



## **John McCain: Bush's Third Term**

Republican nominee offers more of the same for Mainers on taxes, energy and health care

John McCain's Straight Talk Express is stuck in neutral on issues of greatest concern to Mainers. On tax cuts for the rich, home heating assistance and health care for Maine's poorest children, John McCain offers nothing more than a third Bush term.

This report by Americans United for Change reveals how John McCain's support for the Bush tax cuts may be continued good news for the wealthiest Mainers, but it means more of the same for everyone else.

### **Highlights**

- **In order to double the number of Maine Households receiving funds from the Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) – adding assistance to 46,000 Maine households, would cost the same amount as the Bush Tax breaks provide for the top 5% of tax payers in the United States in two hours this year. (about \$26 million).**
- **In order to double the number of Maine Households receiving funds from the State Children's Health Care Program (SCHIP) providing insurance to 12,000 Maine children, would cost the same amount as the Bush Tax breaks provide for the top 5% of tax payers in the United States in two and a half hours this year. (about \$33 million).**
  - ◆ **John McCain says he will maintain the Bush Tax Breaks to the Wealthy.**
  - ◆ **John McCain voted to cut funding for Low Income Energy Assistance.**
  - ◆ **John McCain voted against expanding funding for Children.**
  - ◆ **How can John McCain justify providing a couple of hours of tax breaks for the wealthiest people in America instead of energy**

**assistance for 46,000 hard hit Maine households or insurance for 12,000 children?<sup>1</sup>**

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## **John McCain: Bush's Third Term on Tax Cuts for the Rich**

John McCain originally opposed the Bush tax cuts which, in all, cost the U.S. Treasury \$1.25 billion for the state of Maine.<sup>2</sup> In 2009, the wealthiest one percent of Mainers, who make on average \$772,700 annually, will get a \$34,290 tax cut.<sup>3</sup>

But now that he is running for President himself, John McCain wants to make the Bush tax cuts permanent. During a GOP debate at Florida Atlantic University, McCain said: "I'm disappointed because I think it's very important that we make the Bush tax cuts permanent. I voted to make them permanent twice already. If we don't make the tax cuts permanent, [Americans] will have what amounts to a tax increase."<sup>4</sup>

*The bottom line:* If John McCain gets to serve Bush's third term, the wealthiest Mainers will continue to be lavished with tax cuts while important priorities for everyone else remain ignored.

## **John McCain: Bush's Third Term on Denying Home Heating Assistance**

With oil prices at record highs, home heating assistance is a top priority for Mainers. Forty-six thousand households in Maine receive funds from the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).<sup>5</sup> In 2008, Mainers receive more than \$26 million from the program to help keep their heat on.<sup>6</sup>

LIHEAP is a vital program for the elderly and low-income Mainers families who would otherwise be forced to choose between buying food or heating their homes. Despite this,

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<sup>1</sup> Cost of Bush Tax cuts calculated by Instituted on Taxation and Economic Policy Model, March 2007 as reported by Citizens for Tax Justice – approximately \$13 million dollars per hour for 2008.

<sup>2</sup> "Size of the Bush Tax Cuts By State," The Tax Foundation, 8/24/04, <http://www.taxfoundation.org/files/ff15.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Citizens for Tax Justice, Press Release, "The Bush Tax Cuts: Are Mainers Better Off?" October, 2006, <http://www.ctj.org/pdf/bushtaxcutsme.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> MSNBC/FAU GOP Debate, 1/24/2008

<sup>5</sup> US Department of Health and Human Services, LIHEAP Clearinghouse, accessed 7/17/08, available here: <http://www.liheap.ncat.org/profiles/Maine.htm>

<sup>6</sup> US Department of Health and Human Services, LIHEAP Clearinghouse, accessed 7/17/08, available here: <http://www.liheap.ncat.org/profiles/Maine.htm>

John McCain opposes home heating assistance for Mainers and throughout the past 13 years has voted repeatedly to slash LIHEAP funding.<sup>7</sup>

In 2006, McCain voted against a measure that would have increased funding for LIHEAP by \$500 million.<sup>8</sup> And ten years earlier, McCain voted to gut LIHEAP funding by \$633 million over six years and freeze the program thereafter.<sup>9</sup> The thought of freezing Mainers apparently never crossed his mind.

***The bottom line:*** While John McCain supports a \$34,290 tax cut for the wealthiest one percent of Mainers in 2009 alone, he opposes helping Mainers cope with rising home heating costs.

### **John McCain: Bush's Third Term on Denying Health Care for Kids**

Currently, nearly 15,000 Maine needy kids are enrolled in the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), which provides health insurance for children in families who earn up to double the federal poverty income level.<sup>10</sup>

In 2007, the United States Congress overwhelmingly passed a bipartisan bill to reauthorize and expand the SCHIP to cover more kids whose parents can not afford health insurance. Under the bill, "Maine was slated to receive more than \$33 million in federal matching funds" – enough to cover 12,000 additional Maine children.<sup>11</sup> John McCain voted against it, denying these children health insurance coverage.<sup>12</sup>

Like McCain, President Bush also opposed expanding health insurance for needy children and vetoed the SCHIP bill. McCain told CNN that Bush's veto of the legislation was the "right call by the president," even though the veto denied health care to millions of poor children nationwide, including an additional 12,000 children in Maine.<sup>13</sup>

***The bottom line:*** While John McCain supports a \$34,290 tax cut for the wealthiest one percent of Mainers in 2009 alone, he denied health care to nearly 12,000 of Maine's neediest children.

### **Conclusion**

From tax cuts for the rich to home heating assistance to health care for Maine's neediest children, John McCain offers more of the same. He supports a \$34,000 tax cut for the richest one percent of Mainers, but could care less that elderly Mainers may have to

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<sup>7</sup> 2006 Senate Vote #57, 3/16/2006; 2005 Senate Vote #349, 11/18/2005; 2005 Senate Vote #261, 10/20/2005; 1995 Senate Vote #319, 7/21/1995

<sup>8</sup> 2006 Senate Vote #42, 3/14/2006

<sup>9</sup> 1996 Senate Vote #129, 5/22/1996

<sup>10</sup> Sun Journal, (Lewiston, Maine), 10/5/07

<sup>11</sup> State By State Number of Kids Covered By Bipartisan CHIP Bill," Press Release, Office of Speaker Nancy Pelosi, 10/18/07; Press Release By Maine State Representative Mark Bryant, 10/26/07

<sup>12</sup> 2007 Senate Vote #307, 8/2/2007

<sup>13</sup> CNN.com, 10/3/2007, <http://www.cnn.com/2007/POLITICS/10/03/mccain.interview/index.html>

choose between food and heating their homes this winter. He wants to make the Bush tax cuts permanent, but has no problem denying health insurance to 12,000 needy Maine kids.

Despite his rhetoric, John McCain represents nothing more than a Bush third term.