

# **AMERICA 1st**

## ***SAM'S PLAN FOR OUR FUTURE***

I have spent the first half of 2007 traveling around the district on Sam's Listening Tour searching for your ideas, dreams, and stories. With that information, I have formulated America 1<sup>st</sup>, a plan of action to help the Sixth District and America as a whole. Citizens of the Sixth District, these are your ideas in motion...

### **Summary**

- **Economic Fairness & Government Corruption**
  - End Tax Loopholes and Poor Subsidies
  - Campaign Finance Reform
  - Clean-Up Government Waste
  - Limit Executive Compensation and Extreme Inequality
  - Right To Organize-*Employee Free Choice Act*
- **Healthcare**
  - National Health Insurance Act
  - Enact H.R. 676
  - Help Insure The Nearly 47 Million Uninsured Americans
- **Education**
  - Increased Financial Aid
  - Skills/Vocational Training
  - Pre-K Education
  - Expanding Head Start
  - Increase Funding For GI Bill
- **Small Business & Job Creation**
  - End Poor Tax Breaks For Corporations
  - Healthcare Tax Breaks For Small Businesses
  - Purchasing Cooperatives
  - Invest In Alternative Energies
- **Immigration & Border Security**
  - Secure Borders
  - Secure Ports
- **Local Initiatives On Healthcare & Small Business**
  - FutureCare-mobile clinics for children
  - FutureJobs-assistance for small businesses

## Expanded

### **ECONOMIC FAIRNESS & GOVERNMENT CORRUPTION**

Today, candidates are ever more reliant on fundraising – firstly, to prove viability; and secondly, to be able to spread the message of their campaign. Most donations come from the wealthier tiers of society, and these donors tend to be leaders in most major industries. A correlation exists between government corruption and economic inequalities, because many wealthier individuals of society that are involved in “big business,” have been able to infiltrate our legislative branch through fundraising dollars. Those in the the more powerful business industries and firms have been able to leverage their donations to legislators that show favoritism to their cause. That favoritism in legislation, leads to increased wealth and increased leverage. The cycle perpetuates at an alarming rate until this point in history where it is almost an anomaly to experience a “clean” politician. The presidential candidates of 2008 are expected to have to raise twice as much as those in 2004 to be truly competitive.

With more leverage for the very wealthy, the bottom and middle of America are left without an advocate for their causes: savings for retirement, avoid bankruptcy from medical bills, afford higher education for their children, keep up with energy prices, fair working conditions and livable wages, high property taxes, and worries of the environment we will leave to our children. I believe that my fellow citizens are ready for a change in government, a change that is visionary and sees beyond the next 4 years, to the next 40. This level of change on a systemic level will not happen overnight, or even in one election cycle. We must evolve out of this buddy system of government and not compromise our values, even when it seems all hope is lost.

#### **To Do:**

***End Tax Loopholes and Poor Subsidies.*** I pledge as Congressman of the Sixth District to crackdown on pork barrel spending and close corporate tax loopholes.

- We know about off shore tax shelters, let us put an end to them.
- The IRS states that our country loses about \$290 in the tax gap or about 14% of the total U.S. Budget. This is the amount of taxes due to the IRS that is not paid for a variety of reasons. I would push to close this gap.
- End tax subsidies for oil companies.

***Campaign Finance Reform.*** I propose that we end our endless cycle of fundraising and focus on big donors and special interests. Campaign financing is the single most devastating factor in politics today because this leaves the politicians' allegiance in the hands of those with the heavy donations. I support the Clean Money, Clean Elections Act of 2007. As indicated by the bill set forth by Rep. Raúl M. Grijalva (D-AZ) and Rep. John F. Tierney (D-MA), this legislation would:

1. Eliminate the perceived and real conflicts of interest caused by the financing of campaigns by private interests;
2. Limit campaign spending by requiring that candidates who choose to participate in the Clean Money, Clean Elections system spend no more than the fixed amount of Clean Money, Clean Elections funding they receive;
3. Allow qualified individuals to run for office regardless of their economic status or access to large contributors;
4. Free candidates and elected officials from the burden of continuous fundraising; and
5. Shorten the effective length of campaigns (when the public is bombarded with broadcast ads and mass mailings) by defining the point at which candidates receive Clean Money, Clean Elections funding to pay for campaign expenditures.

***Clean-Up Government Waste.*** Government waste is nothing short of taking advantage of tax payer dollars to help government contractors that are friends of legislators. Our federal government procurement system is hardly the free market at work; only 7% of all government contracts face competition.

- I propose that all government contracts over \$100,000 be put online for competitive bidding. With increased competition, this will decrease the total cost to tax payers. This will also allow for small businesses to compete more, which is of great importance since 75% of all net new jobs come from small business.

With the collapse of anti-trust laws, most government contractors are not required to disclose their costing on products or services. If most government contracts are not competitive, and the government does not know costing on products or services, then the federal government does not know if it is receiving a “fair” deal. This is a waste of tax payer dollars.

***Limit Executive Compensation and Extreme Inequality.*** A son makes 12% less income than his father did in the 1970s according to the PEW Research Center.

- I would push an increase in the Earned Income Tax Credit to help working families.
- I will push for “Say-On-Pay” initiatives, which allows for a non-binding vote from shareholders as to the maximum compensation for executives. This will enable shareholders to have an active voice in the structure of compensation for their executives and help to shift the paradigm by asking “If the executive needs such a high compensation, does he/she really care about the welfare of the firm?”
- I support legislation which states that compensation for executives over 25 times that of the average worker, cannot be written-off as a business expense or be tax-deductible. These deductions effectively shift the tax burden onto average Americans. Companies would still be able to pay executives as much as they wanted to, but tax-payers would no longer support bloated compensation.

***Right to Organize.*** I support the **Employee Free Choice Act (H.R. 800, S. 1041)** which enables working people to bargain for better wages, benefits and working conditions.

## **HEALTHCARE**

I am a supporter of **The “United States National Health Insurance Act,” H.R. 676**  
Introduced by Rep. John Conyers:

### **Brief Summary of Legislation:**

The **United States National Health Insurance Act** establishes a unique American national universal health insurance program. The bill would create a publicly financed, privately delivered health care system that uses the already existing Medicare program by expanding and improving it to all U.S. residents, and all residents living in U.S. territories. The goal of the legislation is to ensure that all Americans will have access, guaranteed by law, to the highest quality and most cost effective health care services regardless of their employment, income, or health care status. With over **45-75 million** uninsured Americans, and another **50 million** who are under- insured, the time has come to change our inefficient and costly fragmented non- health care system.

For more information about H.R. 676 which is co-sponsored by 70 Congressman, please visit:

I will start a local organization that focuses on healthcare for children 13 and under with part of my salary that I have pledged. I call this organization **FutureCare**, which is under Local Initiatives.

## **EDUCATION**

Education is more than just another expense item on the government's operating budget, education is our future. I tried to think of how I can express that in my own unique way, but it has all been said before. So I borrowed a quote that I enjoy from Henry Adams in the 19<sup>th</sup> century which states "The chief wonder of education is that it does not ruin everybody concerned in it, teachers and taught," This quote stresses to us as human beings that we will NEVER go wrong when furthering educational initiatives. We are only led astray when we forget that we are life-long students..

Remembering that we are life-long students, I turn my focus on two areas in education. Pre-K education to better prepare our students going into primary schools, and post-secondary education. Today with the rising costs of a college education, we should offer increased financial assistance and viable alternatives such as an increased emphasis on skills and vocational training, not just for graduating high school seniors, but for adults in a career transition.

Nation-wide, tuition for higher education has increased by about 40% over the past five years. Even in our region, tuition at Virginia Tech has doubled from \$3,664 in 2001 to \$7,397 in 2007.

### **To Do:**

- ***Increased Financial Aid***-I would increase financial assistance for higher education, expanding on and creating new work/study programs that encourage students to earn their assistance.
- ***Skills/Vocational Training***-I would expand programs and increase financial assistance for skills and vocational training that is accessible to high school graduates and to adults in a career transition. I would create a work/study apprenticeship program that offers a tax deduction for small businesses that hired unskilled students/workers and trained them.
- ***Pre-K Education***-I would push for matching funds from the federal government for states that implemented an expansion of a primary school system to include four year olds.
- ***Expanding Head Start***-I would increase the income threshold for Head Start participants.
- ***Increase Funding For GI Bill***-I would increase the amount of financial aid available in the GI bill to keep up with rising tuition costs to help those in our military.

## **SMALL BUSINESS & JOB CREATION**

***Small Business Development.*** The small business administration generally defines many small businesses as a firm with 500 or fewer employees. The Small Business Majority states that 75% of all net new jobs come from small business. I believe our country should do our part to allow small businesses to compete in a global marketplace. I propose these initiatives to help small businesses succeed:

- ***End Poor Tax Breaks For Corporations***-I would stop huge tax breaks that go solely to large corporations through ill-advised subsidies and tax gaps.
- ***Small Business Tax Breaks For Healthcare***-I would provide tax breaks to small businesses that provide healthcare to their employees
- ***Purchasing Cooperatives***-I would push for purchasing cooperatives between small businesses

with the same purchasing needs

I also have planned to start an organization here in the Sixth District of Virginia that encourages small business development and growth. I have outlined this program called FutureJobs under the local initiatives below.

***Invest In Alternative Energy.*** I believe that we should invest in alternative energy sources, not only to decrease our dependence on foreign oil, but to *decrease energy costs* for our small businesses and small farmers. Some alternative energies we should investigate over the next decade are:

- Solar Energy
- Ethanol Fuels
- Investment in TIDAL POWER PLANTS
- Woodchip Heating
- Hydrogen Fuel Cells

## **IMMIGRATION & BORDER SECURITY**

Fix a leak, then you clean up. I believe we should secure our borders and ports first, before we begin the discussion on how to deal with the millions of illegal immigrants. Border and port security should not only begin our conversation about immigration, but this an essential starting point for the debate on national security.

## **LOCAL INITIATIVES ON HEALTHCARE & SMALL BUSINESS**

I have promised to pledge half of my salary as Congressman to two different *local* initiatives in affordable & accessible healthcare for children in our district, and a small business development task force.

**Mobile Clinics:** **FutureCare** will grow to be a series of mobile clinics that venture around the district giving medical check-ups and basic care to all children under the age of 13. We will use the funding to help create this initiative and we will look for community support from volunteer doctors and nurses, as well as basic medical equipment. It is simple...our children are our future, and we should have basic care available to all children in our district.

**Small Business Task Force:** **FutureJobs** is an organization committed to help small businesses grow with help for all aspects of the business. Assistance will be provided in the areas of marketing, hiring, bookkeeping, business plan development, and obtaining financing. Small business is the backbone of our district and we will be able to help those businesses that need assistance the most.

### **How To Pay For These Initiatives?**

- Closing the Net Tax Gap of \$290 billion, cost after compliance, which equates to 14% of total taxes
- Eliminating the tax breaks for oil companies
- Decrease Pork Barrel Spending
- Increased government efficiency through competitive bidding on federal contracts