proposals, before taxpayers (36%) and even before current Social Security recipients (16%).**

Being responsible means thinking long--term and not about the next election. It means not just thinking about your own retirement security, but of the retirement security of many generations to come. We know Social Security works well now and will work well for the next few years, but this will not last long. Our job is to face the facts and do what we know is right.

### **WORDS THAT WORK**

**The problem that Congress has always had is planning for the next election instead of the next generation. We've got to get over that. We've got to have a long view as to where we want this country to be, not 5 or 10 years from now, but where are we going to be decades down the line. We have to start planning now and not leaving the problem for the next Congress.**

**-- Clay Shaw**

Politicians from both sides of the aisle need to come together as a team if meaningful change is going to take place. When it comes to the retirement security of tens of millions of Americans, there are no Democrats or Republicans. There are only Americans.

The conclusion that we need to save Social Security is best when it comes from PERSONAL EXPERIENCE. When put in the context of our own children, the conclusion becomes common sense. It becomes an issue of GENERATIONAL FAIRNESS. Our children deserve the type of security past and current generations receive. And we can achieve this WITHOUT compromising the benefits of current and near retirees. Let me repeat that: CURRENT AND NEAR RETIREES' BENEFITS WILL NOT BE COMPROMISED. NOT AT ALL. If this is emphasized, those close or near retirement will not see this as a situation in which we are favoring our younger generations at the expense of our older. What we are doing is creating retirement security, like that which we ourselves enjoy, for our children and children's children.



## **ANSWERING THE TOUGHEST QUESTIONS ON SOCIAL SECURITY**

### **Q1: Social Security has worked great for decades. Why change it?**

**A:** Let me give you four facts that have convinced me that the status quo is unacceptable and that the modernization of Social Security is a moral imperative. First, when Social Security was first created, men made up the vast majority of the workforce and had a life expectancy not much more than 60 years. Today, in a majority of households, both men and women are working, and our life expectancy has risen more than 10 years. We are living longer, healthier, more productive lives...and that trend will likely accelerate as we continue to lead the world in medical breakthroughs. But while that is great for us here today, that's not great for an antiquated Social Security system.

Second, it is a fact that when Social Security was created, there were 41 workers for every retiree, and in the 1950s, about 16 workers paid in to Social Security for every person drawing out. Today, the ratio is just 3 to 1, and when our kids retire, it will be down to two workers for each beneficiary. The burden we will be placing on the workforce is unimaginable, and it's getting worse. Think your taxes are too high now? Imagine what they will be in the future if we don't make the necessary changes in the present.

Third, it is a fact that the expansive Baby Boom generation continues to age — and the oldest of them turn 60 next year. Because of that, the number of workers in America has increased since the 1950s, but the number of retirees has increased much faster.

And fourth, it is a fact that the return on your Social Security dollars is a paltry two percent. That's it — two percent. That's not even more than inflation! That's not enough to retire with a nest egg. That's not enough to retire with a sense of security. To me, depending on a two--percent rate of return over the lifetime of paying into Social Security is more of a risk than trying an alternative approach.

### **Q2: The Social Security System is stronger than it has been in recent years. Back in 1997 the day when the trust fund would run out was 2029. Now it's gone up 13 years to 2042, and if the economy continues to grow at the rate President Bush says it's going to grow, it will be pushed even farther into the future. Why should we tinker with it now?**

**A:** Right now we have a strong workforce because of our Baby Boomer generation has not yet retired, and it is this that will drastically change everything. Social Security may be solvent now, and it may run a surplus for 13 more years...but what happens to the next generation of Americans? To do nothing would not be fair. It would not be responsible. It would not meet our obligation as the stewards not just of the past, but of the future. I do not intend to allow America's next generation to inherit a broken system. We in Washington have an obligation not to think merely of the next election but to plan for the next generation.

**Q3: I think the Social Security system is fine and I don't want to invest in a personal account. It seems to me you are forcing the American people to support Wall Street.**

**A:** The investment options in each individual's personal Social Security account is VOLUNTARY. And that's what our new plan is all about: the freedom to do what you want to do with YOUR money. You probably think you own Social Security right now — but you don't. If you pay into the system year after year but die before you retire, you can't pass on your Social Security benefits to your spouse or your children. And if you think a two percent return on your Social Security is sufficient, you can't change that.

American's deserve the freedom to voluntarily save some of their payroll taxes in a personal account for their retirement. At a two percent return, Washington has done a rotten job managing your Social Security savings. Just putting it in the bank in a long-term account and letting it sit there for a decade or more would have yielded a higher return. We think you can and should have the right to do better.

Let me say this again. YOUR Social Security belongs to YOU. It doesn't belong to Washington. This is not about someone else's retirement security. It is about YOUR retirement security and who will control YOUR savings. YOU should be able to determine how your Social Security dollars will be saved and invested.

**Q4: Can't the Social Security system be fixed by implementing modest changes, including raising the retirement age, or making the wealthy pay Social Security taxes on oil of their income?**

**A:** Unfortunately, it will take much more than modest changes to save our broken system. The Social Security Administration notes that the current system will require a total of \$27 trillion more revenue than it will receive in taxes over the next 75 years. Raising the retirement age or taxes will postpone the crisis, but will not end it. For too long, financial experts and independent economists have warned that Social Security is on a collision course with insolvency.

And yet Washington has not offered a meaningful solution. This is the old way, the 5 political way...to wait for the disaster to occur before making the necessary changes to PREVENT it. It is our responsibility to save and strengthen Social Security NOW, BEFORE the crisis occurs. It is what we were sent here to do and we have to get it done.

Frankly, I raising taxes would seriously harm our nation's economy. We are already over-taxed in this country. As a society, that financial burden cannot be further increased because it would hurt every family in America. Now more than ever, we in Congress have a responsibility to make the tough decisions while not making the burden any harder on the American people.

**Q5: Can't Washington just stop spending so much of the Social Security Trust Fund?**

**A:** I agree spending in Washington has grown out of control, and I am working to make sure Congress develops a fiscally responsible budget. But unfortunately, the problem lies in the fact that Social Security is not truly a trust fund. For years now, the Social Security "trust fund" was nothing more than a stash of cash that the Washington politicians used for their own pet projects. All that's left is a pile of Treasury Bills — IOUs that you and I will have to pay unless we act now.

Even if the borrowed money was paid back, this crisis will only be delayed — so that further generations can suffer its consequences. The question for us as Members of Congress is, "what are we going to do to make Social Security more reliable for the generations to come?" We have a responsibility in Washington to modernize Social Security in a way that achieves built-in reliability so that NO future generation has to go without retirement security.

**Q6: I have heard it will cost an estimated 2 trillion dollars in transition costs to pay for setting up personal Social Security accounts. How can you justify incurring such an astronomical cost?**

**A:** I am looking at the financial difficulties our children will inherit if we do nothing, and that's even more frightening. Our choice is between an enormous crisis starting 13 years from now, when Social Security begins to pay out more than it takes in, or facing these challenges today, when they are a lot less expensive. To me, the best course of action is to face these challenges now, protect current retirees and save generations to come from needless financial heartache.

**Q7: Won't this new system jeopardize the benefits of current and near retirees?**

**A:** Preserving the security of your benefits are a cornerstone of our program. Let me say this again. Your benefits are secure. If you are receiving your Social Security check, or nearing retirement, nothing will be taken away from you. Absolutely nothing.

**Q8: By investing a portion of our Social Security contributions in financial markets, aren't we in essence gambling our money on stocks?**

**A:** The financial markets have made America the most financially secure nation on the globe, yet tens of millions of Americans have not had the opportunity to invest. Until now. Every American worker should have the right to own and control their retirement savings account so that they can reap the benefits of a safe, secure and rewarding retirement.

Federal employees and even Members of Congress can enroll in savings plans that give them the right to invest in CDs, treasury notes and other safe investments that yield more than the two percent we get from Social Security. Most Americans now have IRAs and 401K plans that allow them to make choices in how to invest their retirement savings.

And that's all we're getting with Social Security. A paltry two percent. That's even below the inflation rate! That's not enough to retire with a nest egg. There is no security in today's system of Social Security.

And we also have common sense limitations. These personal retirement accounts would give people the chance to take a small portion of their Social Security and invest it. Not their entire Social Security — just a small portion. The majority of their payroll taxes would go into the same system as a safety net.

**Q9: Amidst all the recent cases illustrating the rampant fraud that has taken place on Wall Street, can we trust these fat cats with our hard-earned money?**

Currently our Social Security is being gambled by a Washington Bureaucracy that is spending the Social Security trust fund AS WE SPEAK — and I believe that is a lot more dangerous. The truth is, the bureaucrats have more faith in Washington than they do in you. I put my faith in the American people.

**Q10: I know for a fact that the stock market has crashed several times since its inception, most recently the day after September 11th, Wouldn't an event like this be devastating to my Social Security account?**

It is true the stock market went down after September 11th, but that was just one day. You have to look at stock market returns over time. Since 1985, the Dow Jones industrial average has climbed nearly 400 percent, and individuals who chose to invest a portion of their Social Security will be investing over these long-term periods. The stock market has always out-performed treasury bills and inflation ...combined — a rate far exceeding what Social Security returns now.

**Q11: What other safeguards are in place to ensure my money will be there when I retire, no matter what the financial climate is like?**

**A:** Aside from the strong performance of financial markets over the long term, as well as the fact that the majority of your account will remain in the Social Security trust fund as a safety net, the personal accounts that will be offered will be fully diversified. By employing a variety of financial products including stocks, treasury bills and bonds, they will allow you to diversify your risk. This diversification of investments is a proven strategy that has been used by millions of Americans who have already benefited with secure and long-term retirement benefits in the form of IRAs and 401ks.

**RESTORING THE SECURITY IN SOCIAL SECURITY**  
**(a 20--minute stump speech)**

*As our nation takes up the great debate around Social Security, I ask you to pause for a moment This is about something more important, more fundamental to our nation and its hardworking citizens...this is not just a debate about Social Security — this is a debate over your retirement security.*

*This is not about the size of a check or what the government owes you, although it may be tempting to think of it that way. You want to be sure that you are provided for in your golden years — that you are secure in your retirement — that you can spend these special years with peace of mind living without fear.*

*It is this most basic principle — RETIREMENT SECURITY — that we in Washington must address.*

*For I believe Social Security is not simply a government program, and it is more than a safety net. It is a solemn promise by the United States to generations of diligent, hard-working Americans. It is clear to me that no one who has worked hard their entire life should have to spend their golden years in poverty or live in fear of financial ruin.*

*For too long, financial experts and independent economists have warned that Social Security is on a collision course with insolvency. And yet Washington has not offered a meaningful solution. This is the old way, the political way ... to wait for the disaster to occur before making the necessary changes to PREVENT it.*

*Instead of addressing the problem and applying a solution, we in Washington do nothing until the situation deteriorates into a crisis...passing the buck from one generation to the next. And that's the trajectory of Social*

*Security. Maybe not right now, but it's coming.*

*Well, as Harry Truman once said, "The buck stops here." It is our job in Congress to put an end to this vicious cycle and restore generational fairness to Social Security so that seniors get every dime they are entitled to but that it surveys for their children and doesn't end up bankrupting their grandchildren. It is our responsibility to save and strengthen Social Security NOW, BEFORE the crisis occurs. It is what we were sent here to do and we have to get it done.*

*First and foremost, improving our Social Security system cannot be a partisan issue. When it comes to the retirement of tens of millions of Americans, there are no Democrats or Republicans. There are only*

*Americans — and those Americans are depending on us to stop the bickering and the cheap political stunts and do what's right for .the current generation now receiving benefits, the next generation who are paying those benefits, and future generations who are now just entering the workforce.*

*I applaud my colleagues from BOTH sides of the aisle for working toward a solution to*

*modernize Medicare and provide a prescription drug benefit. And today, as a team, we again need to come together and enact common sense, effective legislation that will protect American workers now and in the future.*

*While current Social Security retiree benefits are secure — and will remain so — in a little over a decade the source of these benefits will begin to show deficits, and thirty years from now the system will be spiraling towards bankruptcy. It would be easier to turn away and leave the tough decisions to others. But we do things in life not because they are easy but because they are necessary — no matter how hard they are.*

*To turn our back on this problem is to turn our back on the future — our children and the generations to come. We have a profound obligation to provide those that come after us with the same security we have enjoyed. For this to happen, we must take up this discussion — face this challenge — and enact long--term financial improvements to the Social Security system that will guarantee benefits for not just those on it but those who are paying into it.*

*Pardon the history lesson, but we all know that the current Social Security system was designed for a different generation and a different America. Let me give you four facts that have convinced me that the status quo is unacceptable and that modernization of Social Security is a moral imperative.*

*First, it is a fact that when Social Security was first created, men made up the vast majority of the workforce and had a life expectancy not much more than 60 years. Today, in a majority of households, both men and women are working, and our life expectancy has risen more than a decade. We are living longer, healthier, more productive lives ... and that trend is going to accelerate as we continue to lead the world in medical breakthroughs. But while that is great for us here today, that's not great for an antiquated Social Security system.*

*Second, it is a fact that in the 1950s, about 16 workers paid into Social Security for every person drawing out. Today, the ratio is just 3 to 1, and when our kids retire, it will be down to two workers for each beneficiary. The burden we will be placing on the workforce is unimaginable, and it's getting worse. If you think your taxes are too high now, imagine what they will be in the future if we don't make the necessary changes in the present.*

*Third, it is a fact that the expansive Baby Boom generation continues to age — and the oldest of them turn 60 next year. Because of that, the number of workers in* PAGE 109 *--*

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*Third, it is a fact that the expansive Baby Boom generation continues to age — and the oldest of them turn 60 next year. Because of that, the number of workers in America has increased since the 1950s, but the number of retirees has increased much faster.*

*And fourth, it is a fact that the return on your Social Security dollars is a paltry two percent. That's it — two percent. That's not enough to retire with a nest egg. That's not enough to retire with a sense of security. And security is what Social Security is all about. To me, depending on a two--percent rate of return over the lifetime of paying into Social Security is more of a risk than trying an alternative approach.*

*Now these facts come straight from the Social Security trustees, Democrats and Republicans alike. They aren't pretty, and neither is the outcome ...if we continue to do nothing and ignore the facts and whitewash the statistics.*

*What we need today is retirement security that can grow even stronger as the American people grow strong. What we need is retirement security that keeps pace with us. What we need is to strengthen Social Security so it in fact DEFINES retirement security.*

*Let me be frank. With each year we put off improving this system, the higher the price our children and grandchildren will have to pay. We also know that any change to our*

*system will create short--term costs. I tell you this because I want to be upfront with you. I believe you have a right to know the fine print before you make a decision. Life is full of enough surprises — Washington should be honest with you and not sock it to you when you least expect it.*

*The plan I am about to outline will cost roughly a trillion dollars over the next ten years — and that's a lot of money. But according to the Social Security Administrators, to do nothing will cost 11 trillion dollars — and every year we put this off, the bill to our children and the next generation increases by \$600 hundred billion.*

*Our choice is between an enormous crisis starting 13 years from now, when Social Security begins to pay out more than it takes in, or face these challenges when they are a lot less expensive today. To me, the best course of action is to face these challenges now, protect current retirees, and save generations to come from needless financial heartaches.*

*One more point, and this one is strictly my opinion. Fixing Social Security is an issue of fairness... **GENERATIONAL** fairness. We should have a system that is fair to our parents and fair to the baby--boomers, but that is not enough. It has to be fair to our children and their children as well.*

*It may be solvent now, and it may run a surplus for 13 more years ... but what happens to the next generation of Americans? To do nothing would not be fair. It would not be responsible. It would not meet our obligation as the stewards not just of the past but of the future.*

*This great nation has made its share of mistakes, many of which were products of hard decisions put off to future generations...problems that were avoided by bequeathing them to our children. I do not intend to allow America's next generation to inherit a broken system. And we in Washington have an obligation not to think merely of the next election but to plan for the next generation.*

*The answer involves ownership — owning and controlling your Social Security savings. You probably think you own your Social Security now — but you don't. If you pay into the system year after year but die before you retire, you can't pass on your Social Security benefits to your spouse or your children. If you don't think a two percent return on your Social Security is sufficient, you can't change that.*

*Now remember... it's YOUR money. It doesn't belong to Congress, to the President, or even to the Social Security Administration. It's YOUR money. Social Security is a basic right that you have paid for. The question is "are you going to make the government accountable?"*

*And the question for us as members of Congress becomes, "what are we going to do to make Social Security more reliable for the next generation?" We have a responsibility in Washington to modernize Social Security that achieves built--in reliability.*

*Let me say this again. YOUR Social Security belongs to YOU. It doesn't belong to Washington. This is not about someone else's retirement security. It is about YOUR*



*retirement security and who will control YOUR savings. YOU should determine how your Social Security dollars will be saved and invested.*

*It is up to Washington to make the necessary reforms so that Social Security provides the opportunity for a better return than what it provides now. Two percent is not enough. You deserve more — and you deserve investment opportunities that are safe and sound for the long term, so that you will have peace of mind knowing that your retirement benefits will be there when you need them and expect them.*

*Federal employees and even Members of Congress can enroll in savings plans that give them the right to invest in CDs, treasury notes and other safe investments that yield more than the two percent we get from Social Security. Most Americans now have ERAs and 401K plans that allow them to make choices in how they invest their retirement savings.*

*And that's what Social Security personal retirement accounts are all about — allowing Americans to voluntarily save some of their payroll taxes in a personal account for their retirement. At a two percent return, Washington has done a rotten job managing your Social Security savings. Just putting it in the bank in a long--term account and letting it sit there for a decade or more would have yielded a higher return.*

*We think you can and should have the right to do better.*

*Personal retirement accounts can turn every American employee, into an owner, giving them a retirement fund they control themselves and can truly call their own.*

*But we also believe in common sense limitations. These personal retirement accounts would give people the chance to take a small portion of their Social Security and invest it. Not their entire Social Security — just a small portion. The majority of their payroll taxes would go into the same system as a safety net.*

*It would be voluntary, not mandatory. If you don't want to invest, you don't have to. If you want Washington to manage your money, you will have that right.*

*There would be strict limits to how much and where YOUR Social Security personal retirement account could be invested, but YOU would be making the decisions, not some bureaucrat in Washington.*

*The financial markets have made America the most financially secure nation on the globe, yet tens of millions of Americans have not had the opportunity to invest. Until now. Every American worker should have that right to own and control their retirement so that they can reap the benefits of a safe, secure and rewarding retirement.*

*Here's what will not change, however. If you are receiving your Social Security check, or nearing retirement, nothing will be taken away from you. Absolutely positively nothing. Your benefits are and will remain secure.*

*Partisan critics of this plan argue that giving employees the right to control their retirement is essentially the same as gambling on the stock market. My first response is*

*to say that they are gambling on a Washington bureaucracy that is spending the Social Security Trust fund AS WE SPEAK — and that is a lot more dangerous. The truth is, they have more faith in Washington than they do in you. I put my faith in the American people.*

*So I ask you to focus on the facts, study the issue, and then make up your own mind. When it comes to financial literacy and Social Security, the more you know, the better off we'll all be.*

*Social Security has worked for decades and for generations. But as it now stands, this is not a modern system that meets modern needs. We have a terrific opportunity right now. Imagine the peace of mind in knowing the contributions you make each month to Social Security will result in a real nest egg of savings for your retirement that you own and no one can take away from you.*

*After all ... it is your money.*

# LAWSUIT ABUSE REFORM: A COMMON SENSE APPROACH

## THE TEN PRINCIPLES OF LAWSUIT ABUSE REFORM

This is a winning issue for Republicans. The public is on your side — well over 70% of the American public want lawsuit abuse reform. But unless you get the tone right, that won't matter — you will lose the argument. The key is communicating it.

Especially in the wake of September 11, the public has less tolerance than ever for anyone perceived to be taking advantage of other Americans. Out-of-control lawsuit abuse can seem like an illogical Alice in Wonderland creation in light of the shift in priorities that has taken place since the war on terror began.

Adherence to these ten principles will help you communicate your effort to restore sanity to the legal system:

- 1) Tone and context is everything.** If you don't get the tone and the context right, nothing else matters. Yes, there is a strong desire for lawsuit abuse reform, BUT there is a right way and a wrong way to speak to that desire. Get it wrong, and you will undermine your credibility — not the personal injury lawyers. Americans are opposed to the abuse of the system, not to every lawyer out there.
- 2) Talk about the specifics — spell out the problems caused by lawsuit abuse.** You have to address the specific problems that America's out-of-control legal system is creating. It is essential to take Americans with you each step of the argument. So relate lawsuit abuse to the real life problems it is causing.
- 3) Personalize, Personalize, Personalize.** It is a communications mistake to talk about the effects of lawsuit abuse on the economy as a whole or any other big abstraction. You must talk about the consequences for ordinary Americans — how it impacts everyone from pregnant mothers to America's hardworking employees.
- 4) Don't overstate the impact of lawsuit abuse.** Americans believe that lawsuit abuse is a serious problem, but they don't buy arguments that lawsuit abuse is the sole cause of rising healthcare costs, doctor flight or outsourcing. You can say lawsuit abuse contributes to these problems, but you can't say it's causing them.
- 5) Third party endorsements matter.** Let me blunt. The B.S. meter of the average American voter is high. People want to know that respected authorities agree with you. It is important to people that the American Medical Association has designated their state a 'state in crisis' because of the shortage of doctors.
- 6) Individuals who have been wrongly injured deserve their day in court.** Americans believe that everyone has a right to their day in court. They agree that

we need to make our courts more accessible to real victims and less accessible to unfounded lawsuits. And they agree that it should not take years to bring legitimate cases to trial because the system is jammed with frivolous lawsuits.

- 7) **It is essential that Americans can access healthcare when and where they need it.** Runaway lawsuits are forcing doctors, including many OBGYNs, out of the profession and forcing many more to practice defensive medicine, blocking access to healthcare for all Americans and risking lives in emergency situations.
- 8) **There must be a common sense cap on punitive damage awards.** Someone who buys hot coffee at a drive--thru and then spills it on herself is not entitled to a \$2--million settlement. An employee who finds an employer's language offensive is not entitled to tens of millions of dollars because of "pain and suffering." Americans believe it's time to restore common sense to financial rewards.
- 9) **It's time to return to responsibility as the core principle of our legal system.** Damages should be awarded according to who is at fault rather than who has the deepest pockets. Those who are primarily responsible for damages should pay promptly, but it's time to stop targeting people and businesses just because they are financially successful.
- 10) **Lawsuits should not be "strike it rich" schemes for lawyers — and losers should pay the costs of frivolous lawsuits.** There must be reasonable limits to what lawyers can take from their clients. Otherwise, lawyers get the lion's share of the settlement and the victims end up with scraps. Judges should discourage lawsuit abuse by holding lawyers who file frivolous lawsuits accountable for their actions

## **OVERVIEW**

A New Mexico woman buys a cup of coffee at McDonald's, spills it in her lap, sues the fast food giant, and the jury awards her more than \$2 million. A Port Isabel, Texas, man injures his knee when a small dog runs in front of his bicycle. He sues and is awarded \$1.8 million. A drunken San Antonio man wanders into a public stairwell to urinate, falls down, injures his back, sues, wins!!, and is awarded \$8,000 in damages.

America has far too many frivolous lawsuits, absurd jury awards and outrageous plaintiffs' lawyers. They wreck small businesses, damage the economy, punish consumers, deprive Americans of essential healthcare and cost all of us a lot of money.

Republicans can never go wrong criticizing lawsuit abuse. For statistical purposes, you start with a potential pool of 81% of the electorate that believes "laws should be enacted to make it tougher for lawyers to file frivolous lawsuits." That's pretty darn good.

So you start out with the American public on your side. But to keep them there, you

need to talk about this issue using the right tone, context and language.

## **KEY COMMUNICATION POINTS**

- 1) The system is broken.** Start here. Americans fundamentally feel the current legal system is broken. No doubts. No exceptions. It isn't fair. It isn't balanced. This is a winner with the electorate — the eight out often who want to make it tougher to file frivolous lawsuits.

Talk about the ideals of the profession, and how lawsuit abuse is tarnishing those high ideals. It isn't working. 90% of Americans believe major changes are needed 'to restore common sense and balance' to the legal system.

So say it. **'The current system is needlessly confusing, takes too long, costs too much money, makes health care more expensive for others, and ends up truly benefiting only the lawyers involved.'** Then talk about the alternative.

**The phrase "frivolous lawsuit" is fully understood and says everything you want it say.** The language voters used to describe a frivolous lawsuit should be music to your ears: crooks, fakers, cheats, rip--off, scam, fraud, etc. Here, you definitely have the language advantage.

## **WORDS THAT WORK**

**Access to quality healthcare is a right, not a privilege. Unfortunately, America's personal injury lawyers are threatening that right with frivolous lawsuits and courtroom antics that are raising everyone's premiums and pushing doctors out of the profession.**

**YES, lawsuit abuse IS crippling our healthcare system. YES, lawsuit abuse IS a 'crisis' in America. And YES, people ARE paying more and getting less because of the lawsuit epidemic.**

**The fact is, doctors are closing up shop because insurance premiums are skyrocketing. The price of saving lives is just too high so they simply stop practicing, in fields where excessive awards are commonplace. And when the life--savers stop saving lives, we know what chilling reality ensues...**

**There is too much fraud. There is too much abuse. Too many doctors are leaving and too many hospitals are closing. Something must be done, and done NOW.**

## MORE WORDS THAT WORK

**Individuals who have been wrongly injured deserve their day in court. We must make the courts more accessible to real victims, and less accessible to unfounded lawsuits. Tragically, our court system is so jammed with frivolous and groundless lawsuits that it can take years to bring a legitimate case to trial. This must end.**

- 2) **Personal injury lawyers, not trial lawyers, is the term you should use.** A good indicator of the depth of emotion Americans have regarding the current legal system is their utter disdain for the term personal injury lawyer. When asked what comes to mind when they hear the term 'personal injury lawyers,' Americans use words like ... **'creeps,' 'bottom-feeders,' 'overpaid,' and 'evil'** You don't want to use those terms yourself — and you don't have to — just call them personal injury lawyers — Americans already know what they think of them.

There is universal agreement that navigating the current system cannot be accomplished without the aid of a lawyer or, more likely, a team of lawyers. Americans do not believe this is a good thing, or an accident. They suspect that it was the personal injury lawyers themselves who have designed the current system ... and with their own financial gain in mind.

## WORDS THAT WORK

**As a matter of principle, damage awards should go to the victim, not the lawyers. They absolutely deserve to be paid, and they deserve fair compensation when they perform well, but lawsuits should not be "strike it rich" lotteries or schemes. There has to be some limit to what lawyers can take from their clients. Otherwise, lawyers end up with the lion's share of the settlement and the victims end up with little more than the scraps...**

**...There is no reason — NONE — that a personal injury lawyer should walk away with a \$50 million dollar cut of a medical liability settlement. That money belongs to the victim, or the hospital, or to us. And if you don't agree, be prepared to pay more, a lot more for your healthcare, because someone's going to pay.**

- 3) **Link lawsuits with healthcare access and affordability.** Americans accept the direct link between lawsuits and higher insurance premiums and declining access to quality healthcare — but they don't want to blame lawsuit abuse for the entire problem, so make sure you communicate that it contributes to the problem. The argument for reform with the most resonance is the one that demonstrates the

adverse domino affect these lawsuits have on the health care system. In particular, all the legal baffles necessitate the spending of huge sums of money in the lengthy defense process, regardless of culpability. In a sentence: "Money that should have been spent in the operating room ends up being spent in the courtroom."

The result? "Doctors and medical facilities are distracted and diverted from their proper health care mission, spending money to defend themselves rather than helping others. In the end, it is the consumer, the patient, and those in need of medical attention who suffer." This is a good argument, so make it.

### **WORDS THAT WORK**

**Remember that every time you hear about another \$100 million verdict, two things will happen. Number one, the cost of healthcare will go up for you and for the doctors and hospitals you need. And two, whether or not YOU can afford the higher costs, your doctor, your emergency room, and your hospital may be forced out of business. It's happened in Nevada. It's happened in West Virginia. It's happened in a dozen states. And it can happen right here.**

**When one person wins big, we ALL LOSE.**

Another effect of runaway costs and the growing burden of medical malpractice insurance that Americans will relate to is the drain of doctors and medical facilities from states without caps on malpractice awards; While money will always be a concern, "accessibility can be a matter of life or death." in an emergency, cost is not a consideration ... access is:

- > *Families of individuals with chronic conditions may be forced to relocate if there is healthcare flight. Give them real life examples.*
- > *The unavailability of OBGYN care for young mothers and families is another issue that moves your audience and should be emphasized.*

Access is the key word, and the lack of access to healthcare is the most direct threat if the current system is not reformed. But when you talk about access you must spell out in detail why lawsuit abuse is forcing good doctors to close up shop and practice defensive medicine. If you don't, voters won't make the link between healthcare flight and lawsuit abuse.

### **MORE WORDS THAT WORK**

**Doctors are closing up shop because it's too expensive to practice**

medicine, thanks to skyrocketing insurance costs caused by skyrocketing court costs. In some communities there may be no doctors, no trauma centers and no hospitals, forcing people to drive long distances to get the care they need.

Increasingly, for Americans, the doctor is not in — and consumers like us are out of luck. It shouldn't be that way.

Lawsuit abuse is forcing up the cost of health insurance. Every huge settlement from a frivolous lawsuit makes it more expensive for doctors and hospitals to provide medical care. And that means it costs more to get medical care. As a result, millions of Americans go without the healthcare they need and everyone with health insurance is paying more than ever but getting less in medical coverage.

Instead of improving care, lawsuit abuse is forcing doctors to practice defensive medicine. Instead of encouraging doctors to use their best judgment, knowledge and experience to help their patients, lawsuit abuse forces doctors to practice a form of lowest common denominator medicine.

Instead of investing in healthcare that is delivered in the operating room, we are spending way too much money suing each other in the courtroom. There must be a better way.

As a matter of principle, we deserve a system that provides the highest quality care to the most people when, where and how they need it. But lawsuit abuse is making this goal unachievable.

Just pick up the newspaper or turn on your TV and you'll understand why this is happening. Verdicts of \$20 million, \$40 million, even \$75 million against doctors and hospitals. And you know who pays them? Not the doctor. Not the hospital. We do.

- 4) **The best approach on healthcare is to talk about 'States in Crisis.'** The fact that a state has been designated a 'state in crisis' by the American Medical Association is effective because it is personal — it is about your state — and because it connects lawsuit abuse to healthcare — a big priority for voters. It also works because the AMA has huge credibility among American voters, more so than ... er ... politicians. Back the AMA designation up with stories from local--newspapers.

### **THE BEST OPENING LINE**

**Did you know that your state is considered a 'state in crisis' by the American Medical Association?**



**4) To win support for the cap, personalize the issue.** Once people see liability reform as an issue of accessibility, it becomes real and personal to them. It is about them. It is about their family. And it goes beyond party affiliation. When the issue becomes patient protection, even some Democrats want change (they will disagree with you only about the size of the cap).

Yes, talk about the abuse; the fraud; the get-rich-quick mentality among personal injury lawyers that is crippling our healthcare system and hurting too many innocent Americans, but personalize it by explaining what it means in dollars and cents and in decreased access. If you don't make it personal, it won't matter.

### **THE PERFECT PITCH**

**If we don't get this national greed under control the doctors won't be there when we need them.**

**Let's face it. We are making it impossible for doctors and hospitals to stay in business. Nineteen states today are in crisis due to a legal system that's out of control. This is not a lottery. For each multi-million dollar, frivolous settlement, we are forcing doctors and hospitals out of business, and we all pay the price. Curbing lawsuit abuse is not only a matter of the rising cost of our health insurance.**

**If we don't control this situation, our doctors and emergency rooms and trauma centers will not be there when we need them most We need to wake up. This is a life or death situation, and we need to take action right now.**

Why is that last statement effective? It causes them to personalize this issue. It causes them to think in terms of their family, not the family across the street. Moreover, this statement paints a vivid picture of the abuse prevalent in the current system. It allowed these voters to envision a person sitting on their couch and being swayed by a personal injury lawyer commercial. **No medical situation is more frightening than not being able to access treatment in an emergency.**

### **WORDS THAT WORK**

**Expectant mothers need to know that the medical and childbirth care they need is nearby -- not several hours' drive away. Distance matters in emergencies. How long it takes to get to the nearest ER can literally mean the difference between life and death.**

**What if the worst were to happen to you or someone in your family?**

**In those circumstances, we all want the very best medical expertise available. But what if it's not? What if the trauma center has closed? For people in several states across the country, that "what if" is now a real life reality. States that have passed lawsuit abuse reform don't have this problem, but states that haven't are heading into crisis. And the crisis is here.**

Again, the most personal is the most credible:

### **WORDS THAT WORK ... AGAINST YOU**

**When innocent people who are injured seek compensation from those who caused their injuries, it's anything but frivolous. When a preventable careless medical error forces a child into a wheelchair for the rest of his life, it's anything but frivolous. And when someone close to you suffers due to doctor negligence, their right to a day in court is anything but frivolous.**

That's why you need to start with the argument that innocent victims deserve their day in court. Then emphasize that there is NO cap on economic damages being proposed. Everything from medical bills to lost wages will be covered -- which is what scares people the most about a medical accident. Then tell them you are simply trying to end the fraud and abuse that exists in the current system.

- 5) Justice and fairness are the two principles that matter MOST to Americans so they need to matter most to you.** Americans are genuinely moved by human suffering. We have a deep desire to help and protect those we see as victims. You must make it clear again and again that the cap is just, fair, and protects those who have been hurt.

### **WORDS THAT WORK**

**Let's talk about what lawsuit abuse is doing to the medical community. Doctors are suffering. Their insurance premiums are on the rise, which is forcing many of them out of fields of medicine that are at risk for huge settlements. And while insurance premiums increase for a number of reasons, the single biggest reason are the excessive malpractice lawsuits.**

**Don't try to find an OBGYN in any of the states the American Medical Association has designated as 'in crisis.' They're closing up shop**

**because they can't afford the insurance. Don't expect to see trauma centers fully staffed. Same reason. Doctors are leaving the fields of medicine where they are most needed because their insurance costs are through the roof. If we truly want to protect our access to quality healthcare, we need reform now.**

- 6) Stress the balance in the legislation.** That is, don't start by telling voters what they can't have (more than \$250,000 in punitive damages). Start by telling them what they CAN have. In communicating this legislation, begin by describing the full gamut of awards still being received by the 'victim.' Americans have a very difficult time putting a cap on the value of human life. A cap of \$250,000 on the value of 'pain and suffering' makes even supporters of the legislation somewhat uncomfortable. With a cap of one million, almost everyone would support the change. So what should you say?

### **WORDS THAT WORK**

**All medical expenses will be covered, both now and in the future as a result of malpractice. The patient's anticipated earnings will also be awarded for as long as necessary, possibly for life. There will be no out-of-pocket expenses, and the victim will receive medical treatment at no cost to him/her. In addition, the victim will receive additional compensation for pain and suffering, up to \$250,000. It is only the pain and suffering award that will be capped. The patient will be taken care of and supported in full, for life.**

### **MORE WORDS THAT WORK**

**First and foremost, as a matter of principle those who have been wrongly injured deserve their day in court. Legitimate mistakes and, tragically, even true negligence, still exist in medicine today. There are times when people go into hospitals seeking care and come out worse off than when they entered. Those victims have every right to a judicial system that is fair and speedy.**

**Patients will receive ongoing compensation for their medical expenses, their rehabilitation costs, their domestic expenses, and any past or future lost wages, if they are harmed by a physician's negligence.**

**...So let me be clear. The main goal of any lawsuit abuse legislation must be to put an end to the out-of-control PUNITIVE damage awards in America ... the \$50, \$75 and even \$100 million dollar paydays and**

**legal lotteries that are crippling the healthcare industry, costing all of us more and more, and making healthcare less available and accessible.**

**We all remember the McDonald's lawsuit ... millions paid out to a woman who, at a drive-through window, spilled coffee on her lap that was-- go figure-- HOT!**

- 7) Never attack juries.** To do so is, essentially, to blame Americans for the problem -- and they won't like it at all. Instead, focus on the system. As one person put it, it is not the lawyers that decide these outrageous verdicts; they are simply working within the confines of the system. So too are the juries. We need instead to get at the root of the problem ... and that is the very system that facilitates this abuse.

Talk about the broken system. Talk about the politicians -- but don't be partisan -- who are saying 'no' to balance and to change ... who are saying 'no' to patients, doctors and the future of the healthcare system in America. And talk about the personal injury lawyers who are enriching the democratic coffers to ensure that lawsuit abuse reform is never passed.

#### **WORDS THAT WORK**

**Democrats and Republicans should come together in partnership with legislation to end lawsuit abuse.**

- 8) Beware of tangents.** The cost of healthcare is a highly charged issue for most people. Raising the topic of medical liability reform often leads people to another issue close to their hearts -- the rising costs of HMO's, health insurance and prescription drugs. They easily confuse one with the other. It's important to keep your audience specifically focused on the issue of medical liability reform. That's why it's important to focus on lawsuit abuse as contributing to these wider problems -- rather than claiming it is their sole cause. And that's why you must always explain how and why lawsuit abuse is driving up the cost of healthcare.
- 9) Talk about the EXCESS.** It is the exception that proves the rule. While the system is widely recognized to be in need of reform, Americans retain a strong concern for the victim. After all, there, but for the grace of God, go each one of us. The way to sway these voters is to emphasize the extremes -- everyone opposes the excesses... Talk about the abuse -- the \$80 million settlement in Texas ... the exorbitant legal fees ... the McDonald's 'hot coffee' case. This is a zero sum game. Today, it is a lottery. When a few can win big, we all suffer.

## WORDS THAT WORK

**As a matter of principle, damage awards should go to the victim, not the lawyers. Lawsuits should not be “strike it rich” lotteries or schemes for lawyers. There has to be some limit to what lawyers can take from their clients. Otherwise, lawyers end up with the lion’s share of the settlement and the victims end up with little more than the scraps.**

And it’s not about the additional money in the pockets of the victims, but rather the message that this would send to bad doctors. Again ... this is an absolute winner.

We found overwhelming consensus on this point... a system that is supposed to be about justice has become too much about money. There is too much fraud. There is too much abuse. Our legal system has become, quite literally, a lottery.

## THE PERFECT PARAGRAPH

**No amount of money will make someone whole again. As a matter of principle, if a doctor is found to be responsible for negligence they should be punished to the greatest extent of the law. But let us not destroy the healthcare system in the process. Let us not make healthcare LESS available. Let us not make healthcare LESS affordable. We must enact balanced reforms that will preserve America’s access to a superior healthcare system. Our ultimate goal is NOT to limit justice, but to limit abuse.**

### **10) Talk about the economy in terms of small businesses, not statistics.**

Americans won’t accept that lawsuit abuse is the cause of outsourcing there are simply too many other factors involved. But you can say that lawsuit abuse is making it more expensive for small businesses to do business. And you can explain that those higher costs make it harder for small businesses to hire and retain workers. Americans accept that this is largely an American problem.

## WORDS THAT WORK

**Unfortunately, America has become the lawsuit capital of the world, and a personal injury lawyers’ paradise. There are now more attorneys in California than the entire continent of Europe.**

You can say that the increased fear of lawsuits is just another reason for companies to look elsewhere to build new factories and expand their business.

## **REPUBLICAN RHETORIC THAT WORKS**

**It is a crisis. It is getting worse. It should be no surprise that this medical malpractice liability crisis is having a negative effect on the way these much needed specialists practice medicine...**

**...In fact, a recent survey--a fascinating survey--showed that 70 percent of neurosurgeons responding said they have had to make at least one of five practice changes. So if 100 responded, 70 said they have had to do one of these following things to narrow down or change their practice in response to the medical malpractice crisis: referred complex cases, closed their practice, moved to a different state, stopped providing patient care or retired. Runaway lawsuits are forcing neurosurgeons and other specialists to limit emergency services.**

**Again, it is not the doctor who is being hurt, it is the patients who are being hurt, and it is future patients, and that means potentially everybody listening to me now.**

**-- Senator Frist**

**Patients and doctors ought to be on the same side, working together; but fear of the legal system puts them in opposite corners and pits them against one another. There has to be a better way.**

**-- Senator Enzi**

**All of us want access to quality, affordable health care. When the quality is not there, when people die or are truly sick due to negligence or other medical error, they should be compensated. When healthy plaintiffs file meaningless lawsuits to coerce settlements or to shake the money tree to get as much as they can get, there is a snowball effect and all of us pay the price.**

**For the system to work, we must strike a delicate balance between the rights of aggrieved parties to bring lawsuits and the rights of society to be protected against frivolous lawsuits and outrageous judgments that are disproportionate to compensating the injured and made at the expense of society as a whole. I repeat that again. For the system**

**to work, we must strike a delicate balance between the rights of the aggrieved parties to bring lawsuits and the rights of society to be protected against frivolous lawsuits... Society as a whole.'**

**-- Senator Voinovich**

**This is not just about big hospitals with shiny buildings owned by corporations. This ultimately comes down to the individual who wants what we all want, and that is access to good quality health care, but who simply cannot find it because they either cannot afford the health insurance or their employer has been priced out of the market because of booming health insurance premiums, in large part caused by this liability crisis or, as we have seen, simply the doctors who, rather than live in the crosshairs of this broken system, decide to retire or to move away to some other location.**

**-- Senator Cornyn**

With this data in mind, I have created a comprehensive 25-minute speech, found on the next page, that covers virtually all areas of the issue. States that are considering some aspect of legal reform will find the rhetoric very helpful.

## **REPAIRING OUR BROKEN LEGAL SYSTEM: A CALL TO REFORM**

*Plaintiffs' attorneys: \$49 million! Flight attendants: zero!*

*That's the negotiated outcome of a national class action suit brought by nonsmoking flight attendants who claimed injuries caused by exposure to second-hand smoke while working. The plaintiffs got a study that will be financed by the tobacco industry -- and that's it. Their lawyers got all the cash. All of it.*

*Wherever one stands on the merit of this case, its outcome illustrates that America's civil justice system has fallen into serious disrepair. It has been hijacked by a small number of plaintiffs' attorneys who have poured millions of dollars into the political system and transformed America into the lawsuit capital of the world.*

*As a nation, we face truly unprecedented economic, social and political opportunities. Power -- once defined solely by geographic boundaries and bombs -- is now better illustrated by hard drives, gigabytes and access to the World Wide Web. Americans are the world's cultural icons, and our economy alone will propel the rest of the world in the 21st century.*

*It's an exciting time, but a disturbing trend is emerging, and it threatens to stifle economic growth, hinder prosperity and undermine the principles of fairness and justice in this country.*

*This trend isn't the result of foreign competition, for our products and services are the best in the world. It is not the result of unfair trade practices, for our economy has withstood and overcome this challenge before.*

*And it isn't because American businesses cannot compete successfully, for we have the most productive and highly trained workforce on the planet.*

*The trend I speak of is the slow and insidious destruction of our legal system at the hands of a small group of personal injury lawyers. We have allowed personal injury lawyers to abuse our legal system -- and it's costing all of us a fortune. But what's most disturbing is that this trend discourages medical innovation, delays the finding of cures for disease, bankrupts small businesses and tears the social fabric of our great nation.*

*That's why our greatest challenge, as a business community and as Americans, is reeling in renegade personal injury lawyers and ending the climate of lawsuit abuse in our country.*

*The statistics are staggering: The tort system alone now costs consumers and businesses an estimated \$160 billion a year -- \$2,400 for a family of four. That's more than the federal government spends on transportation and Head Start combined!*

*Less than half the money transferred through the tort system ever reaches the victims, yet lawyers routinely earn multi-million dollar fees in class action suits.*

*There are more lawyers in California than there are in all of Europe*



*So bad has lawsuit abuse become, that even some of the earliest opponents of reform have recognized that this isn't a partisan or ideological issue -- it's an issue that rattles the very core of our country's economic foundation*

*After a run for the presidency and a quarter century on Capitol Hill, George McGovern left public service and became a business owner. And what did McGovern say about how plaintiffs' lawyers have changed society? In his own words: "We have begun to see one another not as compatriots, neighbors and fellow citizens but as potential plaintiffs and defendants."*

*McGovern is right. He was flushed out of business after nearly drowning in lawsuits.*

*Indeed, by undermining the foundations of our legal system, lawyers are undermining American society itself the personal injury lawyer, once regarded as guardian of the unprotected, champion of the little guy, has become a robber baron with his own little scam. Armed with the title juris doctor and open-ended contracts known as contingency fees, personal injury lawyers seek not to balance the scales of justice, but to line their own pockets at the expense of American businesses and consumers. They get rich, and you and I foot the bill.*

*Our courts should concern themselves with establishing right and wrong, instead of turning over the legal system to those who want to overturn the scales of justice. Litigation, it seems, is now more highly valued, and more profitable, than innovation. The class action lawsuit -- in which a lawyer sues on behalf of some supposedly-wronged group, often composed of millions of people, and collects millions while the offended parties themselves get less than a dollar each, if they bother to claim it -- has been the subject of particular abuse.*

*A study by the RAND Institute for Civil Justice noted that some personal injury attorneys "routinely scan electronic databases and the press to find reports of product recalls, safety warnings, regulatory actions and other consumer complaints that can provide the basis for class actions." Lawsuits are often filed on behalf of people who don't even know they are parties to a suit. The lawyers then seek out a friendly jurisdiction -- and, since federal courts have tended to be strict about criteria for class action suits, these attorneys often file in friendly state courts. They also go shopping for sympathetic juries that will levy huge punitive damages awards.*

*Some personal injury lawyers are particularly fond of finding a high tech company that hasn't performed as well as projected and suing it.*

*It doesn't take a genius, an economist or a psychologist to figure out the allure of these class action lawsuits. Attorneys' fees sometimes reach \$35,000 or more an hour. In the tobacco settlement, one firm scored a \$780 million dollar windfall. Is that justice?*

*Is it surprising that faith and trust in our legal system is at an all-time low? A fair and balanced legal system is critical to the political health and well being of our nation. Yet today, we have a legal system that is unfair, unbalanced and widely unpredictable. How many of you truly believe that the guilty are punished and the innocent go free? How many of you truly believe that justice in America is swift and sure? How many of you have*

*complete faith and confidence that our legal system works for all Americans?*

*The real victims of all this legal activity are the small business owners, teachers, doctors and homeowners whose lives are ruined by baseless lawsuits. More often than not, it's the "little guy," the innocent, hard-working American who gets taken to the cleaners. A recent case involving flight attendants resulted in \$49 million in legal fees for the lawyers and no compensation for the attendants.*

*Just think about how much more you have to pay for everyday household products, for medical care, for car insurance, for thousands of different necessities ... all because of unreasonable lawsuits.*

*The legal system should protect the innocent, punish the guilty and make people whole again. It should not exist to make lawyers rich and fat. For too long, Washington has protected high-priced, high-flying lawyers. It's time to return fairness to the legal system.*

*So the question we face as elected representatives of the people, sworn to uphold the Constitution and dedicated to a strong, healthy economy for all Americans, is how to approach the trial lawyer industry.*

*Make no mistake. It is an industry, business is booming, the personal injury lawyers' lobbyists are powerful, and they never quit.*

*Since I began my remarks tonight, somewhere in America, another personal injury lawyer in search of a big payday filed another class action lawsuit.*

*By the time I'm finished a few minutes from now, a thousand Internet hours will have been cumulatively spent in search of the next corporate victim. They'll have downloaded millions of bytes of data from their litigation web-sites -- dedicated to topics ranging from, and I quote, "Tipping vending machines," "How to seek out auto accidents," "Trip and fall for a million dollars," and "Settling claims for fun and profit."*

*Suing corporations is the fastest growing profession in America, and the trial lawyer industry has sectors specializing in medical law, auto accidents, employment law and financial law. There is even an emerging market of suing industries in emerging markets. And thousands of lawyers have ideas for new state laws that will increase their profitability and make it easier for them to sue.*

*For example; we've all heard the story of the New Mexico woman who bought a cup of coffee from a McDonalds drive-thru, spilled it in her lap and then sued the fast food giant for more than \$2 million. For those of you wondering why your coffee is always cold ... you can stop wondering.*

*Or how about the Port Isabel, Texas, man who injured his knee when a small dog ran in front of his bicycle? The jury awarded him \$1.8 million.*

*And haven't things gone too far when a drunken San Antonio man wanders into a public stairwell to urinate, falls down, injures his back, sues and wins \$8,000?*

*Incidents like these speak volumes about the depths to which our personal and professional lives have been affected by the excesses of the legal profession. A balanced, fair legal system is critical to the political, economic and social well being of our nation. Yet, today we have a legal system that is unfair, unbalanced and widely unpredictable.*

*The shattering of faith in our legal system goes hand-in-hand with the shattered faith in many of our institutions government agencies, our political system and even community based non-profit organizations. We should also realize that excessive litigation has become ingrained in our culture. To fix it, we need to end it. We need to sue each other less and care for each other more.*

*Yet it is clear that reform won't come from within the legal profession itself. So today I am introducing the Common Sense Legal Reform Act to mark a starting point on the road to the restoration of common sense and decency in the field of law. The legislation has five specific components:*

- 1. It limits excessive punitive damage awards. They destroy small businesses, damage the economy and cost taxpayers too much money.*
- 2. It gives juries specific guidelines on awarding punitive damages. Some limits must exist or we'll continue to succumb to "lotto fever."*
- 3. It gives judges the authority to make losers pay the costs of frivolous lawsuits.*
- 4. It protects state laws and measures that limit the fees and percentages personal injury lawyers may charge to reasonable levels.*
- 5. It protects reasonable caps on lawsuits and discourages lawsuit abuse.*

*This is just the beginning. We need to create a judicial system that is accessible to everyone and provides full and speedy redress for genuine injury, but limits frivolous lawsuits and outrageous attorneys' fees. And so I challenge the legal profession to join this effort and not stand in the way. Next to American consumers and companies, the biggest losers in allowing the litigation explosion to continue unchecked are the respectable lawyers whose profession has been tainted by the actions of a relative few.*

*That's why all Americans should join us in our fight to reform the American legal system and ensure that small businesses and American consumers continue to enjoy their place as the world's economic leader. I invite all Americans, including those in the legal profession, to join us in charting a course of responsible reform, to restore vitality, fairness and common sense to a justice system that once was, and can again be, a model for the world.*

*We owe it to our children to pass on to them our American traditions, our great institutions and our pioneering, entrepreneurial spirit, all anchored by a legal system of unquestioned balance and integrity.*



# AN ENERGY POLICY FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

## THE EIGHT ENERGY COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES FOR 2005

- 1) **A threat to America's energy security is a threat to national security.** Our "dependence" on OPEC and foreign oil entangles us in the Middle East and makes us dependent on countries that are hostile to America and American interests. The greater America's dependence on foreign energy, the greater the threat to American national security. This is the single most important communication recommendation.
- 2) **Articulate the need to move toward American energy independence and energy self-sufficiency.** It is the optimistic, hopeful flip-side of the national security argument. It is not enough to say what we don't want. We need to offer a positive goal.
- 3) **We need to take a BALANCED approach to solving our energy needs through DIVERSITY of supply.** These two principles are closely linked and crucial to demonstrating that your approach is both long-term and comprehensive.
- 4) **Reject talk about "choosing between more energy and a cleaner environment." Assert clearly that "we have to do both."** The key principle is "responsible energy exploration." And remember, it's NOT drilling for oil. It's responsible energy exploration.
- 5) **Innovation and 21st Century technology should be at the core of your energy policy.** Articulate how 21st Century technology and innovation will provide the solution to our current energy situation. The following sound-bite works best: **"We have the best scientists, the best engineers and the best technicians in the world. It's time to put them to work to develop a 21st Century energy program that leads America toward energy independence and self-sufficiency."**
- 6) **Stress alternatives that are CLEAN, EFFICIENT, and AFFORDABLE.** Alternative sources of energy aren't really viable unless they meet these three criteria. Stress that increasing energy supplies MUST be done by "using energy more cleanly and efficiently and ultimately making it more affordable."
- 7) **There is an important role for conservation.** Whether through technology that allows our products to burn energy more efficiently to an effort to get Americans to be more careful when and how they use energy, we do want conservation to play a role in our energy future. Any policy without conservation will fail the public opinion test.
- 8) **We need to say yes to a comprehensive, common sense energy policy for the 21 Century.** It's time to hold accountable those who stand in the way refuse to accept the energy needs and the energy opportunities facing American now and in the future.

## OVERVIEW

It was a year of home heating fuel spikes, \$50 a barrel for oil, and gasoline approaching \$2.25 a gallon. It is not surprising that now, in 2005, over 70% of the American electorate believes the energy situation in this country is either in crisis or a significant problem. The prospect of somehow, someday reducing America's dependence on foreign oil and developing/diversifying America's own energy sources are top priorities among Republicans and Democrats alike. You read that correctly. For the first time in recent memory, energy has become a bipartisan issue.

## AMERICANS TALK ENERGY

**What Americans want more than anything else is less dependence on foreign oil. They know we can never be fully energy self-sufficient, but they want more energy developed right here in America because, in their own words, dependence on foreign oil threatens both our national and economic security.**

But while Republicans owned the issue a year ago, that advantage has slipped away. John Kerry's repeated public focus on the importance of reducing American dependence on Middle Eastern oil and his famous comment that "we should rely on American ingenuity and not the Saudi Royal Family," at the Democrat convention struck a raw nerve in the American psyche. Americans forgot that it was the Republicans who offered a comprehensive, long-term strategy and that it was the Democrats who kept saying no, no, no.

You need to retake this issue now before the next spike at the pump and before the next surge in our home heating bills. There are four principles that matter most: energy self-sufficiency/independence, national security, new technology/innovation, and a balanced approach that will take America well into the 21st Century.

**1) Make it about Energy Self-Sufficiency and Independence.** The energy debate is ripe for partisan picking and the Democrats were smart to use it during their convention. Americans want to hear about solutions to foreign energy dependency and are desperate for big ideas and bold solutions. Energy policy is now a public priority and Democrats put themselves on the side of the future. Americans loathe the idea of being reliant on the Middle East for our energy needs and they were waiting for someone to tell them so. This was John Kerry's single best line at the convention, and it continues to resonate even today:

## DEMOCRAT WORDS THAT WORK

**I want an America that relies on its own ingenuity and innovation -- not the Saudi royal family. Our energy plan for a stronger America will invest in new technologies and alternative fuels and the cars of the future -- so that no young American in uniform will ever be held**

## **hostage to our dependence on oil from the Middle East.**

Americans are evenly and bitterly divided about an assortment of political issues, but nearly all of them agree that our nation's current energy policy is behind-the-times and needs a new, 21st Century approach. Right now, the Democrats are exhibiting perfect pitch when it comes to their energy message. They understand that if you play on American fears towards OPEC, Saudi Arabia and the Middle East, while also appealing to American ideals of invention and innovation, they will have a compelling message. But fortunately for Republicans, the Democratic message does not match their policy. If the GOP wants to gain the advantage you need to match the optimism of the Democrats message -- and that begins with a clear statement that the status quo is unacceptable.

- 2) **Current energy policy threatens national security.** Americans believe that our current energy policy is the culprit not only for skyrocketing gas prices and increased pollution but also for our entanglement in the Middle East and therefore endangering national security. That's why they want a NEW direction. There are two phrases that need to be specifically articulated if you want the energy issue back: energy independence and energy self-sufficiency. And be sure to tap into feelings of American exceptionalism and ingenuity to seal the deal with the swing voters:

### **GOP WORDS THAT WORK**

**We have the best scientists, the best engineers and the best technicians in the world. It's time to put them to work to develop a 21st century energy program that leads America toward energy independence and self-sufficiency. If we can send a man to the moon, we can develop alternative sources of fuel right here on earth, and stop our dependence on Saudi oil.**

Americans HATE our dependence on foreign and Middle Eastern oil, and they will respond favorably to anyone who offers an alternative:

### **THE DEMOCRAT ATTACK**

**No young American in uniform should ever be held hostage to America's Dependence on oil in the Middle East. We're going to liberate ourselves. We're going to make ourselves more energy independent.**

## WORDS THAT WORK

**American dependence on foreign oil threatens our national security. When more than half of our energy needs comes from foreign sources, particularly OPEC, that alone is a security risk. OPEC has already slowed down production and tried to gouge us on prices. What happens if they decide to limit sales further? We have barely 45 days worth of oil in our Strategic Petroleum Reserve, Imagine what would happen if that reserve runs out?**

- 3) The key to energy independence is A BALANCED APPROACH.** If you neglect to discuss the importance of conservation, you will appear anti-environment. Your challenge is to make the case that energy exploration and the environment can co-exist. In fact, they can thrive. The Democrats will by to bury your energy solutions by focusing on whatever is the most controversial element of your program. That's why you must stress again and again that you support a "truly comprehensive energy solution," from energy exploration and diversifying resources to research and conservation.

## CHENEY WORDS THAT WORK

**"We're still subject to the international marketplace because we import over half of the oil that we use in this country. And we badly need to develop more resources. We need to invest in new technologies. We need to look for ways to take advantage of the research that's been done and take advantage of our basic energy resources that we've got here at home."**

## EVEN BETTER ENERGY LANGUAGE

**Our energy problems are largely the result of shortsighted domestic policies. The problem has been years in the making, and it will take years to solve. We are committed to the dependable, affordable and environmentally clean production of energy for America's future. We are committed to an energy policy that enhances national security. I know we can do it.**

## ANWR: A SOLUTION TO AMERICAN ENERGY DEPENDENCE

Any discussion of energy must begin with the core principle that when it comes to oil, gas and electricity, America must not depend on any foreign nation. That is the



single strongest argument you have for exploration in ANWR. Especially now, given the turmoil in the Middle East, the importance of American energy independence is clearer than ever.

## **GETTING TO ANWR**

### **The Principle: Making America more energy independent**

### **The Problem: America's dependence on foreign oil**

### **The Actions:**

**1) Discover new, American sources of energy**

**2) Ensure a diversity of energy sources**

### **The Answer - Exploring and developing a tiny fraction of ANWR**

Getting to ANWR as a "solution" is the road best traveled. However, a word to the wise before we (metaphorically) drill too deeply: you should not present this as a silver bullet to American energy issues. It should instead be presented as but one component of a comprehensive energy policy that will address Americans' desire for dependency, diversity and ultimate energy independence. Discuss the entire policy, from energy exploration and diversifying resources to research and conservation measures. Americans will look more favorably upon ANWR exploration if they know that you have this balanced (and affordable) approach.

### **For in the end, the challenge is dependency and ANWR represents security.**

Let's start with debunking the myths surrounding ANWR:

- \* Hardly anyone -- an incredible 87% of Americans -- knows what the letters ANWR stand for;
- \* 73% don't even know what state it's in; and
- \* Just over 50% of Americans admit they know absolutely nothing at all about it.

There is a perception in Washington that Americans are ready to rise up and take to the streets to oppose energy exploration. But the intensity of opposition by the environmental special interest groups does not represent the breadth of public opposition. Like much of Washington, the perception of a potential uprising is a myth. Rather than having to overcome negative perceptions or preconceived notions, you have the opportunity to define this issue and shape those perceptions.

In the years prior to 9/11, true support for exploration in ANWR hovered around the 40% level. Today, support stands above a majority (53%) nationally before a discussion of the topic, and a **remarkable 67% of Americans support exploration and development of ANWR after hearing the pros and cons.**

Even more remarkable is the percentage of opposition support which stands -- after the pro and con education effort: only 20% strongly oppose ANWR development (31% overall). We provided positive and negative information and facts that both sides are using, and after weighing the pros and cons, Americans move sharply in favor of oil exploration in ANWR the more they learn.

Your job is to educate the public on this issue. With facts comes increased support for ANWR exploration. Here's what you need to know:

**1) It is all about REDUCING OUR PEPENDENCE ON OPEC, MIDDLE EASTERN AND FOREIGN OIL.** Americans loathe the idea of being DEPENDENT (use this word as opposed to "relying") on another country -- any country. This is especially true when they find out just how much we depend on foreign countries for our energy needs. The fact is, most Americans don't know exactly where we get the majority of our oil and how much we need to purchase every day. This one fact alone turns people in favor of ANWR exploration.

And when you talk about foreign dependency, "the OPEC oil cartel" evokes the most distain from Americans, followed by "Middle Eastern oil producers" and finally "foreign oil producers" for that matter. OPEC is viewed as an enemy -- and with \$40 or \$50 dollars a barrel for oil, can you blame Americans for their anger and frustration? And if dependency is the problem and national security the threat, ANWR is increasingly viewed as the solution.

Reducing our dependence on foreign oil is about more than just cost or national pride. A full 69% of Americans are more angered by the fact that America is so dependent on foreign oil than the actual cost of gasoline at the pump. The dependence factor is seen as a direct threat to our national security. **ALWAYS stress the importance of national security and link it to our dependence on foreign oil.** This is a simple three-step fact-based process:

- (1) America imports more than 55 percent of the oil we consume;
- (2) This dependence on foreign oil threatens our national security;
- (3) This dependence on foreign oil threatens our economy.

These facts aren't news to most of Washington but it is a real shock to most Americans. **Once they are made aware of this dependence, their perspective changes completely.** The threat to national security over the lack of American oil independence is one of the best arguments to influence those who are initially skeptical or opposed to greater domestic oil production.

**WORDS THAT WORK**

**Reducing our dependence on foreign oil must be a top priority for the President and Congress.**

**America needs American oil. We need to develop our energy sources right here in America and not depend on foreign and Middle Eastern oil for our economic security.**

**Oil from ANWR would reduce American dependence on OPEC and Middle Eastern oil. ANWR represents a secure American supply of oil that could help reduce U.S. demand for foreign oil for 25 years or more.**

### **EVEN MORE WORDS THAT WORK**

**It's pretty obvious that the area in the world that we most heavily rely on today for our oil supply is a very unstable part of the world. Iraq, Saudi Arabia, all of the Middle Eastern countries where the majority of the oil that comes to the United States is produced, is the part of the world where all of the major acts of violence are taking place today.**

**It's a part of the world where there are a lot of people who don't like Americans. At the drop of a hat we could see a change in policy in the Middle East directed towards America from the standpoint of supplying us with the oil that we need to grow the economy of this country, to heat the homes of this country, and to allow our individuals to have the quality of life that they do in America.**

**2) Talk about the reality of BALANCE between Responsible Energy Exploration and Minimal Impact on the Environment.** While Americans definitely care passionately about the environment, they absolutely agree that we need to strike a balance between our environmental goals and our goal of less dependence on foreign oil. They also believe that the two are not mutually exclusive:

**“We can have both greater energy independence AND a healthy environment”**

Two-thirds (67%) of Americans believe that, “by using 21st century technology and advanced engineering that already exists, ANWR can be developed and the environment protected.” **So explain how energy exploration and the environment can co-exist and THRIVE.** The environmental rhetoric on the impact of oil drilling is initially compelling, but our testing shows that it does not withstand scrutiny. Enumerate and tick off the two best examples and evidence:

- 1) The North Slope's petroleum industry is the cleanest, most technologically advanced and most heavily regulated in the world. Facilities are designed for minimal environmental impact.**
- 2) The experience at Prudhoe Bay has proven that oil drilling does not harm**

wildlife. In fact, the Central Arctic caribou herd at Prudhoe Bay has grown from 3,000 to 25,000 during the past 20 years, while oil has been produced in the area.

## **WORDS THAT WORK**

**If we're going to have a vibrant economy here at home, we need to protect our interests overseas. We need to move away from oil dependence and not have to ask Russia or Saudi Arabia "how much are you charging for a barrel of oil?"**

**As Americans, we should be able to set the standard for the environment through conservation, domestic exploration and environmentally friendly ways of doing things. Let's ask ourselves what we're willing to pay for energy. We can do that if we combine all those things -- conservation, domestic exploration and an environmentally friendly approach -- and get to a place where every American feels comfortable.**

### **3) Tell audiences what the part of ANWR in question REALLY looks like.**

Those opposed to ANWR exploration will claim that the Alaskan coastal plain is unspoiled beautiful wilderness, the last remaining Arctic ecosystem, and even the "Serengeti of the North." While eight million acres of ANWR are indeed beautiful and pristine, this land is already designated as wilderness. And more than nine million more acres are classified as a National Wildlife Refuge. No one can touch that land, ever.

However, when the public learns that the area being considered for oil development is no Serengeti, opinions begin to change. So tell them. They can't see the pictures ...so paint them with words:

- 1) It is a frozen, barren land for nine months of the year;
- 2) The sun doesn't shine AT ALL for eight weeks; and
- 3) Wind chills during the winter can drop to minus 110 degrees.

When they understand the truth, the opposition to oil exploration just peels away. And if you are smart enough to carry pictures of the frozen, flat, non-pristine plain to illustrate your point it's game, set and match.

### **4) Technology drives both Exploration AND Environmental Protection.**

Americans have tremendous faith in technology. In fact, one of the most important concepts today is INNOVATION and what it means to the American economy and day-to-day American life. We have full faith and confidence that innovation and

21st Century technology can solve almost any problem. In fact, 71% of Americans share the opinion that "21st century technology and advanced engineering now exist that allows us to explore for oil and natural gas with minimal impact on the surrounding environment." **"Thanks to advanced technology, responsible development and environmental protection can co-exist."**

**It is essential that you make your audiences aware of the incredible developments in energy exploration technology which will result in very minimal impact on the environment.** The average American has no idea about the latest truly incredible technological developments. It is therefore crucial that you make the public aware of these advances.

### **WORDS THAT WORK**

**Exploration and development in the coastal plain of ANWR would take place in the frozen winter.**

**Using modern techniques, only a very small area will actually be impacted by the development. For example, we now have 3-D seismic technology to locate the oil quickly and effectively. Thanks to innovative engineering, we now have directional drilling capabilities that allow you to drill horizontally, deep below the surface for miles to recover the oil -- without any impact whatsoever to the surface above.**

**And if there is no oil, the equipment would be dismantled and when the thaw came, there would be one small cap to show that any disturbance ever took place. The tundra would remain untouched. Like ice fishing on a frozen lake, the icehouse structure would not damage the water below. In similar areas where successful oil exploration has occurred, caribou herds have remained healthy and have actually increased four-fold in number.**

- 5) America does it better than anywhere else.** It is important to emphasize to your audience that, while we have the highest environmental standards and technology in the world, other nations have few laws and little environmental oversight. The majority of Americans who are concerned with our environment have never truly considered the environmental impact of the oil that is drilled and imported from overseas.

So ask them: **"Who do you think cares more about the environment? When it comes to energy production, who do you think is more likely to act responsibly and prudently?"**

Then tell them, **"If you are truly concerned about the impact on nature,**

then what is done in Siberia is just as important as Alaska -- and America is leading the world in the science, technology and engineering of energy exploration.”

## **WORDS THAT WORK**

**We must always keep in mind that we have the highest environmental standards and the most advanced technology in the world. Our nation’s strict federal and state laws ensure that the environment is protected.**

**However, the same cannot be said for other nations. All too often, their technology is inferior and there is little or no environmental oversight.**

**Depending on our own energy resources will always be smarter, safer and cleaner than importing oil from nations with much lower standards.**

Once again, a picture is worth a thousand words. After viewing before and after photos of explored areas, people are pleasantly surprised by the minimal impact - one small pipe sticking out from the surface -- that is possible with today’s technology. Whenever you can, bring photos to illustrate these advancements in technology.

**6) Size matters.** It is important for audiences to know just how small the actually developmental area truly is and how more than 99.8% of ANWR will never be touched:

- When they find out that the area in question is the size of a typical farm or New York’s Central Park, they realize that this is not a major disruption of the area.
- And if you tell them that if ANWR were the size of a basketball court and the area to developed is the equivalent of the size of five one-dollar bills on a basketball court,” you remove another public concern.
- **But the best analogy: if ANWR was the New York Times, the area in question is the size of a single letter on the page.**

**7) Expanding American sources of energy expands the American economy.** When it comes to oil, economic considerations are a significant factor for many Americans. In fact, 63% of Americans are more likely to support ANWR development when they learn that it would create hundreds of thousands of jobs affecting virtually every state. But it’s not only about the new jobs. Fully 62% believe oil from ANWR will help reduce the long-term U.S. trade deficit reduce the federal deficit and strengthen the value of the dollar. “Higher oil prices hurt everyone. Lower oil

prices help everyone.”

- 8) Alaskans Should Decide for Themselves.** Exploration and development of ANWR has the support of Alaskans and their leaders -- and Americans have always sided with local control and location decisions over federal mandates. Fully two-out of three Americans (67%) are more supportive of ANWR development when learning that the vast majority of Alaskans support ANWR development. It's just that simple -- and should be expressed plainly. If Alaskans, who will have to live with the consequences every single day, support ANWR exploration, who are we to say no?

### WORDS THAT WORK

**It should be up to the people who actually live in a particular community, the people who must breathe the air and drink the water, to decide whether or not to accept energy exploration in their communities. Washington should not control the environmental and energy policies for Alaska. We are talking about their community, their homes and their families.**

**The fact is, more than 75 percent of Alaskans favor exploration and production in ANWR. And the Inupiat Eskimos, who live in and near ANWR, strongly support onshore oil development on the coastal plain.**

**On the coastal plain, the area we're talking about exploring, there's a group of 270 natives that still live there. They've got to be the toughest people in the world to survive in that kind of environment. And unlike some of us who talk about the environment and say we like it because the view's great or we like clean air or clean water, their lives literally depend on it. They hunt the animals, the caribou and they spear fish in the Arctic Ocean. That's how they survive. It is truly environmental dependency.**

**We asked them what we should do about ANWR. And their two-word answer was: drill it. Why? Because they know it's safe and will not damage the environment.**

- 9) The Words of Experts Yield Authority.** Partisan rhetoric has run its course. Fully 84% will listen to the advice of experts -- scientists, engineers and professionals -- when weighing a decision on environmental concerns, and specifically ANWR. Experts, not politicians, provide the necessary credibility.

## WORDS THAT WORK

**We should trust the experts, not the politicians. If the scientists, engineers and professional experts, who have spent their lives studying energy and environmental issues, conclude that oil exploration will not have any impact whatsoever on the surrounding environment, that should carry more weight than the politicians who would rather play politics than find a long-term solution.**

### **ANWR ARGUMENTS THAT WORK** (*Arguments that make people “more likely” to support exploring for oil in ANWR.*)

**67%** Most Eskimos who live in the area have expressed their support for development because of the jobs and economic benefits they would receive, as have the people of Alaska.

**67%** By using 21st century technology and advanced engineering that already exists, ANWR can be developed and the environment protected

**65%** ANWR represents a secure American supply of oil that could help reduce U.S. demand for foreign oil for 25 years or more.

**64%** We currently import more than half our oil from OPEC and other foreign sources. Oil from ANWR would reduce American dependence on OPEC and Middle Eastern oil.

**63%** ANWR has been determined by experts to be the single largest and most promising. area of unexplored oil reserves in North America.

**63%** ANWR development would create hundreds of thousands of American jobs affecting virtually every state.

**63%** In similar areas where oil exploration has occurred, caribou herds have remained healthy and have actually increased four-fold in number.

### **ANWR STATEMENTS THAT AMERICANS ALREADY AGREE WITH...**

**84%** We should trust the experts, not the politicians. If the scientists, engineers and professional experts conclude that oil exploration will not have any impact on the environment, that should carry more weight than the politicians who would rather play politics than find a long-term solution.

**84%** America needs American oil. We need to develop our energy resources right here in America and not depend on foreign and Middle Eastern oil for our economic security.



**82%** Reducing our dependence on foreign oil must be a top priority for the President and Congress.

**71%** 21st Century Technology and advanced engineering now exists that allows us to explore for oil and natural gas with minimal impact on the surrounding environment.

**ANWR: SECURING AMERICA'S ENERGY FUTURE**  
**(a 15-minute speech that America wants to hear)**

*Have you checked your electricity bill lately? Sticker shock doesn't begin to describe what has happened to electricity prices. Remember how high gasoline prices were just a few months ago? Can we afford to have those high prices return?*

*Skyrocketing prices. Rolling blackouts. It didn't have to happen. We could have planned for the future. We could have been better prepared. Let me be as blunt and candid as I can. We should have done more. We didn't, and now we're all paying -- at the pump and at the light switch.*

*Demand for energy in the United States is outstripping supply, and will continue to grow as our 21st century high-tech economy expands. Higher energy costs are squeezing family budgets, undermining farms and small businesses, jeopardizing jobs, and threatening the long-term health of our economy.*

*It's time we face facts: we have an energy crisis in America. Sure, we aren't suffering through gas shortages or having difficulty keeping our houses warm -- this crisis is far more subtle, but it just as harmful. And we need answers. Environmentalists will tell you we can conserve our way out...we can't. The oil companies will tell you we can drill our way out...we can't do that either. Both of these solutions are too one-sided and too often the only things we talk about in this town. It's time to bring some balance and some measured common-sense to our nation's great energy debate.*

*It's time we balance energy conservation efforts with moves to produce more energy in this country in a safe and environmentally friendly manner.*

*But while there may be a shortage of energy, there is no shortage of hot air when it comes to real action. There are a lot of loud voices, a lot of shouting and finger pointing about what to do, but no one has come forward with a truly comprehensive plan that will address our energy needs not just for the next 10 months but for the next 10 years.*

*But before I offer a solution, and there is one, let me just offer you a few key facts:*

*Fact. As a nation, we have become too dependent on foreign oil. Currently, 60 percent of the oil consumed in the United States is imported from foreign sources. American families and industry are held hostage to OPEC to meet their energy needs. This is a national security nightmare waiting to happen. OPEC has already slowed down production and tried to gouge us on prices. What happens if they decide to limit sales further? We have barely 45 days worth of oil in our Strategic Petroleum Reserve. Imagine what would happen if that reserve runs out.*

*We need less dependence on foreign fuel and more attention to developing our own secure, domestic energy supply. We need more American oil, more American gas, and more use of American clean-coal technology. This is the only way to guarantee an uninterrupted supply of energy when we need it.*

*Fact: Electric demand alone has risen by 25 percent in the past eight years, while power*

*generation has increased a scant six percent. We have an economy that needs the electricity to power up the computers, the electronics, the things that make our day-to-day life easier and better, but we're not producing it.*

*Fact. Outdated rules have made oil exploration nearly impossible, and no major power plants have been built for a decade. I am absolutely committed to a clean, safe, healthy environment, and I will take a back seat to no one when it comes to promoting common sense environmental protections. But we have gone much too far in our regulations and we have begun to hurt the people we should be helping.*

*Fact. Technology now exists that allows us to explore for oil with absolutely no impact on the surrounding environment. What was inconceivable 20 years ago is commonplace today. We can dig in areas so safely and cleanly that surrounding communities won't even know there's a well in their neighborhood.*

*Fact. Unless we change current energy policies and practices, the problem will actually get worse. We will be paying more and more and getting less and less. We can't let the finger pointing distract us from what common sense tells us we need to do now.*

*But skyrocketing prices are not the only crises we face. American dependence on foreign oil threatens our national security. When more than half of our energy comes from foreign sources, particularly OPEC, that alone is a security risk. What happens if they decide to limit sales? We have barely 45 days worth of oil in our Strategic Petroleum Reserve. Imagine what would happen if that reserve runs out? Shouldn't we be better prepared?*

*This brings me to the issue of ANWR and the exploration for oil in Alaska. Environmental lobbyists claim that oil drilling in the ANWR will damage this beautiful, pristine land. Let me give you the facts.*

*Fact. Ninety-eight percent of the area is either designated as "wilderness" or classified as a "National Wildlife Refuge." Nothing will be touched in that 98 percent. In the remaining two percent, where the oil is, the Arctic winter lasts for nine months, and they don't see the sun at all for eight weeks. That's right Total darkness, 24-hours a day, for eight weeks. Windchills can reach minus 110 degrees. There are no majestic mountains or sweeping panoramas. It is nothing but ice and darkness.*

*Should exploration and development ever take place in the coastal plain of ANWR, it would take place in the frozen winter. If there is no oil, the equipment would be dismantled and when the thaw comes, there would be one small cap to show that any disturbance ever took place. The tundra would remain untouched. Like ice fishing on a frozen river, the icehouse structure would not damage the water below.*

*Using modern drilling techniques -- such as 3-D seismic imaging to locate oil and directional drilling to recover the oil from one, central spot -- means that only a very small area will actually be impacted by development.*

*We should trust the experts, not the politicians. If the independent experts, who have spent their lives studying energy and environmental issues, conclude that oil exploration*

*will not have any impact whatsoever on the surrounding environment, that should carry more weight than the politicians who would rather play politics than find a long-term solution.*

*And we should not only consider the potential benefit to our country, but to the Alaskan community as well. After all, it should be up to the people who actually live in a particular community, the people who must breathe the air and drink the water, to decide whether or not to accept energy exploration in their communities.*

*Consider that more than 75 percent of Alaskans favor exploration and production in ANWR. Or that the Inupiat Eskimos who live in and near ANWR strongly support onshore oil development on the coastal plain. And why not? The development of the oil reserves from ANWR could create as many as 736,000 new domestic U.S. jobs.*

*I am committed to the dependable, affordable and environmentally clean production of energy for America's future. I am committed to an energy policy that enhances national security. I know we can do it. We have the best scientists, the best engineers and the best technicians in the world. We will put them to work to develop a 21st century energy program that leads America toward energy self-sufficiency and is the envy of all other nations.*

*So let me lay out an energy plan that uses tomorrow's technology today and truly plans for the future. The principles of an energy solution are simple:*

*Because of short-term thinking and inaction, we need a national energy plan that is both comprehensive and long-term in outlook. There are no easy solutions or quick fixes.*

*Because we believe the priorities of more energy and a clean environment must co-exist, any plan must promote environmentally friendly, advanced technologies that increase energy supplies while also using energy more cleanly and efficiently.*

*Because we believe the government should not dictate private behavior, any plan must respect the right of Americans to live the lifestyle of their choice and enhance both the individual's and community's quality of life.*

*A problem that took a decade of neglect to develop will take a decade to solve. We must begin today, but in acting quickly, we must also act prudently. In rushing to put a band-aid on this problem of high prices, I am unwilling to neglect our environment or undermine our national security.*

*So let us agree that we do not need a political quick fix. We need a long-term, balanced common sense solution that will work not just tomorrow but next year and a decade from now.*

*So let's start working on this right now. The principles of energy reform are easy to put into action:*

*First, we all need to work harder to conserve energy starting today. Americans are the first to pitch in to help their neighbors as we've seen so stunningly during the most*

*recent tsunami. Even though our energy crisis is a man-made disaster, we should all show the same spirit now. When the temperatures heat up, ask yourself if you can do without air conditioning for an hour so that the elderly person down the street or your neighbor with the asthmatic child can use theirs. Besides, with prices where they are today, you will even save some money.*

*Second, we need to produce more home-grown oil and electricity right here in America, and we need to do it quickly. Our country grows the food that feeds the world. We write the software and manufacture the technology that fueled an information revolution across the globe. If we can do all this, surely we can produce our own oil and electricity.*

*And third, we don't have to weaken our environmental laws to get more plants built or oil drilled. There is a lot of unnecessary red tape in government that has nothing to do with environmental regulations. Let's streamline that process and get government out of the way of progress.*

*We've got a lot of work to do and a long road ahead. But there's no reason for us to put this off to another day. It's time for America to take its energy destiny back into its own hands. For too long we have outsourced our energy needs, effectively handing over our car keys and our wallets to unfriendly governments in the Middle East. It's a simple choice really...and it's something we should have done long ago.*

*America's energy depends on America's ingenuity.*

## **NUCLEAR ENERGY: THE ENERGY SOURCE OF THE FUTURE...TODAY**

Nuclear energy may be the largest source of emission-free electricity in the United States, it may be one of the most affordable sources, and it may be one of the most reliable. But the most important reason why Americans will support nuclear energy today is because “it will contribute to energy independence.”

As with all energy policy, discussions of nuclear energy should be set in the context of a post-9/11 world. But there is a broader context as well. Nuclear energy goes beyond today’s short-term problems created by dependence on foreign oil and represents part of a long-term solution for tomorrow. The best argument for nuclear energy is built from the following communications ladder:

### **WHY NUCLEAR ENERGY**

**The context:** Develop a comprehensive long-term solution for the future to make America more energy independent and energy efficient.

**The action:** Encourage diversity of energy sources, including emission-free sources of energy.

**The reality:** We cannot wait for the day when alternative sources of energy -- like solar and wind -- can meet our nation’s energy demands. We need to focus on clean, reliable and sustainable sources that are available today.

**A solution:** Nuclear energy is a clean, reliable and sustainable source of energy that should be an important part of any comprehensive energy policy.

**There are two important things to note.**

- 1) Since diversity is critical to our energy policy, then no single source of energy represents the entire solution. Nuclear energy represents “an important part “ of the solution but it is one component of a comprehensive energy policy. If you talk about it as the only solution, you will lose credibility with your audience.
- 2) You cannot talk about nuclear energy without discussing the safety and security of nuclear power and nuclear power plants. And you cannot credibly argue that nuclear plants are 100% safe and secure. Instead, you must talk about the fact that all energy sources have risks, and nuclear energy is no different. Highlight the industry’s 25+ year track record of safety, the measures it has taken to secure its operations and, most importantly, the significant benefits of nuclear energy. In that context, American’s will agree that, even if you cannot eliminate the risks of nuclear energy, it is a risk worth taking.

The good news about nuclear energy is that most Americans (56%) already support its expanded use as a way to increase the nation’s energy supply. And when educated about the issue, **nearly two out of three Americans (65%) support nuclear energy while just 18% say they strongly oppose it.**

More importantly, Americans are now ready to consider building the next generation of nuclear power plants. Sixty-one percent (61%) of Americans say they support building new nuclear plants near the sites of existing plants. **And six in ten (60%) say they will support new plants at new locations.**

Set in the proper context, and within appropriate limits, nuclear energy is not only an acceptable component of our energy strategy, it is one that Americans want promoted.

Here are the key areas to focus on.

**1) Self-sufficiency begins with diversity and DIVERSITY BRINGS SECURITY.** We have already discussed how Americans feel about dependence on foreign oil -- it is the foremost priority for our energy policy. And despite the differences between oil and nuclear energy and the needs they fulfill, increasing energy independence remains the number one reason to support expanded use of nuclear energy. It is more important than protecting the environment. It is more important than affordability. And it is more important than ensuring that supply meets demand.

If dependence on foreign oil is the problem, then energy diversity is the most important answer. By overwhelming majorities, Americans want America's energy policy to encourage new sources of energy and more options.

### **STATEMENTS THAT RESONATE**

**90% We need an energy policy that promotes diversity of energy sources -- including emissions-free sources like solar, wind and nuclear energy.**

**88% Our energy policy must include a broad mix of options -- from clean coal and natural gas to nuclear energy and hydro-electric power.**

Diversity is compelling: fully 79% of Americans believe that “**diversity of supply means security of supply.**” And as we already know, security of supply equates to American energy independence. If we focus on more sources of energy -- and more sources produced here at home -- then we will reduce the need for foreign oil.

### **THE BEST DIVERSITY ARGUMENT**

**We don't want to be dependent upon foreign sources of oil and we don't want to be dependent on any ONE source of power either. We need to have a broad mix of options -- from clean coal and natural gas**

to nuclear power and solar energy.

**More diversity of supply means more protection for consumers against price fluctuations and supply disruptions caused by natural disasters and other major events. More diversity of supply means more competition to provide the most efficient energy possible. More competition in supply will lead to more investment in advanced energy technologies whose goal is to provide more energy at a lower cost with less pollution.**

**And more diversity of supply also means more SECURITY of supply. Because diversity of energy sources is the only way to guarantee an uninterrupted supply of energy where and when we need it -- under any circumstance.**

### **MORE WORDS THAT WORK**

**We're forcing ourselves to be either dependent on fossil fuels and when we say that it almost means foreign fossil fuel -- or to go back to living in caves. We shouldn't do either. We should be considering every reasonable source of energy that's out there, and when we talk about the era of non-traditional sources of energy, nuclear has to be in the equation.**

- 2) Talk about the future.** Americans are tired of an energy policy that looks like a patchwork quilt of half-measures and partial solutions. And they are tired of constantly hearing that there is an energy crisis in America. Though they may never be willing to give up their own SUV, they expect their elected representatives to stop focusing on short-term problems and start looking at long-term solutions. They want to hear their legislators talk about the future -- about a comprehensive plan that address America's needs today and tomorrow.

### **WORDS THAT WORK**

**Nuclear power should be a major source of fuel in the future because it's reliable, it's clean, it's affordable, and because the technology is there. We especially should be taking advantage of those kinds of clean resources that are available and can provide us with the necessary energy to move forward.**



## WORDS THAT WORK

**When we talk about energy in general, we have to talk about renewable fuels, because we are on the cusp of new technologies that are going to make renewable fuels much more affordable and environmentally friendly while ultimately creating all kinds of new jobs that we can't even imagine here in the United States.**

We need an energy policy that allows us to continue to develop the energy sources that we have right now, but more importantly gives modest incentives for us to develop the technologies which will fuel this economy and the world's economy for the next hundred years

- 3) **Talk about the benefits of nuclear energy.** Despite significant support for nuclear energy, most Americans know little about it. Even those who live closest to nuclear plants generally know little about the use of nuclear energy in America. They may be able to name the closest plant, but few have a clear sense of the benefits of nuclear energy. These are the same people who are most afraid of the risks -- real or perceived. A key part of every discussion about nuclear energy must be to educate Americans about the benefits.

**There are four key benefits to nuclear energy that should be highlighted in every discussion:**

- \* **Nuclear energy is clean and efficient.**
- \* **Nuclear energy is affordable.**
- \* **Nuclear energy is reliable.**
- \* **And nuclear energy is made right here at home.**

## WORDS THAT WORK -- CLEAN AND EFFICIENT

**Nuclear energy is among the cleanest and most efficient sources of energy available today. Together with solar, wind and hydra-electric energy, it is one of only a few emission-free sources of energy. It produces no greenhouse gases or other emissions that harm our air.**

**What's more, advances in nuclear power technology are helping nuclear power plants to become EVEN MORE efficient at producing electricity as time goes on. In fact, since 1990, efficiency improvements at the nation's nuclear power plants have created the same amount of power as 26 additional power plants without a single new plant.**

## **WORDS THAT WORK -- AFFORDABILITY**

**Producing electricity with nuclear power is extremely inexpensive compared to other sources of energy. In 2003, the average production cost for nuclear energy was less than two cents per kilowatt-hour, while it was five and a half cents for oil and closer to six cents for gas. That's double and triple the price of nuclear energy, respectively. Even coal-fired energy production, traditionally the cheapest source, is slightly more expensive than nuclear energy production. And, lower production costs mean lower prices for consumers.**

## **WORDS THAT WORK -- RELIABILITY**

**We need fuels that are not at the mercy of events outside the country or the local weather. Consistent, sustainable and reliable sources of energy for our homes, for our businesses, and for our future. Because, when we flick the switch, we have a right to expect the light to go on.**

**Nuclear energy is one of the most reliable forms of energy available. And that's why nuclear power plants are already a key source of energy across the country.**

**Nuclear energy is so reliable that some states already rely on it for MOST of their energy needs. For example, Vermont gets 76 percent of their electricity from nuclear energy and New Hampshire and South Carolina both depend on it for more than half of theirs.**

## **WORDS THAT WORK -- INDEPENDENCE**

**Nuclear energy can help us achieve independence from foreign oil, because we don't have to depend on. Middle Eastern countries like Saudi Arabia, or organizations like OPEC, for the raw materials to generate nuclear power. With nuclear power, we can help to meet our energy needs for today, and for tomorrow, with energy created right here at home.**

## **MORE WORDS THAT WORK**

**We can put more electricity in the homes and in the businesses of America from a nuclear source than we ever can from an oil-producing source or from a water power-producing or from a gas-producing source or a coal-producing source. It's cleaner than any of those, it's safer than any of those, and it will last longer than any of**

**those. It's critically important that we debate this issue and that we allow the construction of additional nuclear plants for the future of our children and our grandchildren.**

- 4) Address the safety and security issue for nuclear energy head on.** Virtually all of the opposition to nuclear energy is based on fears about the safety and security of nuclear power plants, transportation of solidified nuclear waste, and the storage and disposal of that waste.

This cannot be overstated. While fifty-three percent (53%) of Americans feel that nuclear power plants are either “completely safe and secure” or “very safe and secure”, an overwhelming 87% of those people support the expanded use of nuclear energy. At the same time, more than half (56%) of those who do not think nuclear power plants are completely or very safe oppose expansion.

Setting the appropriate context for nuclear energy as described above is important to making the case. **But addressing the safety and security issue head-on is the only way to truly drive increased support. You cannot ignore or attempt to dismiss these fears if you want to generate increased support for nuclear energy.** You must acknowledge that there are risks and educate the public about the steps the government and the industry have taken to address those risks.

Here is how to approach the issue:

#### **TALKING ABOUT NUCLEAR ENERGY SAFETY AND SECURITY**

**Now, many people may agree that nuclear energy is efficient and affordable, but they were' about the risks of nuclear energy. The fact is, like every other source of energy, nuclear energy does have risks. And there is no way to ensure that there will never be an accident or a terrorist attack. But you can prepare for them. And you can build safeguards to help protect against them...or to contain them if they were to happen.**

#### **NUCLEAR ENERGY: SAFETY & SECURITY**

**That is why the industry and the federal government have created strict regulations to ensure the safety and security of our nuclear plants. Many of these safeguards existed before September 11th. Many more have been added since.**

**These steps and others help explain why there has never been an event at a nuclear power plant in the United States that has affected**

**the health of Americans. Not even Three Mile Island in 1979.**

**We will never be able to eliminate all of the risks of nuclear power. But when you think about the record of safety for the industry over the past 25 years and the benefits of nuclear power, it is a risk worth taking.**

- 5) Give specific examples of the safety and security measures in place.** This is critical. It is one thing to say that steps are being taken and quite another to explain exactly what those steps are. Opponents of nuclear power will cite their own examples of safety and security problems, so you must be armed with data that supports your argument. Here are the three best examples of nuclear industry safety and security.

### **THREE EXAMPLES OF WHY PLANTS ARE SAFE AND SECURE**

**First, strict government regulations require that redundant monitoring and failsafe measures are installed to automatically shut down a reactor if anything out of the ordinary is detected.**

**Second, according to a study by E.P.R.L, an independent, highly respected, Palo Alto, California research institute, the containment structures required of nuclear power plants are strong enough to protect the public even if a nuclear plant was hit by a Boeing 767 at the maximum plausible speed and at the most vulnerable spot.**

**And third, for every one ton of solidified nuclear waste that is transported from a nuclear plant, there are four tons of protective shielding made from multiple layers of steel, lead and other materials surrounding the fuel so the containers could withstand even a severe accident.**

#### **In addition:**

- Talk about the secure -- not solid, strong or robust -- nuclear facility building structure;
- Mention the strict regulations -- not protocols or rules -- governing nuclear power plants; and
- Emphasize safe and secure energy when addressing America's need for energy independence.

6) **We can't afford to wait for wind and solar.** Nuclear energy is not considered the cleanest energy source available -- solar and wind are. Nor is it considered the most reliable or affordable -- hydro-electric is. But what nuclear has that these power sources lack is the ability to help us meet the energy problems of today in the future. Everyone likely believes that someday, we will be able to cheaply power our homes and businesses with any one of these other alternative sources. But we cannot do it today. You must highlight this fact. It makes nuclear stand out as the only emission-free, efficient, affordable and reliable source of energy that is available TODAY.

Americans overwhelmingly understand this. **In fact 89% of Americans agree with the following statement:**

### **WORDS THAT WORK**

**We cannot keep our fingers crossed and wait for the day when solar and wind power are able to meet our nation's energy demands. We need to focus on clean, reliable and sustainable sources of energy that can help us right now - today.**



# APPENDIX: THE 14 WORDS NEVER TO USE

Sometimes it is not what you say that matters but what you don't say. Other times a single word or phrase can undermine or destroy the credibility of a paragraph or entire presentation. This memo was originally prepared exclusively for Congressional spouses because they are your eyes and ears, a one-person reality check and truth squad combined. However, by popular demand, I have included and expanded that document because effectively communicating requires you to STOP saying words and phrases that undermine your ability to educate the American people.

So from today forward, YOU are the language police. From today forward, these are the words never to say again.

## **1. Government - Washington**

**NEVER SAY: Government**

**INSTEAD SAY: Washington**

The fact is, most Americans appreciate their local government that picks up their trash, cleans their streets, and provides police and transportation services. Washington is the problem. Remind voters again and again about Washington spending, Washington waste, Washington taxation, Washington bureaucracy, Washington rules and Washington regulations. Then remind voters that if Washington created this mess, it is

Washington's responsibility to fix it. "If we expect to succeed we must look to ourselves and not to Washington to raise our kids, start our businesses and improve our day-to-day lives." If you must talk about government, use the context defined by President Bush: "Government should help people improve their lives) not try to run their lives.

## **2. Privatization/Private Accounts - Personalization/Personal Accounts**

**NEVER SAY: Privatization/Private Accounts**

**INSTEAD SAY: Personalization/Personal Accounts**

Many more Americans would "personalize" Social Security than "privatize" it. In fact, two-thirds of America want to personalize Social Security while only one-third would privatize it. Why? Personalizing Social Security suggests ownership and control over your retirement savings, while privatizing it suggests a profit motive and winners and losers, BANISH PRIVATIZATION FROM YOUR LEXICON.

### **3. Tax Reform - Tax Simplification**

**NEVER SAY: Tax Reform**

**INSTEAD SAY: Tax Simplification**

While a majority of Americans are generally in favor of tax reform, one-third of the population fears that they would end up paying more in taxes if the tax code was in fact reformed. However, almost all Americans believe they would personally benefit from a tax code that was simplified -- in terms of money they owe, time they spend and anxiety about the IRS. When more Americans fear the IRS than root-canal surgery, something should be done to simplify the tax code.

### **4. Inheritance/Estate Tax - The Death Tax**

**NEVER SAY: Inheritance/Estate Tax**

**INSTEAD SAY: The Death Tax**

While a sizeable 68% of America thinks the Inheritance/Estate Tax is unfair, fully 78% think that the Death Tax is unfair. And while a narrow majority would repeal the inheritance/estate tax, an overwhelming majority would repeal the death tax. If you want to kill the estate tax, call it a death tax.

### **5. A Global Economy/Globalization/Capitalism - Free Market Economy**

**NEVER SAY: Global Economy/Globalization/Capitalism**

**INSTEAD SAY: Free Market Economy**

More Americans are afraid of the principle of globalization than even privatization. The reason? Globalization represents something big, something distant and something foreign. It's the same reason why Americans like their local government but dislike Washington -- the closer you are, the more control you have. So instead of talking about the principles of globalization, instead emphasize "the value and benefits of a free market economy." Similarly, capitalism reminds people of harsh economic competition that yields losers as well as winners. Conversely, the free market economy provides opportunity to all and allows everyone to succeed.

### **6. Outsourcing - Taxation, Regulation, Litigation, Innovation, Education**

**NEVER SAY: Outsourcing**



**INSTEAD SAY: Taxation, Regulation, Litigation, Innovation, Education**

When you use the words of your oppositions you are basically accepting their definition and therefore their conclusion. We should NEVER use the word outsourcing because we will then be asked to defend or end the practice of allowing companies to ship American jobs overseas. Rather, we should talk about the “root cause” why any company would not want to hire “the best workers in the world.” And the answer: “over-taxation, over-regulation, too much litigation, and not enough innovation or quality education.” Because it rhymes, it will be remembered.

**7. Undocumented Workers - Illegal Aliens**

**NEVER SAY: Undocumented Workers**

**INSTEAD SAY: Illegal Aliens**

The Dems have adopted the phrase “undocumented worker” but you shouldn’t. Call them exactly what they are. In fact, instead of addressing “immigration reform,” which polarizes Americans, you should be talking about “border security” issues. Securing our borders and our people has universal support.

**8. Foreign Trade - International Trade**

**NEVER SAY: Foreign Trade**

**INSTEAD SAY: International Trade**

For many reasons unrelated to this issue, the word “foreign” conjures up negative images. Americans simply don’t like “foreign oil,” or “foreign products” or “foreign nationals.” International is a more positive concept than either foreign or global.

**9. Drilling for oil - Exploring for energy**

**NEVER SAY: Drilling for oil**

**INSTEAD SAY: Exploring for energy**

It’s the picture people paint in their minds, the difference between an old-fashioned oilrig that gushes up black goop vs. 21st Century technology and innovation that provides us the ability to heat our homes and drive our cars. When you talk about energy, use words like “responsible” and “balanced” and always address your concern for the environment.

## **10. Tort Reform - Lawsuit Abuse Reform**

**NEVER SAY: Tort Reform**

**INSTEAD SAY: Lawsuit Abuse Reform**

The term “tort” has very little meaning to the average American, and at best reminds one of a French pastry. “Lawsuit Abuse” is something most Americans understand and resent. If you really want to make your case, add the word “frivolous.”

## **11. Trial Lawyer - Personal Injury Lawyer**

**NEVER SAY: Trial Lawyer**

**INSTEAD SAY: Personal Injury Lawyer**

It is hard to distrust a trial lawyer because we see them portrayed so favorably on L.A. Law and Law & Order. But personal injury lawyers, also known as ambulance chasers, remind people of those annoying, harassing commercials we see at 1:00 am cajoling us to sue someone. If you want to get the frill bang for the buck, call them “predatory personal injury lawyers.”

## **12. Corporate Transparency - Corporate Accountability**

**NEVER SAY: Corporate Transparency**

**INSTEAD SAY: Corporate Accountability**

I constantly hear the need for “transparency” coming from members of the financial services industry as well as Members of Congress. But if you asked the American people, corporate accountability is a much higher priority. The fact is, a majority of Americans can’t even explain what transparency actually means. But everyone understands and demands accountability from all sectors of the economy ... and the government.

## **13. School Choice - Parental Choice/Equal Opportunity in Education**

**NEVER SAY: School Choice**

**INSTEAD SAY: Parental Choice/Equal Opportunity in Education**

Americans are still evenly split over whether they support “school choice” in America’s schools. But they are heavily in favor of “giving parents the right to choose

th schools that are right for their children,” and there is almost universal support for “equal opportunity in education.” So frame the issue right and you get the support you need.

#### **14. Healthcare “Choice” - “The Right to Choose”**

**NEVER SAY: Healthcare “Choice”**

**INSTEAD SAY: “The Right to Choose”**

This is an important nuance so often lost on political officials. Almost all Americans want “the right to choose the healthcare plan, hospital, doctor and prescription drug plan that is best for them,” but far fewer Americans actually want to make that choice. In fact the older you get, the less eager you are to have a wide range of choices. One reason why the prescription drug card earned only qualified public support was that it offered too many choices and therefore created too much confusion for too many senior citizens.