

AMERICAN DREAM HOUSE MEETING

AGENDA

Agenda time: Approximately 2 hours



AMERICAN DREAM MEETING

1.

Welcome, Introductions & Agenda Review

2.

What is the American Dream Movement?

3.

Sharing Our Stories

Challenges we face in this economy

Questions to help develop your story

Tell a story about an experience you, a loved one, or someone you know has had struggling in this economy.

<i>What happened? When did this take place?</i>	<i>Who was affected?</i>	<i>What sticks out most in your mind about this experience?</i>	<i>How does it make you feel?</i>

Moments that show us what's possible

Think of the time in your life when you felt most proud of your community or of America.

<i>What happened? Where were you? Who was with you?</i>	<i>What were you feeling in that moment? Why do you think it made you feel that way?</i>	<i>What does this particular moment and feeling tell you about what the American Dream should—and can—be?</i>

4.

A Contract for the American Dream

Opening go-around:

1. What's your vision of the American Dream for your own children or for the young people in your life? What does that vision make you think about the Contract?
2. If you had the power right now to begin rebuilding the American Dream, what's the first thing you would enact? Is that one of these ideas, or is it something different?

How your meeting will help shape the contract:

You and other participants will rate the top 40 ideas—out of 23,000 ideas submitted and 5 million online ratings—to help shape the Contract for the American Dream. The goal of every meeting is to identify the top three ideas for each of the four Contract categories. Your host will report back the top ideas from the meeting, and you will also receive a survey to report back on your personal favorite ideas.

To use this idea ratings sheet, follow these three steps:

FIRST, when prompted by your host or small group leader, rate each of the ten ideas for the Contract category your group is discussing. These are just your preliminary ratings you'll share with the rest of the group next—so don't worry if you're not totally sure which ideas are your favorite yet.

SECOND, share which ideas you rated highest and why in 90 seconds so that everyone has a chance to share.

THIRD, after hearing from everyone in the group, do a final review of the ideas—reevaluate or not based on what you just heard—then circle the number of your top three ideas in the left column of your ratings sheet. The host or small group leader will collect your ratings sheet to determine the top ideas from your meeting to include in the Contract for the American Dream. So that you can remember for the survey later, write down your favorite three overall ideas for here:

1

2

3



How do we create good jobs and invest in a sustainable future for America and our kids?

Fill in the Stars to Rate the Ideas. 1 Star = OK, 3 Stars = Average, 5 Stars = Great Idea.

- Move Toward a Clean, Green, Independent Energy Future**

Invest in American businesses that create, make, and install green sources of energy like wind turbines and energy efficient light bulbs; install solar power in homes and buildings throughout the sunbelt; replace fossil fuels with geothermal heat; and manufacture high-powered batteries for hybrid and electric cars, retrofit offices and homes.


- Stop Paying Corporations to Offshore American Jobs**

It is absurd that corporations literally get a tax break for shifting jobs overseas. But that is exactly what happens. We need to end the tax breaks for companies that ship jobs and profits overseas.


- Invest in America's Infrastructure**

We should be rebuilding our crumbling bridges, roads, water and sewer lines, and investing in high-speed internet and a modern, energy-saving electric grid. That will create good jobs and rebuild America. We need a National Infrastructure Bank to pay for these projects as well as state and local infrastructure banks like the California Infrastructure and Economic Development Bank.


- End the Huge Waste of the Wars and Invest the Money in Peace-Building**

We should end the massive waste of funding wars and instead provide the funds for investing in job-creation. This would create thousands of jobs immediately.


- Create and Enforce Ethical Trade Laws**

One of the reasons why our economy is stalling is because for decades corporations have turned good jobs in the U.S. into bad jobs in India, China, and around the world. Corporations abuse workers, hire children, poison the air and water, pay wages that keep workers in slums, and still are allowed to sell their products here. We must enact and enforce ethical and fair trade laws.


- Cut CEO Pay. Boost Workers' Pay.**

Corporations receiving any kind of tax incentives or public subsidies should not be allowed to pay their highest-paid employee more than 50 times what they pay their lowest-paid employee. Workers should have the same incentive structure as executives; if the CEO gets a 10% bonus, her secretary should get a 10% bonus.


- Keep America Moving**

Put Americans to work building 21st-century transit systems that reduce traffic, get people to work faster, and cut pollution. Invest in high-speed rail, which will save energy and make travel faster. Promote and support improved bus service. Make sure that transportation is built equitably so that poor and middle-income communities benefit.


- Put Americans Back To Work**

If we wait for the private sector, we won't reach full employment for at least a decade. That's a moral outrage. A temporary Back to Work public jobs program would help provide much-needed community services in education, child care, and health care and could help rebuild America's roads, schools, and bridges. The federal government should give local and state governments the funding to create millions of temporary public jobs now.


- Stop the War on Workers**

Governments and politicians should support fair minimum wages and living wages, the right to organize and collectively bargain, the right to negotiate wages, and the right to safe conditions in the workplace. Corporate and right-wing assaults on these rights lower wages and benefits for all of us, and they must be outlawed and prosecuted.


- Create Care Jobs**

Every eight seconds, an American turns 65. More and more members of our communities need quality care in the home, and more and more workers need good, dignified jobs. We should create new jobs in home care and improve the job quality for the existing jobs so all care workers and the individuals and families they support are treated with dignity and respect.



When you're ready, circle the 3 ideas you rate highest.

We All Pay Our Share



How can we stop corporations and the rich from dodging taxes?

Fill in the Stars to Rate the Ideas. 1 Star = OK, 3 Stars = Average, 5 Stars = Great Idea.

Return to Fairer Tax Rates*

- 1 End, once and for all, the Bush-era tax giveaways for the rich, which will eventually have to be paid by the rest of us, or by our kids. We should make the rich pay the fairer tax rates they paid in the 1990s.



End ALL Bush-era Tax Cuts*

- 2 I'm willing to give up the minute tax break I got under the Bush tax cuts in order for the wealthiest people of our nation to pay their fair share. End the Bush tax cuts for the middle class as well and return ALL tax brackets to their Clinton-era rates. Use the trillions of dollars in extra revenue to pay for progressive priorities.



New Tax Bracket for Super-Rich

- 3 We should add new tax brackets for the tiny slice of Americans who are making more than \$1 million each year. The Fairness in Taxation Act would cost millionaires and billionaires a few cents on the dollar, but raise more than \$78 billion a year to protect our public services.



Make Social Security Solvent

- 4 Keep Social Security solvent for decades by removing the cap on the Social Security tax. Right now, people earning above \$106,800 don't pay Social Security tax on the amount above \$106,800. Remove that limit.



Tax Speculation at Least as Much as Perspiration

- 5 One reason that the rich do not pay their fair share is that the tax on capital gains is capped at 15%. In the past, companies reinvested capital gains to avoid paying taxes. Now they do not need to. Hedge fund managers' income also should be taxed as income, not as capital gains, so that hedge fund managers have to pay their fair share.



End Legalized Cheating: Stop Corporate Tax Haven Abuse

- 6 End the tax dodging that occurs when a business incorporates in a tax haven, pretending to be a foreign corporation for U.S. tax purposes. Increase disclosure by corporations and impose restrictions where money laundering and tax enforcement are a prime concern.



Tax the Million Dollar "Gifts"

- 7 No one has "earned" a million dollars a year—25 times the average American salary. If a company's board is paying a CEO that much, it's a gift. Whether in stock, stock options, or income, if a company gives an employee more than \$1 million/year, the amount over the \$1 million must not be deductible to reduce the company's taxes, and should be, in addition, hit with a separate gift tax.



No Subsidies for Dirty Energy

- 8 Oil, gas, coal, and nuclear companies should not be getting any taxpayer subsidies at all.



Be Sure Corporations Pay Their Taxes

- 9 Just as people can't avoid all tax liability via deductions, any profitable corporation should be required to pay a minimum tax rate, regardless of how many deductions and loopholes they can find. This would prevent billion-dollar corporations like GE from paying \$0 in taxes.



Robin Hood Tax: Tax Wall Street Speculation

- 10 Impose a tiny tax on every Wall Street trade. A tax of just 1/20th of a penny on every trade could raise more than \$100 billion annually with little impact on actual investment. Speculation, "flash trading," and outrageous bonuses would be reduced and we'd have a lot more money to pay for programs that Main Street needs.



* These two ideas sound similar, but there's a key difference. The first would only return taxes to Clinton-era levels for those making over \$250,000/year, raising about \$700 billion over the next decade. The second would return taxes to Clinton-era levels for everyone, raising about \$3.7 trillion over the next decade.

Strong Communities



How do we ensure good healthcare, quality education, and a retirement with dignity for all?

Fill in the Stars to Rate the Ideas. 1 Star = OK, 3 Stars = Average, 5 Stars = Great Idea.

Invest in Public Education

- 1 A high-quality education system, from universal preschool to affordable higher education, is critical to our nation's long-term economic success. Investing in education has obvious benefits for individuals, society, and the economy, and it can also create badly needed jobs. We must provide universal access to early childhood education; equitable school funding; increased investments in high-quality teachers; and safe, functioning buildings for students to learn in.



Medicare for All

- 2 The Affordable Health Care Act is a good start—but not enough. We should expand Medicare so it's available to all Americans, while lowering Medicare's out-of-pocket costs, and implementing reforms to focus health providers on providing quality care. We can save trillions of dollars by joining every other industrialized country, which pay much less for health care while getting the same or better results.



Implement the Affordable Care Act and Add a "Public Option" for Health Care

- 3 We must stop all attempts to repeal or defund the Affordable Care Act. And we must improve health care reform by adding a Public Option, which is the only thing that will bring down the cost. Too much of what we pay for health care ends up in the pockets of insurance and pharmaceutical companies.



Increase Social Security Benefits

- 4 With the disappearance of strong pensions, we need to make Social Security stronger, not weaker. That means increasing the already modest average benefit and making it more progressive by exempting the first \$20,000 in earnings from the Social Security tax.



Substantially Reduce Military Spending

- 5 We spend as much as the rest of the world combined on defense. We must put all military spending and the costs of wars "on budget" and dramatically decrease our spending. That means closing unneeded overseas bases, drastically reducing the use of military contractors, and bringing the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to a close.



Allow Medicare and Medicaid to negotiate prescription drug prices

- 6 Lower prescription drug prices by having Medicare and Medicaid negotiate with the drug companies, which is how the Department of Veterans Affairs gets the lowest drug prices in the nation.



Take Care of Our Veterans

- 7 Assist veterans as they re-integrate into civilian life. Whether or not you agree with the decision to go to war, veterans fought for our country and deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. Give them good health care, scholarships, job training, assistance searching for a job, and help for their families.



Protect Women's Rights and Health

- 8 Support genuine reproductive choice and end the restrictive policies that limit women's access to contraception and abortion, and that have increased unintended pregnancies by 29% among the poorest women at the same time they fell by 20% for the best off. Implement policies that respect survivors of physical and sexual violence, recognizing that such crimes cannot be justified or excused.



End the Endless "War on Drugs"

- 9 The War on Drugs has been around since the Nixon administration. It's a total failure and it's time to end it. It only serves to add to the prisoner count (at huge cost to states) and deny our fellow citizens the real help they need.



Family-friendly Policies

- 10 The U.S. lags behind the rest of the developed world in family-friendly work policies. Paid family leave and support for childcare should be part of the social safety net. Paid sick days and paid vacation should be the policy of every employer.



When you're ready, circle the 3 ideas you rate highest.



How do we make sure the people call the shots—and no one gets left out?

Fill in the Stars to Rate the Ideas. 1 Star = OK, 3 Stars = Average, 5 Stars = Great Idea.

Eliminate Corporate Personhood

- 1 We need a Supreme Court with the common sense to understand that corporations aren't people and speech isn't money. We must roll back the *Citizens United* decision, which gives corporations the same rights as people—by a constitutional amendment if necessary.



Reinstate Common Sense Rules of the Road for Wall Street.

- 2 We must reverse the deregulation of the banking sector. Smart rules that the government imposed after the Great Depression helped avoid financial crises for 50 years. The new rules passed in Dodd-Frank are a good start, but we have to go further—by reinstating Glass-Steagall to separate investment and commercial banks, empowering the new Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, regulating shadow banking, and ending Too Big to Fail banks.



Don't Allow "Anonymous" Political Influence

- 3 Campaigns that generate more money don't always win, but they certainly have an advantage. Force all political campaigns (issue campaigns and candidate campaigns) to disclose who is paying the bills. Force 100% transparency in contributions. President Obama should immediately sign the DISCLOSE Executive Order as an important first step in this direction.



Place Elections into the Hands of Everyday People

- 4 The problems in Washington start in the electoral process. Our leaders are forced to rely on big donations, often from corporate interests, and pay attention to their donors' needs, not ours. It's time to put elections back into the hands of everyday people with small donations and public financing, and let us all have an equal say in making the rules we all live by.



Break Up the Big Banks

- 5 "Too Big to Fail" Wall Street banks have only gotten bigger since the crisis, allowing them to dominate our economy and our government. They pay out big bonuses while cheating on taxes, refusing to lend, and foreclosing on Americans. No banks should be allowed to be bigger than 2% of GDP. That would stabilize the financial sector and give Main Street banks a chance to compete.



Slam Shut the Revolving Door in Washington

- 6 Pass legislation to end the overwhelming influence of corporate lobbyists. Prohibit individuals from switching between corporate lobbying and government service within a 5-year period. Close the loopholes in the current lobbying laws that hide lots of lobbying. Require online posting of attendees and content of meetings between lobbyists and government officials.



Stop the Assault on Unions and Workers' Rights

- 7 Implement constitutional protections of long-standing workers' rights—including the right to organize, the right to negotiate wages, and the right to safe conditions in the workplace. Corporate assaults on these rights lower wages and benefits for all of us, and they must be outlawed and prosecuted.



Help the Economy by Reforming Immigration

- 8 Pass the DREAM Act. For immigrants who have been paying taxes for years, establish a path to citizenship. For those who haven't been paying taxes, assess back taxes. American should endeavor to keep families together. For immigrants who are married to Americans and who have children, and for LGBT families with domestic partnership, offer paths to immediate citizenship. Stop the scapegoating of immigrants.



Equal Pay and Equal Rights

- 9 Make sure that women, people of color, and other groups that face discrimination (like gay, lesbian, and transgender people) are paid equally to their peers—based on education, training, and work environment. This includes female-dominated professions like teaching, nursing, and childcare.



All Federal Contractors Should Obey Labor Laws and Create Good Jobs

- 10 Our government buys nearly \$1 trillion in goods and services each year. But many federal contractors violate labor laws and pay poverty wages. Low-paid workers then turn to Medicaid and food stamps to make ends meet. So our dollars subsidize bad job creation, which further drains government resources. The president should mandate that all federal contractors obey labor laws and create good American jobs.



When you're ready, circle the 3 ideas you rate highest.

5.

Building the Movement Locally

What's Next?: The August Congressional Recess

The American Dream movement will only succeed if we stand up and work TOGETHER for a new American Dream. This weekend over 25,000 of us are meeting to create the Contract for the American Dream. And then this August we'll take our message to our communities and into the streets. Congress members will be in their home districts during the August congressional recess—so we'll organize events to demand that elected officials join our fight to rebuild the American Dream and look for opportunities to get more people involved!

Every person at a house meeting this weekend is asked to commit to take one step in August to help grow the American Dream movement. This is the only way we'll generate enough power to fix our economy and restore the balance to our democracy.

Take a look at the following options and decide what you'll do to build the American Dream this August. Be sure to record the contact information of the other people you'll team up with. Find a time when you can plan to meet (or talk on the phone) to plan how you'll follow through with your chosen activities.

You can visit the August Recess Guide to get tips on how to hold an effective American Dream Movement August action:

<http://moveon.org/team/campaigns/dreammeeting/august.html>

1. Recruit five more people to the movement during August by talking with them about the Contract for the American Dream and asking them to join the movement.

List who you can reach out to from your personal network:

1

2

3

4

5

5.

Building the Movement Locally

(continued)

2. Help plan an event during the August congressional recess to let Congress know that we need jobs, not more tax cuts for the rich! The August recess is a perfect time for our movement to make our voices heard loud and clear across the country, and it's coming up soon.

We'll show up in red, white, and blue; bring along the "tools of our trade"; ask "Where are the Jobs?"; and demand that Congress "Make Them Pay!" We're organizing a National Day of Action on Wednesday, August 10th.

Sign one up now at: <http://civic.moveon.org/event/wherearejobs/>

Here are a few questions to help you make a plan:

- Where and when will your event be?
- Who can organize and register the event online?
- Is there a call or meeting to plan next steps?
- Name(s) of organizers:
- Email(s):
- Phone(s):

3. Start or help out with a local campaign for economic justice or a community service activity.

- What local campaign(s)?
- Who will reach out to them?
- Name(s) of participants:
- Email(s):
- Phone(s):
- Time to meet to move this forward:

4. Plan now to hold a house party to build the movement in September.

- Name(s) of (co-)hosts:
- Email(s):
- Phone(s):
- Date(s) of meetings:
- Time to meet to move this forward: