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Press Release - Experts Praise Barack Obama's Plan to Reclaim the American Dream

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"Senator Obama has a deep understanding of what has gone wrong for working families in America. More importantly, he has fresh new ideas for how to put these families back on track and how to make government policies work for them." [Elizabeth Warren, Leo Gottlieb Professor of Law, Harvard Law School; Author, The Two-Income Trap: Why Middle Class Mothers and Fathers are Going Broke]

"Senator Obama is in touch with the fundamental changes needed to make the American dream a reality, particularly for working class Americans. He understands the realities that most people face in juggling work and family, and he has developed supportive programs that are necessary to help people actually make ends meet. Most importantly, I trust that he will be able to turn his proposals into law to improve economic conditions for families nationwide." [Melissa Joseph, Women's Issues Advocate]

"The Agenda to Reclaim the American Dream shows that Barack Obama understands the pressures facing working families and that he has a bold but achievable vision to address them. Working women in particular -- especially those juggling a job and family responsibilities -- will welcome this plan to help with education, housing and health cost; paid sick and family leave; and retirement security. Senator Obama has not only put forth a remarkable blueprint for change, I am confident he has the consensus-building skills to get it enacted." [Jan Schakowsky, Member of Congress, D-IL]

"The Senator has highlighted the very real challenges that millions of middle class families confront every day. Real earnings for most Americans are stagnant, home foreclosures are soaring, millions are without health insurance, rising tuition is placing a college education for our children beyond many families' reach and retirement security has become elusive. The proposals in this plan represent balanced and sensible steps toward restoring broadly shared prosperity for American workers and their families" [Edward Montgomery, Dean, University of Maryland; former Acting Deputy Secretary and Deputy Secretary of United States Department of Labor (1999-2001); former Chief Economist, Department of Labor (1997-1998)]

"Many American workers, even those with good jobs, are saving little or nothing for retirement. Previous attempts by the Federal Government to encourage savings have led to tax incentives such as IRAs and 401(k)s, which have not been very successful at reaching the working class. For financial incentives to be effective they must be accompanied by structural

changes that make it easier for the working poor to get started saving and simple to keep it up. By far the most effective way to save is to have a portion of every paycheck automatically deposited into a retirement savings plan. A simple way to achieve this is to automatically enroll workers into a savings plan from which they are free to opt out. Automatic enrollment dramatically increases participation rates, especially for lower income workers. The Obama plan utilizes this strategy, and would make the benefits of automatic enrollment available to nearly all American workers. The plan is smart and cost effective."[Richard Thaler, Professor of Behavioral Science and Economics, University of Chicago Graduate School of Business; Co-Author, Nudge: The Gentle Power of Choice Architecture]

"Barack Obama's American Dream agenda reminds us that terrorism isn't the only threat to America's working families. Health care crises, foreclosures, bankruptcy, unaffordable college tuitions, and the competing demands of work and family pose significant risks to millions of workers' economic security. The Obama plan will help to give every working family an opportunity to increase his or her family's standard of living and, at a minimum, secure its place in the middle class. This is a plan that will make American workers more productive and provide working families the help they sorely need." [Seth Harris, Professor and Director, Labor & Employment Law Programs, New York Law School; former Counselor and Senior Advisor to the Secretary of Labor and former Acting Assistant Secretary for Policy and Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy, U.S. Department of Labor (1993-2000)]

"Barack Obama has put forth a plan that boldly addresses the economic insecurity that many Americans are experiencing. Specifically, it builds on our progressive tax code to provide incentives & financial support consistent with the aspirations that Americans hold. Further, it ensures that consumers have both access & the information they need to make smart financial choices about credit & don't have the rug pulled out from underneath them by predatory financial firms." [David Marzhal, Executive Director, Center for Economic Progress]

"Because they are complex and poorly targeted, existing tax subsidies for higher education and retirement saving are failing to provide middle class families with the support they need. Sen. Obama's bold proposal to simplify the financial aid application process and make education tax credits fully refundable will enable millions of additional youth to enroll in college and gain the skills that will lead to higher wage jobs. Obama's proposals for automatic workplace pensions and an expanded Saver's Credit will help tens of millions of middle class families begin to accumulate retirement wealth. For too long Democrats have been content to propose narrowly targeted tax credits that sound good in sound bites, but fall short of the comprehensive policy solutions that American families need. These two Obama proposals are the real deal." [Jeffrey Liebman, Malcolm Wiener Professor of Public Policy, Harvard University; Former Special Assistant to the President for Economic Policy, White House National Economic Council (1998-1999)]

"Barack Obama's American Dream agenda delivers on America's promise to workers that they shouldn't have to choose between economic security and caring for their children, parents, and other loved ones. By expanding the federal Family and Medical Leave Act and partnering with every state to create paid leave systems, the Obama plan will make workplace flexibility a reality for millions of workers for whom it is currently out of reach. And by confronting discrimination against caregivers, Barack Obama shows that he stands with working parents - particularly working women. This is a plan that will make American workers more productive and provide working families the help they sorely need." [Nancy Kreiter, former Research Director, Women Employed]

"As the founder of an after-school program, I applaud Senator Obama's plan to dramatically increase funding for such programs. Equally important are his bold college access and affordability proposals, which will ensure that hundreds of thousands of our kids can enjoy the intellectual and economic benefits of a college education. As the first in my family to attend college, I know what a difference that can make in a young person's life." [Norm Eisen, Founder, Kids Computer Workshop; Partner, Zuckerman Spaeder LLP]

"Barack Obama understands that as a nation, we have to invest in the resources to support women in the workforce and their families. It is unacceptable to Barack Obama that a person might have to risk their job in order to care for a sick family member or a new baby. Barack Obama understands that a fundamental commitment to balancing work and family is essential to the healthy future of our country's workforce and economy." [Judy Gold, Partner, Perkins Coie, LLP]