

President Barack Obama's Affordable Health Care Agenda
As a Leader

Submitted by Billie Campbell
Beulah Heights University
LEAD 807 Contemporary Issues in Leadership III Term I
Professor: Dr. Okeke
September 11, 2019

Description

Political leadership is a concept central to understanding political processes and outcomes.

Although many disciplines, such as political theory, history, psychology, and management studies, have contributed to the study of leadership. Political Leadership reviews, along with this line, look at the contributions of these disciplines in consonant with discussions of the work of classic authors such as Max Weber, Robert Michels, etc. Howard Elcock (2001) argues that the preoccupation with new public management over the last twenty years has caused fundamental debates about political and social values to be neglected. Howard opines that only a new focus on leaders and leadership can correct this problem and provide guidance for politicians and officials in a world of increasingly rapid and unpredictable change.

Content: Based on the previous, analyze and evaluate the political leadership agendas of a political leader of your choice. Did their agendas impact their nations and the world, or, was there a question mark on their ability to bring about innovation and change?

Introduction:

Obama's father, also named Barack Hussein Obama, grew up in a small village in Nyanza Province, Kenya, as a member of the Luo ethnicity. He won a scholarship to study economics at the University of Hawaii, where he met and married Ann Dunham, a white woman from Wichita, Kansas, before moving his family to Hawaii in 1959. Barack and Ann's son, Barack Hussein Obama Jr., was born in Honolulu on August 4, 1961. Obama applied to and was accepted at Harvard Law School. In 1990, he was elected President of the Harvard Law Review journal (<http://www.notablebiographies.com>). Also, during his law school years, Obama spent eight days in Los Angeles taking a national training course on Alinsky methods of organizing (Lizza, Ryan, 2007).

Pre-Election Career

According to Donald and Fellow (2019), after two years working in corporate research and at the New York Public Interest Research Group in New York City, Obama moved to Chicago, where he took a job as a community organizer with a church-based group, the developing communities project. He worked with low-income residents in "Chicago's Roseland" community and the "Altgeld Garden's public housing development on the city's mostly black South Side. Obama considered this the best education he ever got.

The writer went on to state in 1996, Obama officially launched his political career, winning election to the Illinois State Senate. He was able to build support among both Democrats and Republicans by drafting legislation on ethics and health care reform. He helped create a state earned-income tax credit that benefited the working poor, promoted subsidies for early childhood

education programs and worked with law enforcement officials to require the videotaping of interrogations and confessions in all capital cases. Obama was re-elected in 1998 and again in 2002. He was unsuccessful in the 2000 Democratic primary election for the U. S. House of Representatives seat. As a state senator, Obama notably went on record as an early opponent of President George W. Bush's push to war with Iraq. During a rally at Chicago's Federal Plaza on October 2002, he spoke against a resolution authorizing the use of force against Iraq (Barack Obama, Transcripts 2002).

According to Wilgoren (2003), Peter Fitzgerald announced that he would vacate his U.S. Senate seat in 2004 after one term. By this time, Obama decided to run. He won 52 percent of the votes in the Democratic primary, defeating both multimillionaire businessman Blair Hull and Illinois Comptroller Daniel Hynes. Nelson (2019) posits in November 2004, the state of Illinois delivered 70 percent of its votes to Obama versus his opponents' 27 percent, sending him to Washington as only the third African American elected to the U.S. Senate since Reconstruction. During his tenure, Obama notably focused on issues of nuclear non-proliferation and the health threat posed by avian flu. With Republican Senator Tom Coburn of Oklahoma, he created a Web site that tracked all federal spending, aimed at rebuilding the citizens' trust in government. Among other agendas of focus, Obama partnered with another Republican, Senator on a bill that expanded efforts to destroy weapons of mass destruction in Eastern Europe and Russia.

The writer goes on to state after traveling to Kenya, where thousands of people lined the streets to welcome him. On February 10, 2007, Barack Obama formally announced his candidacy for President of the United States. A victory in the Iowa primary made him a viable challenger to the early frontrunner, the former first lady now-former New York Senator Hillary Clinton., in a grueling primary campaign claimed the Democratic nomination in early June 2008.

Obama chose as his running mate Joseph R. Biden Jr. who was a U.S. senator from Delaware a one-time Democratic candidate for President and served as chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. His opponent at that time was Arizona Senator John S. McCain, a Vietnam veteran and former prisoner-of-war, who chose Alaska Governor Sarah Palin as his running mate.

As stated in the primaries, Obama's campaign worked to build support at the grassroots level and used what supporters saw as the candidate's natural charisma, unusual life story and inspiring message of hope and change to draw impressive crowds to his public appearances, both in the U.S. and on campaign trips abroad. They worked to bring new voters—many of them young blacks, and demographics they believed favored Obama—to become involved in the election.

During this campaign, a crushing financial crisis leads up to the election shifting the nation's focus to economic issues, and both Obama and McCain worked to show they both had the best plan for economic improvements. With several weeks remaining, most polls showed Obama as the frontrunner. Unfortunately, during that period Obama's maternal grandmother, Madelyn Dunham, died after a battle with cancer, the day before voters went to the polls. She was a tremendously influential force in her grandson's life and had diligently followed his historic run for office from her home in Honolulu.

On November 4, lines at polling stations around the nation heralded a historic turnout and resulted in a Democratic victory, with Obama capturing some Republican strongholds in Virginia, Indiana and key battleground states as Florida, and Ohio, that had previously been won by Republicans in recent elections. Afterward, Obama took the stage in Chicago's Grant Park with wife Michelle and their two young daughters acknowledging the historic nature of his win while reflecting on the serious challenges that lay ahead.

On November 4, 2008, Senator Barack Obama of Illinois was elected President of the United States over Senator John McCain of Arizona. He became the 44th president, and the first African American to be elected to that office. He was subsequently elected to a second term over former Massachusetts governor Mitt Romney. Barack Obama has always been a leader in a real sense. Even before becoming the 44th U.S. President and holding two terms at the office, he was a prolific politician and was revered by the American public especially from his home state of Illinois and city of Chicago from where he was elected as Senator. Getting involved and helping the community made him a public figure and later a politician known across the U.S.

Holding the most powerful position in the world, as President of the United States of America, was no mean achievement. Although presidents do have the support from their cabinet, advisors, and aides, the public face is always the presidents, and he took all the accolades for anything positive for the country and economy, also the wrath and ire from the public in case of a mishap or anything negative happening on the political or economic front. Barack Obama boasts of qualities and habits as an effective leader made him a statesman and a leader of the highest repute across the globe. Even countries not having friendly relations with the USA admired him. That is what made him an excellent politician leading our nation for eight long years. President Obama's agendas impacted nations and the world.

There was almost a derailment of his campaign due to a racial issue, which brought about some question in the public's trust due to the racially charged sermons by his former minister, Jeremiah Wright of Chicago's Trinity United Church of Christ. Obama faced it head-on during his a perfect union speech. The media controversy gained national attention in the United States, pastor Jeremiah Wright's sermons, iterated parts of his sermon about terrorist attacks on the United States and government dishonesty, which were subject to intense media scrutiny.

Obama denounced the statements in question, but critics continued to press the issue of his relationship with Wright. In response to this, he gave a speech titled "A Perfect Union," in which he sought to place Wright's comments in a historical and sociological context. In the speech, Obama again denounced Wright's remarks but did not disown him as a person. The controversy began to fade; afterward, Obama spoke more forcefully against his former pastor, being outraged and saddened by his behavior, in May, he resigned his membership in the church.

President Obama's Proposals for Health Care Reform

Manchikanti (2009), posits the goal of President Obama's health care plan was to retain existing providers, doctors, and plans while building on the current health care system to provide accessible, affordable care for all Americans. President Obama planned to establish a National Health Insurance Exchange which will offer a range of private insurance options, as well as a new public plan available to individuals and small businesses based on benefits provided to members of Congress. Iglehart (2011) posits that the department of human health services.

Secretary Sebelius stated during her Senate confirmation hearings:

Coverage in the Exchange would be accessible, reliable, and meaningful. The President proposed a public option alongside private insurance options. He recognizes the importance of giving the American people this choice, which would also challenge private insurers to compete on cost and quality, not cream-skimming and risk selection. At the same time, he recognizes the importance of a level playing field between plans and ensuring that private insurance plans are not disadvantaged. Moreover, for individuals who are not eligible for employer-based coverage and who cannot afford insurance, subsidies will be provided to purchase an insurance plan of their choice.

The Obama health care plan would also require insurance companies to cover pre-existing conditions so that affordable, reliable, and comprehensive benefits could be obtained despite a patient's health status or history. To further expand health care coverage, President

Obama's plan would also promote cost reductions, bringing about substantial savings from preventive services, in other areas, and care coordination. Prescription drug savings are also expected from legalization of drug reimportation as an emphasis is on generic drug use; thereby establishing an abbreviated approval pathway for generic biologics, and government negotiations with drug manufacturers to lower prices for drugs purchased under Medicare Part D. Through these and other reforms, President Obama planned to lower health care costs by \$2,500 per year for a typical family. Further details regarding many of these and other features of the President's plan for health care reform were also discussed. It should be noted that President Obama's proposals for health care reform were yet to be thoroughly debated and authorized by Congress, which would ultimately determine the actual measures that would be enacted.

They were analyzing and evaluating over decades the obstacles against meaningful health care reform. Never became more promising, until the election of President Barack Obama and his support of the Democratic majority in Congress. Universal health care became a reality which had an impact upon the nation. Even with financial stresses and the rapidly escalating health care costs, prior opponents were encouraged to participate in the process. More than 45 million Americans lacking health insurance in the U.S. Life expectancy, infant mortality rates, and deaths increased as a lack of access to health care than those of other wealthy democracies.

Health care spending in the United States exceeded four times the national defense budget despite the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The U.S. health care system has been blamed for inefficiencies, excessive administrative expenses, inflated prices, inappropriate waste, and fraud and abuse. While many people lacked health insurance, others who did have health insurance allegedly received care ranging from superb to inexcusable. In criticism of health care in the United States, President Obama focused on savings due to the crushing costs of health care, making it harder for families to make ends meet, therefore making it harder for businesses

to compete in the 21st century. In the last eight years, premiums nearly doubled as profound economic challenges were faced, the number of uninsured is growing. Health costs are a significant cause of the United States long-run fiscal deficit. Therefore, the lowering of health care cost growth is crucial to long-term economic viability.

Oberlander, J. (2009) posits in comparison to health cost in major developed nations. It has been proposed that the U.S. population is unhealthy or that Americans use more medical service. However, studies have concluded that the price of care, not the amount of care delivered, is the primary difference between the U.S. and other countries in health care spending. The writer goes on to state the most significant cost difference between the U.S., and other countries are in health care administration, those expenses are said to account for 30% of total health care costs in the U.S., amounting to \$680 billion of the \$2.3 trillion spent in 2007. In the U.S., 59.3% of the population is covered by employer-based insurance. Outlandish administrative costs are accrued by both public and private insurers, as well as by medical groups and hospitals. These administrative costs were mostly a result of inefficient record-keeping and the practice of defensive medicine because of the fear of malpractice claims. President Obama, affordable health plan effectiveness, gained from universal coverage, and a national health system would expect those results in administrative savings to contribute to financing coverage of the uninsured substantially.

Bhosle & Balkrishnan (2007) posits that drug prices also significantly contributed to the high costs of health care in the U.S. compared with other developed countries. Branded drugs in the U.S. were the most expensive of seven major markets, costing 50% or more than in other countries. The cost of prescription drugs was the fastest growing sector of U.S. health care costs until 2007. In 1980, prescription drug expenditures in the U.S. were \$12 billion, 4.9% of total health care spending. By 2003, drug costs had escalated 15-fold to \$184.1 billion. Drug costs

continued to grow at an average rate of 6.9% annually from 2003 to 2006, resulting in an additional \$45 billion increase in costs.

The writer states that besides administrative and branded drug costs, high-cost disparities between the U.S. and other developed countries were also observed in hospital and outpatient care. These high costs of the U.S. health care system attributed to the overuse of new technologies, inflated prices, waste, fraud, and abuse.

Conclusion of President Obama's Proposals for Health Care Reform Plan:

Although the goal of President Obama's health care plan was to retain existing providers, doctors, and Health care reform as an integral part of his domestic agenda; it would come with substantial cost approximately \$2 trillion over ten years. When asked if the massive cost of health care reform was a wise remedy for a system that already overspends, department of

human health services, Secretary Sebelius responded:

"The President believes we cannot afford not to reform our health care system. Modernizing our health care system and ensuring affordable coverage will require an up-front federal investment.

The President's budget includes policies to help offset this investment.

Moreover, health reform, along with the Recovery Act investments, will yield long-run cost savings for both taxpayers and the federal government. Our goal is to fix our broken system in a fair and fiscally responsible manner, covering all Americans and lowering the long-run growth of health care. While some suggest that in this recession, we can no longer afford to invest in our nation's health system, the truth is that we cannot afford not to.

Reflecting this urgency in the very early days of the Obama administration, substantial financing for health care reform policies was established. The Children's Health Insurance Program, Reauthorization Act of 2009 and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act both became law in February of 2009. The CHIP Reauthorization Act extended funding for the program through 2013 providing an additional \$44 billion in allotments above baseline funding levels of \$25 billion. This additional funding is expected to provide access to four million newly insured

children and 11 million individuals already covered. The legislation will be partly funded by a cigarette tax increase of 61 cents to \$1 a pack. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act provided \$787 billion in economic stimulus and a jump start for the President's health care reform, including \$19.2 billion for to subsidize private health insurance for people who lost their jobs. The stimulus bill also boosts the National Institutes of Health budget by one third and provided support prevention and wellness activities targeting obesity, smoking, and other risk factors for chronic diseases. Health professions training programs were also revitalized, providing loan repayments, salary support, and scholarships for physicians and other health care providers who practice in underserved areas. I do agree that this was a necessary part of health care reform of the President's actions stating: "We need to address these issues of workforce and training because if you are going to expand access by bringing more people into the system, you also need to ensure that we have an adequate supply of health care professionals, including pharmacists, to treat them. Access to care and supply of well-trained professionals both need to be addressed because they are interrelated, particularly in rural and underserved areas".

Although health care systems might not be able to control expenditures without efforts to establish and enforce cost targets. The same observation has been reported in many other countries, including Canada, Sweden, France, Germany, and Japan. Advocates for cost control recommend strong government leadership to set targets and spending caps in the various sectors of medical care hospitals, pharmaceutical, and physicians either directly or through insurers. Certain proponents suggest that spending targets do not need to be rigid and can be changed, if necessary, and those total expenditures should be subject to payment caps rather than individual services. To date, President Obama has not indicated support for establishing the health care spending caps and cost controls in the U.S. that are observed in some other countries. The

mention of cost controls on health care immediately inspires alarm about rationing in patients, health care professionals, manufacturers, and the insurance industries and are therefore highly political. The limited discussion of cost control by the Obama administration is likely necessary to avoid this political controversy.

Conclusion:

President Obama has put forth an ambitious, complex, and sophisticated plan for health care reform. Based on the preceding, analyzation and evaluation of his political leadership agenda. Did their agendas impact their nations and the world? Is there a question mark on his ability to bring about innovation and change? It is too early to tell whether his plan will meet all the necessary goals of reducing costs, providing greater accessibility, and improving the quality of health care in the U.S. Despite any shortcomings that might be perceived in his plan, such a severe and comprehensive effort is a significant step forward, compared with the deadlock and piecemeal advances that have been experienced in health care reform over many years. Exactly where the boundaries between widespread access to health care, cost savings, and preservation of treatment choice ultimately fall will likely take many more years to determine the affordable health care reform plans the outcome.

References

- Barack Obama 2002- Speech on the Iraq War At Federal Plaza
<https://newyorkessays.com/essay-barack-obama-speech-on-the-iraq-war-at-federal-plaza>.
Bhosle, M. J., & Balkrishnan, R. (2007). Drug reimportation practices in the United States. *Therapeutics and Clinical Risk Management*, 3(1), 41–46. doi: 10.2147/tcrm.2007.3.1.41

Chicago's Real Crime Story | Obama Chicago Community Organizer

<https://www.city-journal.org/html/chicago's-real-crime-story-13248.html>.

<https://www.history.com/topics/us-presidents/barack-obama>.

<http://www.notablebiographies.com>.

Donald, H. M., Fellow, J. M. O., City Journal, & Manhattan Institute. (2019, June 16). Chicago's

Real Crime Story. Retrieved from <https://www.city-journal.org/html/chicago's-real->

[crime-story-13248.html](https://www.city-journal.org/html/chicago's-real-crime-story-13248.html)

Husain, H. (2017, January 24). 6 Inspiring Leadership Traits of Barack Obama. Retrieved from

<https://blog.taskque.com/leadership-traits-barack-obama>.

Lizza, R. (2007, March 19). The Agitator. Retrieved

<https://newrepublic.com/article/61068/the-agitator-barack-obamas-unlikely-political->

[education](https://newrepublic.com/article/61068/the-agitator-barack-obamas-unlikely-political-education).

Manchikanti, L., Boswell, M. V., Singh, V., Benyamin, R. M., Fellows, B., Abdi, S., ... ASIPP-

IPM. (2009). Comprehensive, evidence-based guidelines for interventional techniques in

the management of chronic spinal pain. Retrieved from

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19644537>

Michael Nelson (Author of The Presidency and the Political System). (n.d.). Retrieved from

https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/23544.Michael_Nelson.

Obama, B. (2008). Modern Health Care for All Americans. *New England Journal of Medicine*,

359(15), 1537–1541. doi: 10.1056/nejmp0807677

Oberlander, J. (2009). Would Health Care Reform Be Easier With a Single-Payer System?

Annals of Internal Medicine, 151(5), 365. doi: 10.7326/0003-4819-151-5-200909010-

00020

President Barack Hussein Obama (D) | Lies, Liars 1996 (n.d.). Retrieved from

<https://liesliarsbeatniksandhippies.wordpress.com/law-of-the-united-states/the-constit>

[ution-of-the-united-states-a-transcription/article-ii-executive-branch](https://liesliarsbeatniksandhippies.wordpress.com/law-of-the-united-states/the-constitution-of-the-united-states-a-transcription/article-ii-executive-branch).

Transcript: Obama's Speech Against The Iraq War 2002: Npr

<https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=99591469>.

Wilgoren, J. (2003, April 16). Illinois Senator Announces He Will Not Seek Re-election.

Retrieved from

<https://www.nytimes.com/2003/04/16/us/illinois-senator-announces-he-won-t-see-re-elect-ion.html>.

Iglehart, J. K. (2011). Implementing Health Care Reform — An Interview with HHS Secretary

Kathleen Sebelius. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 364(4), 297–299. doi:

10.1056/nejmp1014722