

Why I'm supporting Obama

The former US president Bill Clinton said on Sunday 3 February, *"All my life I wanted to vote for an African-American president and all my life I wanted to vote a woman president."* And I agree. If I was an American, I would be very much split on two excellent presidential candidates.

Whilst visiting California late last year, my friend Gaylynn Miller took me to the opening of Senator Barack Obama's office in Oakland, and down the very same street a few hours later, we watched Senator Hilary Clinton's rally. It was an unbelievable experience.

Hilary Clinton is a real powerhouse. The former first lady has a campaigning machine that has the support of major institutions and the hierarchy of the Democratic Party. At the rally, she spoke about ending the war in Iraq, restoring America's positioning in the world, providing lower taxes, providing quality and affordable healthcare, making colleges more accessible, being a champion for women, and even strengthening trade unions.

Very good policies that I would broadly agree with. But why am I supporting Barack Obama you might ask. Besides, he is also a democrat pledging similar policies as Hilary Clinton.

Well, actually on the surface, you would be quite right. Apart from the obvious difference... he's African-American, was born to a Kenyan father who was a Muslim and so on, there is very little difference between them.

However, if you were to unpick the issues on what Obama stands for and how he delivers it, you'll begin to understand why I, like many others, believe he is the right person to lead America and why he will be the right person to improve Americas much damaged position in the world.

“ I'm asking you to believe. Not just in my ability to bring about change in Washington... I'm asking you to believe in yours. ”

Senator Barack Obama

The young senator from Illinois, Barack Hussein Obama, has captivated America and the world. He is intellectual, charismatic, charming and very engaging. Where many have failed, he has succeeded in energising and creating excitement amongst the Democratic Party members, the independents and the once alienated young voters. Record numbers are voting, and it's only the primaries and caucuses.

Whilst his speeches are about hope and positive aspirations, his debates and media insertions are about policies that will create, enhance and sustain wealth and prosperity to all Americans from all sections of society.

I will briefly outline 5...

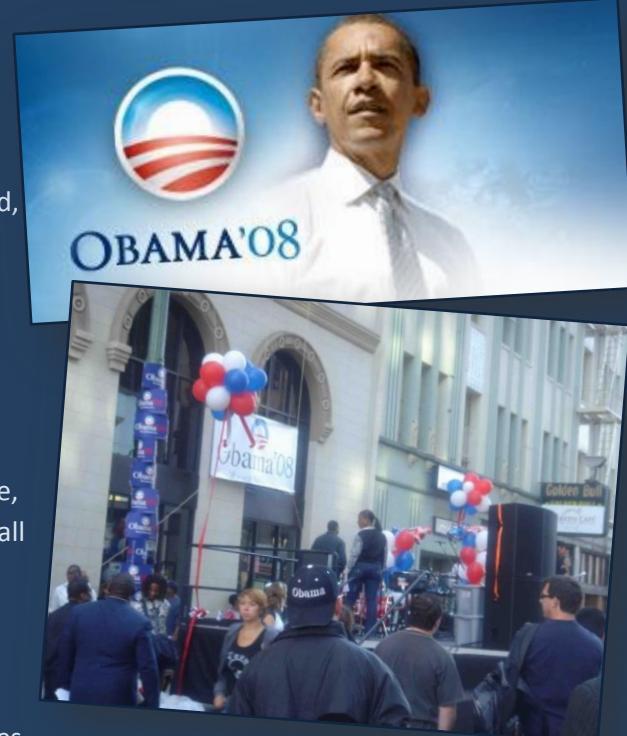
On the economy... he wants to provide tax-cuts for working families whilst simplifying tax filing for the middle-class, fight for fair trade, amend the North American Trade Agreement, create jobs and job training programmes, protect homeownership, fight for workers rights, and raise the minimum wage.

On education... he wants early childhood education, affordable high-quality child-care, address drop-out crisis, expand summer-learning programmes, retain and reward better teachers, and create opportunity tax-credits to make higher education more affordable.

On civil rights... he wants to combat employment discrimination, end racial profiling, reduce crime recidivism, and end deceptive voting practices.

On healthcare... he wants quality and affordable healthcare for all, low cost and modern health system, and develop new initiatives such as fighting AIDS world-wide.

On foreign policy... he wants to end the war in Iraq, renew American diplomacy including meticulously addressing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, open diplomacy with Iran, strengthen NATO, work towards a nuclear disarmament, have better relationships with Asia and Africa, and end global poverty.



So, this talk that Obama lacks experience, doesn't have good thought-out policies and he's just a new kid on the block, is baseless and unsupported by credible evidence. He has sound policies, is able to bring everyone together and galvanise people never seen since John F Kennedy in the 1960s. If Bill Clinton didn't support his wife, I'm sure he would be fully behind Obama.

This is why Obama has the support of many credible people from across the political spectrum and other public life. Ted Kennedy (brother of President John F Kennedy), Caroline Kennedy, Maria Shriver (wife of the Republican Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger), Steven Spielberg, Usher, Stevie Wonder, Scarlett Johansson, and probably the most powerful woman in the world, Oprah Winfrey, to name a few.

These people are not fools... they know that Obama is a serious presidential candidate that would be good for America. That is also the reason why he was able to raise a staggering \$32m in January alone – the biggest in history.

Tuesday 5 February, the so-called 'supa-dupa Tuesday' will be one of the most intense in American history. Since I donated money towards Obama's campaign early last year and bought the t-shirt, I will no doubt be watching the live coverage over-night.

I very much encourage those who are eligible to vote, please vote! You're living in a moment of history... so go and be part of it!

Shahid Miah
4 February 2008

www.barackobama.com

“I'm in this race for the same reason that I fought for jobs for the jobless and hope for the hopeless on the streets of Chicago; for the same reason I fought for justice and equality as a civil rights lawyer...”

That's why I'm running, Democrats – to keep the American Dream alive for those who still hunger for opportunity, who still thirst for equality.”

Senator Barack Obama

