

Nader'08 Gonzalez

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To illustrate how little has changed in four years, other than conditions becoming worse, the 2008 Nader/Gonzalez campaign is posting these policy positions on various injustices, necessities, and redirections that were prepared initially for the 2004 Nader/Camejo campaign. Such a short historical context should give our supporters and viewers an even greater sense of urgency to stop the corporate interests' and the corporate governments' autocratic control -- and the resulting deterioration -- of our society and country.

Restoration and Expansion of Civil Liberties & Constitutional Rights

Civil liberties and due process of law are eroding due to the "war on terrorism" and new technology that allows for easy invasion of privacy. Americans of Arab descent and Muslim-Americans are feeling the brunt of these dragnet, arbitrary practices.

Mr. Nader supports the restoration of civil liberties and the repeal of the Patriot Act. He also supports an end to secret detentions, arrests without charges, restricting access to attorneys, the use of secret "evidence," military tribunals for civilians, misuse of non-combatant status, and the shredding of "probable cause" determinations.

These policies represent a perilous diminishment of judicial authority in favor of concentrated power in the executive branch. Sloppy law enforcement and dragnet practices are wasteful and reduce the likelihood of apprehending violent criminals. Mr. Nader seeks to expand civil liberties to protect basic human rights in employment regardless of gender, sexual orientation, race or religion.

Civil Rights of Muslims and Arab Americans

The Nader Campaign urges the Department of Justice to take action regarding civil rights violations against Muslim and Arab Americans.

According to a report released on March 3 by the Council on American-Islamic Relations, The Status of Muslim Civil Rights in the United States 2004, Muslims in the United States experienced more than 1,000 incidents of asserted harassment, violence and discriminatory treatment in 2003, a jump of 70 percent over the previous year.

The largest number of incidents had to do with employment and the refusal to accommodate religious practices. But there were, however, 93 reported hate crimes (i.e., incidents of anti-Muslim violence), more than double the total in 2002. And there were numerous cases in which Muslims alleged that laws were applied to them more harshly because of their ethnic or religious identity.

The report also noted that the implementation of the USA PATRIOT Act has been associated with law enforcement abuses. The report points to a number of questionable national security policies including:

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- The rounding up of Muslim Americans and Arab Americans by the government that blurred the clear distinction between immigration cases and terrorism investigations. CAIR cites a report by the Office of Inspector General of the Justice Department which found that between September 11, 2001 and August 2002, the government arrested 738 Muslims and Arabs whose entry visas had expired. In doing so, government officials interfered with their access to lawyers, blocked communication with family members, and even denied their constitutional right of obtaining information about the charges filed against them. The Justice Department's Office of Inspector General also reported that many were held in inhumane conditions including being detained in jail cells for 23 hours a day, and taunted and abused by guards. Guards also allegedly slammed prisoners against walls. Security tapes of the Bureau of Prisons show 308 incidents of physical abuse perpetrated by staff of federal prisons. None of these hundreds of detainees were found to have links to terrorism.
- The singling out of Muslim visitors and immigrants by requiring them to report to government offices to be fingerprinted, photographed and assigned a registration number or be deported. Thirteen thousand of the people who complied were still subject to deportation for violation of minor immigration regulations.
- The CAIR report points to widespread incidents of prosecutorial and law enforcement bias against Muslims. Violations of local ordinances for minor offenses like failure to cut lawn, or leaving garbage cans outside, have increased as have discretionary criminal prosecutions.
- Enforcement of the PATRIOT Act has also led to harassment by banks and financial institutions. People with Muslim or Arab names are being arbitrarily requested to provide detailed documentation of their identities as well as financial and tax records.

The Ralph Nader Campaign urges:

- Passage of the End Racial Profiling Act, championed by Congressman John Conyers, Jr. in the House and Senator Russell Feingold in the Senate. The Act would dissuade law enforcement from engaging in profiling by requiring collection of race data, and providing legal options to victims of racial profiling.
- The Department of Justice to implement regulatory and procedural reforms suggested by its own Office of Inspector General designed to restore constitutional protections in government investigations and handling of detainees.
- Congressional hearings on post 9-11 rules and procedures enacted by the Bush Administration in order to examine their impact on security and civil liberties.
- Opposition to the extension of provisions of the USA PATRIOT Act that are set to expire in 2005.
- Reinstatement of the Federal Communications Commission's "Fairness Doctrine" -- an attempt to ensure that coverage of controversial public issues by a broadcast station be balanced and fair. In the spring of 1987, both houses of Congress voted to put the Fairness Doctrine into law but President Ronald Reagan vetoed the legislation.

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Equal Rights for Asian Americans

The Nader campaign strives for equal opportunity and justice for all.

During times of war, civil liberties and due process of law are threatened. During World War II the United States moved to intern Japanese-American families. This was shameful. It must never be repeated again.

Today, in the war on terror, civil liberties are eroding as Muslims, primarily of Arab and Asian decent, are targeted. Even from a law enforcement perspective, racial profiling is sloppy law enforcement that leads to ineffective and unjust dragnet sweeps, which is wasteful and reduces the likelihood of apprehending violent criminals. The Nader campaign seeks to expand civil liberties to include basic human rights in employment and equal rights regardless of gender, sexual orientation, race or religion.

This specifically includes passage of the End Racial Profiling Act, championed by Congressman John Conyers, Jr. in the House and Senator Russell Feingold in the Senate, that would dissuade law enforcement from engaging in profiling by requiring collection of race data, and providing legal options to victims of racial profiling.

Regarding discrimination in employment, after more than 300 years of affirmative action to benefit white males, we definitely need affirmative action for people of color and women to offset enduring historic wrongs as well as present-day inequalities. Affirmative-action programs should not be based on quotas, and race and gender should not be the predominant factor in choosing qualified applicants. A good affirmative- action program uses a variety of methods to achieve the goal of increasing diversity, including using race and gender as one of many factors in evaluating the suitability of an applicant. Regarding Asian Americans, the Nader-Camejo campaign supports the enforcement of Executive Order 11246 which forbids any organization from receiving federal money if they practice discrimination. This should be applied to Asians as it is to other groups. Cases of racial discrimination should be vigorously prosecuted.

The United States government should set an example regarding discrimination against Asian Americans by appointing qualified Asian Americans to policy-making positions in the Judicial and Executive branches of the federal government.

Asian issues have been a long-term concern of Ralph Nader's, as an undergraduate at Princeton University his major was East Asian studies including language study in Chinese.

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Equal Rights for Gays and Lesbians

Ralph supports equal rights for gays and lesbians, including equal rights for same-sex couples.

He opposes President Bush's proposed constitutional amendment to ban same-sex marriages. All adults should be treated equally under the law. The Nader campaign believes that by attempting to mandate inequality, President Bush is leading the country in the wrong direction.

The Nader campaign agrees with Marie C. Wilson, the president of the Ms. Foundation, who recently said: "The most important thing is really having equal rights. It's not about the marriage. It's having the same rights that you would get if you were married."

The Nader campaign also believes that love and commitment is not exactly in surplus in this country and should be encouraged. The main tragedy of marriage, what undermines marriage, is divorce, as Mayor Richard Daley of Chicago recently said.

The Nader campaign supports full equal rights for gays and lesbians. While civil unions are a step in the right direction under current federal and state law, they do not afford full and equal rights. There are 1,049 federal rights that are only conferred with marriage. Additionally, at the state level, a civil union is only recognized in the state where it occurs, while a legal marriage, and all the rights that go with it, is recognized in all the states. Thus, the only way to ensure full equal rights is to recognize same-sex marriage.

In more than 200 years of American history, the U.S. Constitution has been amended only 17 times since the Bill of Rights and in each instance (except for Alcohol Prohibition, which was repealed), it was to extend rights and liberties to the American people, not restrict them. For example, our Constitution was amended to end our nation's tragic history of slavery. It was also amended to guarantee people of color, young people and women the right to vote.

The amendment urged by President Bush (called the Federal Marriage Amendment) would be the only one that would single out one class of Americans for discrimination by ensuring that same-sex couples would not be granted the equal protections that marriage brings to American families.

Equal Rights for Women

Ralph Nader endorses the full eleven-point agenda for economic, social and political rights of women advanced by the National Organization for Women (NOW).

The NOW agenda endorsed by Nader includes:

- *Feminization of Power*: If we are to reverse the feminization of poverty, we must have a Feminization of Power. We must move more feminist women into policy-making positions in government, business, education, religion and all the other powerful institutions of society.

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Women are barely tokens in the decision-making bodies of our nation, so the laws that govern us are made by men. In Congress, women make up only 10% of the lawmakers; in state legislatures, the number is less than 25%. NOW's Political Action Committees support candidates, both women and men, who support feminist goals. NOW encourages women to be politically active, to run for office from any political party, and to participate in the decision-making processes of the nation.

- **Economic Rights:** NOW is fighting for equality in jobs, pay, credit, insurance, pensions, fringe benefits, and Social Security through legislation, negotiation, labor organizing, education, and litigation. We are helping women break through the "glass ceiling" of the executive suite, and break loose of the "sticky floor" the dead-end, low wage jobs that keep so many women in poverty. NOW is actively opposed to punitive welfare reform that harms the most vulnerable women and children in our society.
- **Equal Rights Amendment:** Women are still not in the fundamental law of the land. The Equal Rights Amendment is essential to establish equality under the law for women. Equality in pay, job opportunities, insurance, social security, and education will remain an elusive dream without an ERA in the U.S. Constitution, and we are committed to its passage and ratification. The progress we have made for women's rights, and must continue to make, can be lost at any time without the strength of a Constitutional foundation.
- **Reproductive Rights:** NOW affirms that these are issues of life and death for women, not mere matters of choice. NOW supports access to safe and legal abortion, to effective birth control, to reproductive health and education. We oppose attempts to restrict these rights through legislation, regulation (like the gag rule) or Constitutional amendment. NOW supports the right of women to have children, including appropriate pre-natal care and quality child care. We oppose government efforts to limit or discourage childbearing, such as family caps and involuntary sterilization.
- **Lesbian/Gay Rights:** NOW is committed to fighting discrimination based on sexual orientation in all areas, including employment, housing, public accommodations, child custody, and military and immigration policy. NOW asserts the right of lesbians and gays to live their lives with dignity and security.
- **Eliminating Racism:** NOW condemns racism and takes action against racism as one of the organization's top priorities. Seeing human rights as indivisible, we are committed to identifying and fighting against those barriers to equality and justice that are imposed by racism.
- **Early Childhood Development:** NOW supports public programs to provide early childhood development as well as quality child care to meet the needs of children of all ages and their parents of all economic backgrounds.
- **Older Women's Rights:** NOW is dedicated to ensuring economic protections for older women, who are all too often condemned to lives of poverty. NOW is working to change the discriminatory Social Security system, pension, retirement programs, and health insurance plans to assure older women dignity and security.
- **Homemakers' Rights:** NOW actively supports full rights for homemakers and recognition of the economic value of the vital services they perform for family and society. We also support legislation and programs reflecting the reality of marriage as an equal economic partnership.

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- **Ending Violence Against Women:** NOW challenges and acts to change the image of women as victims, which leaves them vulnerable to sexual assault and spouse abuse. We pioneered model rape and spouse assault legislation as well as support programs for battered women, and NOW was instrumental in passing groundbreaking federal legislation, the Violence Against Women Act. In recent years, increasing anti-abortion violence has been used to limit women's access to reproductive health services, and NOW has brought a precedent-setting racketeering case against these terrorists.
- **Ending Education Discrimination:** NOW pursues the rights of girls and women to education without discrimination or segregation, equal opportunity in recreation and sports, and the inclusion of girls and women in all programs and educational institutions.

War on Drugs

The Nader campaign calls for the decriminalization of marijuana, the legalization of industrial hemp, and an end to the war on drugs.

Medical marijuana: The criminal prosecution of patients for medical marijuana must end immediately, and marijuana must be treated as a medicine for the seriously ill.

The current cruel, unjust policy perpetuated and enforced by the Bush Administration prevents Americans who suffer from debilitating illnesses from experiencing the relief of medicinal cannabis.

While substantial scientific and anecdotal evidence exists to validate marijuana's usefulness in treating disease, a deluge of rhetoric from Washington claims that marijuana has no medicinal value.

The Controlled Substances Act of 1970 defines marijuana as a Schedule One narcotic, making it very difficult for American researchers to perform rigorous double-blind scientific studies on marijuana. Even without these difficulties, research has shown marijuana to be a safe and effective medicine for controlling nausea associated with cancer therapy, reducing the eye pressure for patients with glaucoma, and reducing muscle spasms caused by multiple sclerosis, para- and quadriplegia.

Internationally, scientists are undertaking massive studies to determine the healing powers of cannabis. In August 2003 the esteemed British medical journal *The Lancet* reported that the world's largest study into the medical effects of cannabis have confirmed that the drug can reduce pain and improve the lives of people with multiple sclerosis. The three-year study was the first proper clinical appraisal of whether cannabis-derived drugs can help treat MS.

Harvard medical doctor Lester Grinspoon has said he would have loved to do a similar study, but has been held back by the law. On his website, www.rxmarijuana.com, and in his book [The Forbidden Medicine](#), Grinspoon documents how marijuana relieves the pain of people enduring more than 110

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different medical conditions like AIDS, Crohn's Disease, glaucoma, cancer, and many more. Marijuana helps increase appetite, reduce blood pressure and intraocular pressure.

Whenever given the chance, the American public has voted to allow seriously ill people to relieve their pain with marijuana. Despite well-funded opposition from the federal government, citizens in nine states have cast ballots to legalize the use of medicinal marijuana. No state has ever rejected such a voter initiative.

Medical marijuana community health centers have opened up in the states, like California, only to be aggressively attacked and closed by federal law enforcement agents.

Physicians must have the right to prescribe this drug to their patients without the fear of the federal government revoking their licenses, and doctor-patient privacy must be protected. The Drug Enforcement Administration should not be practicing medicine.

Industrial hemp: The Nader campaign supports industrial hemp as a renewable resource with many important fuel, fiber, food, paper, energy and other uses. Industrial hemp is a commercial crop grown for its seed and fiber and the products made from them such as oil, seed cake, and hurds (stalk cores). Industrial hemp is one of the longest and strongest fibers in the plant kingdom, and it has had thousands of uses over the centuries. In need of alternative crops and aware of the growing market for industrial hemp—particularly for bio-composite products such as automobile parts, farmers in the United States are forced to watch from the sidelines while Canadian, French and Chinese farmers grow the crop and American manufacturers import it from them. Federal legislators, meanwhile, continue to ignore the issue of removing it from the DEA list. It is time to allow hemp agriculture, production and manufacturing in the United States.

Clemency for Non-Violent Drug Offenders: In 2004, Ralph Nader wrote President Bush urging that he grant clemency to 30,000 non-violent drug offenders. Nader's letter highlighted the three decade long failed, and unjust, drug war. His call for clemency highlighted a similar request made by 400 clergy members to President Bill Clinton in 2000.

Nader's letter recalled President Bush's substance abuse problems and noted that if he had been incarcerated for cocaine use he "probably would not have gone on to have the career you have had." The letter also highlighted the rapid expansion of the prison system in the United States which now houses more than 2.1 million people – one-quarter of the world's prison population. Clemency for non-violent drug offenders would save more than \$1 billion annually.

"It is urgent that the U.S. reverse the incarceration binge. The U.S. Department of Justice estimates that if incarceration rates remain unchanged an estimated 1 of every 20 Americans and greater than 1 in 4 African Americans can be expected to serve time in prison during their lifetime," said Nader. "It is time to make the failed war on drugs a central issue in the American political dialogue. For too long we have let this injustice continue to grow unhindered. Taking action on clemency at the federal level will set an example for the states and begin the process of reversing this failed policy."

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Nader Reiterates Need to Heed Lessons of Native Peoples:

In 2004, Ralph Nader personally welcomed representatives of the thousands of American Indians and Alaska Natives who visited Washington to celebrate the opening of the National Museum of the American Indian. A contingent from Albuquerque, New Mexico briefed Nader on the continuing neglect of two million-plus off-reservation Indians by the federal and state governments, as well as some tribes, in matters of health care and educational support. So-called welfare-to-work programs have had the impact of other historic Indian removal programs and sent single mothers and their families into cities far away from health care, tribally influenced education, or even extended family support.

Nader's concern with Native Americans first blossomed when he published a lengthy article in 1956 on tribal sovereignty during the termination era in the Harvard Law Record. He has steadfastly supported tribal authority and America's commitment to treaty obligations pertaining to human services, land rights, governmental authority and hunting and fishing rights.

Nader sees the Museum as an opportunity for non-Indians to understand the continuing Constitutional obligation of a government-to-government relationship between the United States and the five hundred-plus tribes. He views the fidelity of our commitment to treaty and statutory commitments, which flow from this trust relationship between our government and the tribes, as a test of the application of our Constitution.

The museum's focus on modern Indian communities offers a second opportunity for non-Indians, according to Nader. Indian peoples have developed critical survival skills over many generations as each confronted systematic efforts to destroy their cultures and their communities. These tribes offer object lessons of stamina for American citizens who must now confront powerful efforts by concentrated corporate power to erode our culture and our democracy.