

Presidential Position Paper

Climate Change

“Someday, our children, and our children’s children, will look at us in the eye and they’ll ask us, did we do all that we could when we had the chance to deal with this problem and leave them a cleaner, safer, more stable world?” - President Barack Obama, June 25, 2013

The Obama administration is taking action to combat climate change. In June 2013, President Obama outlined the Climate Action Plan — the steps his Administration would take to cut carbon pollution, help prepare the United States for the impacts of climate change, and continue to lead international efforts to address global climate change. For the sake of our children and future generations, we must act now.

COP21

“The United States recognizes its role in creating climate change and its role in solving the issue. Here in Paris, let’s secure an agreement that builds in ambition, where progress paves the way for regularly updated targets. Recent economic growth in the United States has come despite a lack of growth in carbon emissions, proving that climate advancements need not come at the expense of the economy or individual livelihoods. That’s what we seek in these next two weeks -- not simply an agreement to roll back the pollution we put into the skies, but an agreement that helps us lift people from poverty without condemning the next generation to a planet that is beyond its capacity to repair.”

Cutting Carbon Pollution in America

“I refuse to condemn your generation and future generations to a planet that’s beyond fixing.” - President Barack Obama, June 25, 2013

The United States is leading global efforts to address the threat of climate change. Since 2005, the United States has reduced its total carbon pollution more than any other nation on Earth.

Wind power has tripled, and energy from the sun has increased tenfold. President Obama has taken a series of common-sense steps to curb carbon pollution and other greenhouse gases through initiatives that drive energy efficiency, promote clean energy, and put in place the first-ever carbon pollution standards for power plants.

The Path Toward a Clean Energy Economy

- Reducing Carbon Pollution from Power Plants
- Acceleration Clean Energy Leadership
 - Renewables on Public Lands
 - Expanding and modernizing the electric grid
 - Staying on the cutting edge of energy technology
- Building a 21st Century Clean Energy Infrastructure
- Cutting Energy Waste in Homes, Business, and Factories
- Reducing Other Greenhouse Gases
- Leading by Example in 'going green'
 - Federal Government
 - The U.S. Military

Preparing for the Impacts of Climate Change

Climate change is not a distant threat — we are already feeling its impacts across the country. The weather is getting more extreme, as droughts, wildfires, and floods are becoming more frequent and intense. Climate impacts have affected every region across the nation and inflicted large costs on the U.S. economy. That is why states, cities, tribes, and communities across America are taking steps to prepare for the impacts of climate change.

Building a More Climate-Resilient America

- Asses the Impacts of Climate Change
- Support and Learn from Local Leaders
- Make Climate-Resilient Investments
- Rebuild and Learn from Hurricane Sandy
- Promote Resilience in the Health Sector
- Procite Data and Tools to Support Climate Resilience
- Reduce Risk of Droughts and Wildfires

Leading International Efforts to Combat Global Climate Change

“What we need is an agreement that’s ambitious — because that’s what the scale of the challenge demands. We need an inclusive agreement — because every country has to play its part. And we need an agreement that’s flexible — because different nations have different needs.” - President Barack Obama, June 25, 2013

Just as no country is immune from the impacts of climate change, no country can meet this challenge alone. America continues to lead the international community in driving action to

reduce carbon pollution and prepare for climate impacts — and is helping to forge a truly global solution to this global challenge.

- Leading Public-Sector Financing Toward Cleaner Energy
- Bilateral Cooperation with Major Economies
- Expanding Clean Energy Use and Cutting Energy Waste
- Cutting Short-Lived Climate Pollutants
- Supporting Forest
- Promoting Free Trade in Environmental Goods
- Multilateral Engagement
- Mobilizing Climate Finance and Promoting Global Climate Resilience

Information taken from: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/energy/climate-change>

Reform & Fiscal Responsibility

“We have to set priorities. If we want a strong middle class, then our tax code must reflect our values.” - President Barack Obama

Deficit Reduction: Lower Discretionary Spending

- Reduce domestic and defense spending
- Impose long-term spending restraints
- Protect core investec from deep and economically damaging cuts
 - “In order to fundamentally rebuild our economy, we have to out-innovate, out-educate, and out-build the result of the the world.” - President Barack Obama
- Protect Pell Grants
- Protect low-income and middle-class families from shouldering the sole burden of deficit reduction
- Reform and build upon medicare and medicaid
- Reform mandatory spending

Paring Back Unnecessary Regulations

- Reduce regulatory costs
- Issue Smarter Regulations

Health Care Reform

- Extend coverage to 34 million Americans
- Address Insurance industry abuses

- Bending the growth curve of health care spending
- The Partnership for Patients (improve service for patients)
- Invest in health care information technology
- Curbing waste, fraud, and abuse in Medicare, Medicaid, and other health care programs

Tax Reform

- Tax cuts for the middle class
 - The American Opportunity Tax Credit (AOTC) now provides college students with up to \$10,000 of tuition tax credits over four years.
 - Improvements to the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC), enacted in 2009 and extended twice more under President Obama, are helping 16 million working families make ends meet.
 - Bipartisan legislation permanently lowered income tax rates for 98 percent of Americans, while asking the wealthiest households to pay more to help reduce the deficit. (The American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012)
- Tax Cuts for small businesses
 - Expanded and permanent small business expensing to encourage and reward investment. Small businesses can currently expense up to \$500,000 of investment, but only temporarily. The President would permanently increase the limit to \$1 million, and index it for inflation going forward.
 - Dramatically simplified accounting for small businesses to reduce taxpayer burden. As part of business tax reform, the President's plan would let businesses with gross receipts of less than \$25 million — 99.6% of all businesses — dispense with most complicated accounting rules, which can be especially complex and costly for small businesses.
 - Further simplifications and tax relief, for example by eliminating capital gains taxes on small business stock; and allowing small businesses to expense up to \$20,000 of start-up costs.
- A new \$500 second earner credit to help cover the additional costs faced by families in which both spouses work — benefiting 24 million couples.
- A simplified and dramatically expanded Child Care Tax Credit that would give a tax cut of up to \$3,000 per child for middle-class families with young children. The proposal will complement major new investments in the President's Budget to improve child care quality, access, and affordability.
- Simplified, consolidated, and expanded education tax benefits, including an expanded American Opportunity Tax Credit that would provide more students up to \$2,500 each year over five years (for a total of \$12,500) as they work toward a college degree.
- Retirement savings opportunities for 30 million more workers. The President's retirement tax reform plan gives 30 million additional workers the opportunity to easily save for retirement through their employer.

- An expanded Earned Income Tax Credit for workers without children and permanent extension of the EITC and Child Tax Credit improvements.
- Close loopholes to stop rewarding companies for keeping profits abroad, while rewarding those that invest in America.
- Cut inefficient and unfair tax breaks
- Cut the deficit (see above)
- Increase job creation and growth in the United States
- Observe the Buffet Rule (No household making over \$1 million annually should pay a smaller share of their total income in taxes than middle-class families.)

Cutting Waste of Resources

- Consolidate duplicate and overlapping programs
- Reduce administrative overhead
- Dispose of unneeded federal real estate
- Reduce the number of federal data centers
- Curbing spending on contracts
- Increase business competition and reducing “no-bid” contracts to save taxpayers money
- Leverage purchasing power (buy foreign product in bulk)
- Transform government record keeping to digital to reduce waste
- Reduce improper payments to individuals, organizations, and contractors
- Recapture improper payments
- Establish a “Do Not Pay” list
- Crackdown on tax delinquent contractors
- Pursue those who had Medicare
- Renew IT projects at highest risk for failure
- Move IT Applications to the Cloud
- Make government information available (data.gov, USASpending.gov)
- Bring Transparency to IT Spending
- Move government services online

Information taken from: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/economy/reform> and <https://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/taxes>

Defense Reform

“As we look beyond the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan -- and the end of long-term nation-building with large military footprints -- we’ll be able to ensure our security with smaller conventional ground forces. We’ll continue to get rid of outdated Cold War-era systems so that we can invest in the capabilities that we need for the future, including intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, counterterrorism, countering weapons of mass destruction and the ability to operate in environments where adversaries try to deny us access.

So, yes, our military will be leaner, but the world must know the United States is going to maintain our military superiority with armed forces that are agile, flexible and ready for the full range of contingencies and threats.

We're also going to keep faith with those who serve, by making sure our troops have the equipment and capabilities they need to succeed, and by prioritizing efforts that focus on wounded warriors, mental health and the well-being of our military families. And as our newest veterans rejoin civilian life, we'll keep working to give our veterans the care, the benefits and job opportunities that they deserve and that they have earned.

I think it's important for all Americans to remember, over the past 10 years, since 9/11, our defense budget grew at an extraordinary pace. Over the next 10 years, the growth in the defense budget will slow, but the fact of the matter is this: It will still grow, because we have global responsibilities that demand our leadership. In fact, the defense budget will still be larger than it was toward the end of the Bush administration. And I firmly believe, and I think the American people understand, that we can keep our military strong and our nation secure with a defense budget that continues to be larger than roughly the next 10 countries combined."

- President Barack Obama, January 05, 2012

Information taken from: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2012/01/05/remarks-president-defense-strategic-review>