

Background and beliefs: barack obama

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Background and Beliefs: Barack Obama Barack Hussein Obama Jr. was born on August 4, 1961 to a Kenyan father and American mother in Honolulu, Hawaii. When he was two years old, his parents separated and later divorced. After his father received his Doctor of Philosophy in Economics from Harvard, he moved back to his native country of Kenya, where he became a finance minister until he was killed in a car accident in 1982. His mother remarried, and Obama moved with his mother and new stepfather to Indonesia in 1967. There, Obama attended local schools from ages six to ten, where he received weekly lessons in the Catholic faith. After moving to a new neighborhood, he attended a secular government-run school and then received weekly lessons in Islam, the predominant religion of Indonesia. When he was in the third grade, Obama wrote an essay saying that one day he would like to become President, and the reason being he wanted to make everyone happy. When Obama was in fifth grade, he returned to Honolulu to live with his maternal grandparents. There, he attended a private college preparatory school until his graduation in 1979. Growing up in Honolulu was not easy for Obama because of his struggles to come to terms with the social perceptions of his multiracial heritage. In his book, *Dreams from My Father*, Obama wrote that he used alcohol, marijuana, and cocaine during his teenage years to push questions of who he was out of his mind. Some of his fellow peers from his preparatory school in Hawaii have also said that Obama was very mature for his age as a high school student and that he sometimes attended parties in order to be with African American college students and military service people. Living those adolescent years in Hawaii, where there is a variety of cultures and a mutual respect for the different cultures,

became the basis for the values that Obama holds today. After high school, Obama moved to Los Angeles, where he attended Occidental College for two years, then later transferred to Columbia University in New York and majored in political science with an emphasis in international relations. He received his Bachelor of Arts in 1983, and upon graduation, worked at Business International Corporation and New York Public Interest Research Group. He then relocated to Chicago to take the \$13, 000 a year job as Director of the Developing Communities Project, a faith-based agency on Chicago's far south side. He worked with the low-income residents in public housing developments that were effected by the dislocation and massive unemployment caused by the closing and down-sizing of steel plants. Obama did not feel community organizing was effective enough to solve major domestic problems, so he went to Harvard Law School in 1988 and in 1990, was the first black elected president of the Harvard Law Review. Obama completed his J. D. degree magna cum laude in 1991. After receiving his law degree, Obama returned to Chicago to direct a voter registration drive that resulted in more than half a million blacks going to the polls in Chicago, where he was then praised as a new political star. On October 18, 1992, Obama married Michelle Robinson, whom he met in 1988 while he was employed as a summer associate at Sidney and Austin, a Chicago law firm. From 1993 to 1996, he was an associate attorney with Miner, Barnhill, and Galland, where he represented community organizers, discrimination claims, and voter rights cases. During this time, in 1995, he published his first of two books, *Dreams from My Father*. While working for Miner, Barnhill, and Galland, he was also a lecturer of constitutional law at the University of

Chicago Law School. In 1996, he was elected to the Illinois State Senate and became a partner at Miner, Barnhill, and Galland. He was re-elected to the state senate in 1998 and became a father for the first time with the birth of his daughter Malia. In 2000, he challenged Congressman Bobby Rush for a position in the U. S. House of Representatives and was defeated. His second daughter, Natasha was born in 2001, and in 2002, he ran unopposed for the Illinois State Senate. On July 27, 2004, he gave the keynote address at the Democratic National Convention, which made him a nationally known political figure. Also in 2004, Obama was elected to the U. S. Senate, becoming the fifth African-American U. S. Senator in American History. His second book, *The Audacity of Hope*, was published on October 17, 2006. It is speculated that the large crowds that gathered at his book signings helped influence his decision to run for president. In Springfield, Illinois on February 10, 2007, Obama announces his intent to run as the Democratic candidate for President of the United States. His slogan “ Change We Can Believe In” is something he himself takes to heart and has written a *Blueprint for Change*, where he outlines how he will go about changing the United States if elected President. The *Blueprint for Change* covers twenty-six issues that Obama believes he can change, and some of the major issues include civil rights, economy, education, foreign policy, health care, and immigration. On the topic of civil rights, Obama believes we should combat employment discrimination by overturning the recent ruling that limits racial minorities’ and women’s ability to challenge pay discrimination and would pass the Fair Pay Act, which would ensure that women receive equal pay for equal work. He believes we should also expand hate crime statutes and end racial

profiling. In regards to the economy, Obama feels we should provide a tax cut for working families and simplify tax filings for the middle class. He believes that trade with other countries should strengthen the American economy and create more American jobs. Also, he feels we should amend the North American Free Trade Agreement so that it works for American workers. When dealing with the subject of education, Obama believes we should expand the Early Head Start and Head Start programs by increasing the funding for both. He also feels we should provide affordable, high-quality child care to ease the burden on working families and that we should reform the No Child Left Behind Act. Obama believes we should make Math and Science Education a national priority and recruit, prepare, retain, and reward America's teachers. Also, he feels we should create the American Opportunity Tax Credit to make college affordable for all Americans. One of the most talked about issues in America today is foreign policy. Obama believes that we should immediately remove our troops from Iraq and press Iraq's leaders to take responsibility for their future. He feels we should expand our diplomatic presence, fight global poverty, strengthen NATO, and move toward a nuclear-free world. An issue that is often brought up in debates is the issue of health care. He will make available a new national health plan to cover all Americans similar to the plan available to members of Congress. His plan will include guaranteed eligibility, comprehensive benefits, affordable premiums, simplified paperwork, and easy enrollment. Obama also wants to create a National Health Insurance Exchange to help people who wish to purchase a private insurance plan. The Exchange would act as a watchdog group to help in reforming the private insurance market.

This would be done by creating rules and standards for participating insurance plans to ensure fairness and to make health insurance coverage more affordable. Also, Obama would push for mandatory health care coverage for children. Immigration is the last of the major topics Obama plans to change. He would create secure borders and remove incentives to enter the country illegally by cracking down on employers who hire illegal immigrants. Obama feels we should work with Mexico to encourage economic development in the country to lower the number of illegal immigrants coming to America. Barack Obama is the current front-runner for the Democratic Nomination with 1, 419 Delegates, 61 of those from the Texas Primary and 38 from the Texas Caucus. With only ten primaries left until the Democratic National Convention this summer, there is no way either candidate can win all primaries and clinch the nomination. This will be a very historic election no matter who gets the nomination, and I guess we all must wait until August 24th to see who that candidate will be. It just might be the boy who wrote the paper in the third grade that wanted to be President to make everyone happy.