

America Revitalized

Our 20-Point Action Plan

By John Hagelin and Nat Goldhaber

Ending Special Interest Control: We support crucial democratic reforms to restore government accountability to the people, including elimination of PACs and soft money, public sponsorship of election campaigns, and prohibiting lobbying by former public servants.

Reforming Health Care: We spend more on health care than any other nation. Yet Americans endure some of the poorest health of any developed nation. This is because we don't have a health care system—we have a disease control system, bought and paid for by special interests. Over 70% of disease is preventable, yet we spend less than 1% on prevention. We support cost-effective, prevention-oriented health care, proven to prevent disease and save money in the best possible way—by keeping people healthy. These significant cost savings will help finance medical coverage for the 46 million Americans who are currently uninsured. We also support a Medicare prescription drug benefit, as well as Medicare vouchers to foster competition among health care providers, ensuring lower costs and higher-quality service.

Strengthening Education: Our educational outcomes have fallen to all-time lows in comparison with other nations. We will showcase and promote the most effective educational innovations proven to boost educational outcomes, taken from America's most successful public and private schools. We believe the teaching of our children should be an honored profession with commensurate compensation. We would raise teacher salaries by \$10,000 per year, through a program of block grants to the states. This would foster greater competition for teaching positions, thereby promoting higher standards. We support school vouchers to expand school choice and to provide sound alternatives for children trapped in schools that are chronic underperformers. And we support education, job training, and apprenticeship programs to prepare all Americans to compete in today's fast-paced economy, fully harnessing our most precious national resource—the unlimited intelligence and creativity of our 270 million citizens.

Cutting Taxes: We will cut taxes responsibly—while protecting Social Security and Medicare and paying down the national debt—through reduction of government waste and fraud, and through cost-effective solutions to costly social problems, such as spiraling health costs, crime, and our energy dependence on foreign oil.

Overhauling the Tax Code: We will halt the endless manipulation of the tax code by Congress for their favorite corporate sponsors (“corporate welfare”) by implementing a low flat tax. Our plan includes a generous floor of \$34,000 (for a family of four) below which Americans would pay no income tax. Above the \$34,000 floor, the tax rate begins at 18% in 2001 and drops to 14% by 2006 as our cost-effective solutions begin to bear fruit. With this vastly simplified system, we can put an end to the IRS.

Promoting Fair Trade: We support balanced, tailored, nation-to-nation trade policies that promote the economic welfare of all Americans, provide markets for our domestic small businesses, safeguard American employment and labor standards, protect human rights, and ensure that imported goods meet environmental and product safety standards.

Foreign Policy: Our meddlesome and invasive foreign policy has sown the seeds of enmity throughout the world. Most of our foreign aid is military aid. We are the world's leading arms peddler, providing weapons to both sides of most international conflicts. Our troops are often forced to confront our own weapons on the battlefield. America's foreign policy has fostered ill will throughout the world and has made us the principal target of terrorism on Earth. We will create an immediate shift in U.S. foreign policy away from intervention and military aid towards a more life-supporting policy, offering technical assistance in crucial areas such as business, entrepreneurship, education, sustainable agriculture, and environmental technologies. This will create a more prosperous, harmonious, and secure family of nations.

Strengthening National Defense: Scarce military resources are squandered on pork-barrel weapons like the \$2 billion B2 bomber and the \$60 billion flawed missile defense shield—programs that the Pentagon does not even want. We would maintain our weapons superiority, while focusing more resources on military personnel, training, readiness, and retention—creating a more flexible force to effectively combat the threat of terrorism and meet our nation's security needs in the post-Cold War world. Recognizing our recent failures to prevent conflict and promote lasting peace through military

intervention alone, we would support a “prevention wing” in the military—a true peacekeeping force trained to diffuse regional tensions among warring factions, using proven nonviolent methods of conflict resolution.

Creating Energy Self-Sufficiency: We will end our costly addiction to foreign oil—cutting our trade deficit in half—and protect our environment through energy conservation and the development of renewable, safe, nonpolluting energy resources such as wind and solar—saving hundreds of billions of dollars in health and environmental costs.

Protecting the Environment: We will lead the effort to clean up America's polluted air, rivers, wetlands, and oceans by tackling industrial pollution at its source. We will also work to prevent the destruction of the earth's forests, the decimation of the diversity of species, and the potential damage from ozone depletion and the greenhouse effect, creating new jobs and industries in energy conservation and renewable energy sources.

Safeguarding Our Food Supply: We will support sustainable agricultural practices proven to produce high-quality, healthy food without hazardous chemical fertilizers and pesticides. We will mandate the labeling and safety testing of genetically engineered foods, and will propose a moratorium on the release of these experimental life forms into the environment until they are proven safe.

Protecting Family Farmers: We will help restore the vitality of family farms and rural communities 1) by enabling farmers and farm communities to capture a larger share of profits through local, value-added packaging and processing plants, and 2) by promoting sustainable agricultural methods that reduce health risks to the farmer from chemical pesticides and preserve the soil for future generations.

Reducing Crime: We support effective crime prevention programs, including 1) drug and alcohol rehabilitation, 2) increased community policing, and 3) targeting those who are at highest risk of committing future crimes—the current inmate population—with effective criminal rehabilitation, education, vocation, and drug prevention programs. We will cut our burgeoning prison population in half by decriminalizing nonviolent drug offenses, directing such offenders to drug education, prevention, and rehabilitation programs. We would impose a moratorium on the death penalty unless and until our criminal justice system demonstrates its ability to impose this harshest of all sentences justly and fairly.

Revitalizing Our Inner Cities: We will use federally guaranteed loans and targeted capital-gains tax breaks to stimulate capital investment for start-up industries in urban “enterprise zones.” We will rebuild urban infrastructure and promote community planning that includes ample parks and green spaces and the construction of homes and buildings that are human friendly, nontoxic, and in harmony with natural law.

Equal Opportunity for All: We will take action where necessary to ensure the constitutional rights of all Americans. However, more than that, we will support effective education that expands comprehension and overcomes intolerance, prejudice, and bigotry born of narrow-mindedness.

Balanced Immigration: We will disincentivize illegal immigration by enforcing our immigration laws and by working to improve economic conditions in neighboring countries.

Gun Control: We uphold the Second Amendment. We will vigorously enforce existing gun control laws, as well as support child safety locks, waiting periods, and background checks to help prevent guns from falling into the hands of children and convicted felons.

Abortion: We believe we should leave abortion decisions in the hands of women, families, and doctors where such decisions belong—not the government. We are committed to substantially reducing the number of abortions through effective education, prevention, and adoption programs.

Ending Partisan Politics: We will bring together the best ideas, programs, and leaders from all political parties and the private sector to serve the interests of all Americans.

Breaking the Two-Party Stranglehold: We will break the two-party death grip on our political process by opening up the presidential and other debates to all legally qualified candidates, providing equal access to our publicly owned airwaves, and reforming discriminatory ballot access laws.

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