

# Local Action for National Change

**A Guide to Lobbying for a Progressive Budget during the Congressional Recess**

**April 2009**



[www.campusprogress.org](http://www.campusprogress.org)

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## OVERVIEW

2008 was an amazing year. Young people across the country mobilized to register a record number of voters, participated in presidential campaigns, revolutionized how these campaigns are run, and, when election day finally came, changed the electoral landscape by voting at unprecedented levels. This huge surge of activity was due not to one candidate, but to the weight of the issues that we face and the conviction that change is possible. Young people are now—finally—on the map as an important political constituency.

But now is not the time to rest on our laurels if we want to see the change for which we worked so hard. President Obama recently released his proposal for the **2010 federal budget**, which will help to define what reforms are possible for the next year. His proposal was bold and progressive, especially when it comes to the issues that affect young people the most: **climate change, health care, and college access and affordability.**

Unfortunately, ideological conservatives and special interests—like student loan companies and the coal industry—are fighting hard to derail the progressive agenda. If young people do not take a stand to protect vital investments in our future, we could lose the opportunity to realize the change that we have been fighting for.

## TAKE ACTION!

Join Campus Progress in our efforts to make sure that the federal budget:

- Puts people, especially young people, before corporate interests
- Makes long-term investments in a sustainable and just future
- Builds prosperity and opportunity from the bottom up

We can do this only by being as loud and as smart as the powerful interests desperately trying to derail progress and hold on to a broken status quo. One of the best opportunities to make your voice heard will be to talk with your elected representatives when they return to their home districts for the **Congressional Work Period from April 6<sup>th</sup> through the 17<sup>th</sup>.**

Before you get in contact with your representatives, you need to evaluate what you have the capacity to organize. **Will you organize a town hall event on your campus or will you get some friends together for a meeting with your elected officials?**

- **Town hall events:** Take this opportunity to give a voice to people from different groups
- **Office visits:** Take the time to elaborate on your talking points, it's easy to schedule one

It's up to you to determine which one works best in your community. We hope that this toolkit will be helpful to you and, as always, feel free to e-mail us at [organize@campusprogress.org](mailto:organize@campusprogress.org) to get help from Campus Progress staff.

Now go out and continue flexing your political muscle!

Sincerely,

**The Campus Progress Advocacy Team**

Erica, Natasha, Pedro, Tanya, and Tommaso

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## PLAN OF ACTION

### REQUEST TIME WITH YOUR LEGISLATOR



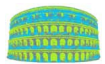
1. Call your congressperson and two senators' local offices (find out how at [house.gov](http://house.gov)) and ask for the direct phone number, fax number, and email address of the Appointment Secretary or Scheduler.



2. Email, fax AND call the number to request a meeting during the recess with your official's local office and suggest specific times and dates (Check out the sample invite in APPENDIX I).



3. If you went to PowerShift 09 or USSA LegCon, let them know that you are following up from those lobby days and want to show them how much support you have back in your district.



4. If you are doing a town hall, book a venue – reserve the largest venue on your campus for every day you have available during the two weeks of congressional recess. You want to make sure that whatever time that works for your representative works for you.



5. Contact Campus Progress at [organize@campusprogress.org](mailto:organize@campusprogress.org) to help you set up a meeting, deal with messaging, targeting, media, visibility and other logistics for the event.

### TIPS AND TRICKS

1. Be polite and patient – schedulers are the gatekeepers.
2. Follow up every two days both via phone or e-mail until you get an answer.
3. Do your research! It is useful to know about your representative's interests and background so you can tailor your letters and phone calls to make your invitation sound more appealing. (e.g. I am calling to set up a meeting about X because I know you have worked on authoring a bill about this issue and it's a really important issue in your district)

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## IN DISTRICT MEETINGS

Meetings with elected representatives vary in structure, agenda and content. You could be meeting directly with the legislator or with a member of his staff, you could have 5, 10 or even more than 30 minutes, you could be meeting them in their office, in a conference room, or at your organizations' meeting space. You want to make sure to prepare for the meeting, research your legislator's stance on the issues, their committee assignments, and make sure everybody in the room has a role. Check out this sample agenda and roles and tailor your message to the law maker with whom you are meeting.

SAMPLE AGENDA (based on a 30 minute meeting, based on Wellstone Action resources)

### 1. **Introductions** (5 minutes)

All students introduce themselves with full name, hometown/school.

Meeting overview – Explain that you are there to talk about passing a progressive budget for 2010, and why young people are interested in this issue.

### 2. **Personal Stories** (10 Minutes)

Have 1-3 people tell a personal story about how the current economic situation is affecting them personally and why they legislator should support a progressive budget. Stay personal, don't get wonky.

### 3. **The Ask** (10 minutes)

Make your hard ask: "*will you support a progressive budget?*" You should record video of response if possible. Respond strategically to move supporters to champions, undecideds to supporters, opponents to side-sitters. Figure out what parts of the budget they do not support, if any, and use your talking points to defend the progressive priorities that you care about.

### 4. **Closing** (5 minutes)

Thank them for the meeting and clarify the need to follow-up.

**IMPORTANT:** Before you leave, ask if you can take a picture with the representative. Taking a picture with them can give you some precious extra time that you can dedicate to reinforcing your ask, and commit to visit them again next time they will be in district.

### ROLES:

- **The Facilitator:** Leads introduction, meeting overview, closing and keeping it on track.
- **The Storytellers:** Delivers message, makes it personal, speaks to why legislator should act.
- **The Pitcher:** Makes the hard ask and is prepared to respond depending on what legislator says.
- **The Recorder:** Takes comprehensive notes on what the legislator says. See APPENDIX IV.
- **Volunteers:** Stand outside the venue before the event with informational flyers and after the event with "Action Steps" when it ends.

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## TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE GRASSROOTS LOBBYING

1. **Know your agenda and roles going in.** How does the conversation go? Who does what? Check out the sample agenda for ideas.
2. **Who you are matters. Tell your story.** Why do you care about the budget, and why are you moved to act?
3. **Deliver a clear, compelling message.** Your message isn't just a list of bulleted policy points, but should address why the member of Congress should care and act.
4. **Demonstrate your power.** The Millennial Generation is 50 million strong. We're ¼ of the potential electorate right now and will be 1/3 by 2015. We're more active and more aware than any generation since the baby boomers. We're not going away. And we vote.
5. **Politely control the conversation.** Remember what you came for. Politicians/staff often control conversations with small talk, talking about things other than the issue at hand, or asking questions they know you can't answer. Stay focused on your agenda and diplomatically move the conversation where you want it to go.
6. **Make a hard ask.** "Can we count on you to support the principles we've laid out?"
7. **Be strategic in your response to their position.** Thank supporters and help turn them into champions. If you can, give undecideds the information they need to become supporters, or commit to follow-up with information that you do not know. Neutralize the opposition if possible, but don't waste too much time trying to argue with them.
8. **Do:** stay positive, talk in the public interest, view this as an educational process, and take the long view (no permanent enemies, no permanent friends)
9. **Don't:** whine, threaten, bluff, misrepresent the facts, malign the opposition, personalize differences of opinion, or burn bridges.
10. **Saying "I don't know" is not a crime.** It's always OK to say that you don't know but will follow up with an answer they're looking for. You don't have to be a policy expert to be effective.
11. **Remember: Rome wasn't built in a day.** You're not going to get everything you want out of this meeting. It's the beginning of a critical relationship that will ultimately move them over time.
12. **Look out for deflections:** Legislators like to blame others for inaction, whether it's their more conservative colleagues or other branches of government. Make sure that you keep the emphasis on what THEY can do to help your cause like supporting more ambitious targets, co-sponsoring legislation, introducing amendments or making an effort to convince like-minded colleagues.

*This section was developed with the help of trainings from Wellstone Action. You can learn more about Wellstone Action at [www.wellstone.org](http://www.wellstone.org).*

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## TOWN HALLS

Town Hall Meetings are large events, usually open to the public, where the public faces their elected official to express their concerns, receive a response, and usually get media coverage. The event usually consists of a few select speakers of your choice who frame the issue, a chance for the member of Congress to speak, and the delivery of your “ask”. Your member of Congress needs to connect to constituents, hear their opinions, and get local media attention in their district. By becoming part of this process, you can make sure that your elected officials pay attention.

SAMPLE AGENDA (based on a 1.5 hour 3 person panel event)

### 1. **Introductory comments** (45 minutes)

- Moderator introduces the situation and sets the tone for the event (funding our future)
- Panelists speak for 5 minutes each about their views on the budget
- Moderator asks questions about how the budget will impact young people (20 minutes)

### 2. **Question & Answer** (25 Minutes)

- People from the audience line up to ask questions. Moderator takes questions from audience for (25 minutes)

### 3. **Conclusion** (5 minutes)

- Moderator thanks panelists and people in the audience and closes with hard ask: “*Do you support President Obama’s budget priorities for climate change, health care reform and higher education?*”
- **IMPORTANT:** Before you leave, ask if you can take a picture with the representative. Taking a picture with them can give you some precious extra time that you can dedicate to reinforcing your ask, and commit to visit them again next time they will be in district.

### ROLES :

- **Moderator:** Leads introduction, sets the scene with a couple of questions, MCs the Q&A)
- **Video Coordinator:** Records the event and posts it online right after the event
- **Recorder:** Takes comprehensive notes on what the legislator says
- **New Media Recorder:** Live blogs and tweets what the legislator is saying
- **Pitchers:** Students who go up to the mike with pre-established hard asks and questions
- **Volunteers:** Stand outside the venue before the event with informational flyers and after the event with “Action Steps” when it ends
- **Outreach and Publicity:** Works before the event to recruit attendees, secure media coverage, and find co-sponsors for the event

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## **SHOW YOUR STRENGTH**

When you visit your member of Congress or host a town hall, it is a good idea to show that you have substantial support behind you. There are a few good ways to accomplish this goal:

### **SIZE (AND DIVERSITY) MATTERS**

The most effective way to get your message across and be taken seriously is to bring as many people as possible to your meetings and town halls. If they tell you there is a size limit, ask them for more meetings or a larger room. It's not all about quantity though; the kind of people you bring matters even just as much. You want people of all backgrounds and all interests to show that there is broad support for passing a progressive budget. Bringing 10 members from your campus environmental group is not nearly as effective as bringing 5 people from different groups to back you up.

### **MEDIA SUPERSTAR**

Show your representative that your group is often in the public eye by bringing a binder with all of the media hits, flyers, and campaign materials that you and your group compiled throughout the years. These materials show the legislators that you are already implementing the change in your community and that you are talking to others in the process. Nothing shows power like your ability to organize and get others to care about your work.

### **STATEMENTS OF SUPPORT**

Individual statements of support from student and faculty groups can show substantial support for your demands. We have included a sample statement of support in APPENDIX II. The statement of support could be either signed by the individual leaders or by the whole group. You should especially target:

- Student government president
- Student government legislative directors
- Prominent faculty, especially economists
- Environmental student organizations
- Student labor groups
- Financial aid directors
- Student newspaper editorial board
- Progressive student organizations
- Student groups responsible for voter registration or GOTV efforts in 2008
- Alumni Association
- Staff, graduate student, and faculty union
- Community leaders
- Religious leaders

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## TESTIMONIALS

Collect testimonials from friends, family, and co-workers about how misplaced priorities in the past affected them. Encouraging them to either **write a brief letter** about their experiences with college affordability, health care coverage, or environmental problems, or **record a short you tube video** that you can show your member of Congress during a town hall or meeting. For an example of a video testimonial, check out this video from Campus Progress Action's I'm Voting For campaign: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=SrYrti4G5-A&feature=channel](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SrYrti4G5-A&feature=channel)

## GET CREATIVE

Another way to show that there is significant support for a progressive budget is to use your creativity! Here are a few ideas that could help to make sure that your member of Congress remembers the meeting:

- **Student Check Book:** Make a "check book," and have students on campus write out "checks" to some of the progressive priorities that should be in the 2010 budget and deliver it in-person to your member of Congress.
- **Progressive Baked Goods:** Bake some goodies using cookie cutters shaped like dollar signs, design a nice package for them with progressive messaging, and offer them to the member of Congress during the meeting.
- **Signs of Progress:** Have students on campus take a picture holding a handwritten sign with a personal message to the member about passing a progressive budget and deliver them in-person to your member of Congress.
- **Giant Petition:** Get students on campus to sign a giant petition, and deliver it in-person to your member of Congress.

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## WHAT NEXT?

### REPORT BACK TO CAMPUS PROGRESS

Everything you find out about your legislator and their position on the budget will be helpful to Campus Progress and other progressive organizations working to pass the most progressive budget in history. *In district lobby meetings and town halls have the dual purpose of influencing your legislator with your stories and to collect information about their stances to help progressive groups strategize effectively.* Make sure your recorder prints out the form on APPENDIX IV and return it to [organize@campusprogress.org](mailto:organize@campusprogress.org).

### SEND FOLLOW-UP LETTERS

#### TO THE LEGISLATOR

Grassroots lobbying is like relationships: you wouldn't stop talking to someone if you were really interested in them after the first date! Send a follow-up letter to your legislators after your meeting or town hall to thank them for showing up and sharing their time. This also gives you another opportunity to state your priorities and show how organized you are. Be creative with it—the congressional offices would be delighted to receive a hand-crafted card. Check out the sample legislator follow-up e-mail in APPENDIX III.

#### TO THE ATTENDEES

The people attending the meeting or town hall with you are like your wing-people. You might think that you will be OK after the first time, but you are going to need them again. Send them a thank you e-mail as well and encourage them to remain involved in the cause. Once you graduate you will be happy to have built a movement instead of a cult of personality. Check out the sample follow-up e-mail in APPENDIX III.

### KEEP UP THE PRESSURE

Think you are done? There will be endless other opportunities to communicate with your representative. Here are some suggestions about how to keep up the pressure after your in-district meeting or town hall:

- Organize a letter writing drive when important bills are introduced
- Write letters to the editor or op-eds about your lobbying experience, important legislative positions, and other organizing victories and send them to your legislator when they are printed. Campus Progress can help, just get in touch at [organize@campusprogress.org](mailto:organize@campusprogress.org)!
- Come to the Campus Progress National Conference on July 8<sup>th</sup> and participate in the Lobby Day on July 9<sup>th</sup>.
- Organize another lobby visit/town hall event in your hometown during the August Congressional Recess (8/3-9/4) and pull out this toolkit one more time.



## APPENDIX I – INVITATION SCRIPTS AND LETTERS

### SAMPLE INVITE LETTER

{Use your student organization’s logo or letterhead if you have it, or use a Campus Progress logo <http://www.campusprogress.org/about/3629/campus-progress-logos> if you are working with one of us on the event}

Dear Representative/Senator [last name],

On behalf of [insert your organization or group name here] we would like to formally invite you to join us in a town hall forum/district office meeting over the Congressional recess in April. Across the country, we are gathering to ask Congress to rebuild our economy and secure our future by supporting Obama’s budget proposal to create clean energy investments and green jobs under a cap and trade, reform the financial aid system to make college affordable, and provide quality healthcare now.

As you know, young people voted in record numbers in the last election. We are working with the Energy Action Coalition, the United States Student Association, US PIRG, and many other groups to organize thousands of young people to organize meetings in every Congressional district in the country. As your constituents, our top priority is to bring these issues to [insert city or region].

Our organization has already been working in [insert school or city] to promote [insert 2 sentences on your local work].

As young voters concerned for our economy, country, & climate, we want legislation to:

- **Enact a Fair Cap and Trade Program:** Cap carbon and reduce global warming pollution by the science-based targets of 25-40% by 2020 and 80-95% relative to 1990 levels, auction 100% of pollution permits, allow no offsets and safety valves, and use the revenues to deploy renewable energy, implement energy efficiency, and to offset costs for middle and low income households.
- **Re-Vitalize our Higher Education:** End the wasteful FFELP program to cut out the middleman and use the revenue to expand the Pell Grant award and peg it to inflation, reform the Perkins Loan program, and to create a \$2.5 billion fund supporting state-federal partnerships that help disadvantaged students access a higher education.
- **Fix our Broken Healthcare System:** Enact President Obama’s proposed investments in healthcare to reduce waste and eliminate red tape while paving the way for expanded coverage to low-income Americans.

Please let us know your availability so we can plan accordingly. If the representative is available for a town hall we’ll make sure to reserve the largest room available on campus.

Thank you and we look forward to hearing back from you.

Sincerely,

[your name here]

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## SAMPLE INVITE PHONE SCRIPT

### Introduction:

Hi,

My name is [Your Name] and I am a constituent from [Town where you go to school]. On behalf of [insert your organization or group name here] we would like to formally invite [Senator X/Congressman/woman X] to join us in a [town hall forum/district office meeting] over the Congressional recess in April. [As soon as we know [his/her] availability, we will book the largest room on our campus to make sure the representative will be heard by [hundreds] of constituents. (for town hall only)] When would he/she be available to [come to campus / meet with us]?

### If asked: "What issues you would like for the representative to talk about?"

Across the country, we are gathering to ask Congress to rebuild our economy and secure our future by supporting President Obama's proposed budget proposal to create clean energy investments and green jobs under a cap and trade, reform the financial aid system to make college affordable, and provide quality healthcare now.

### If scheduler seems uninterested/unresponsive:

As you know, young people voted in record numbers in the last election so now we are working to make sure that our elected officials are working towards the change that we voted for. We are working with many other groups including the United States Student Association, the Energy Action Coalition, and the US PIRGs to organize thousands of meetings in every Congressional district in the country. As your constituents, our top priority is to bring these issues to [insert city or region].

### If unable to come to the campus:

We are sorry to hear that. We would still like to use this opportunity to meet with our representative while [she/he] is home. Can we schedule a brief in-person visit at [his/her] office? There are [10, 30, 50, 100] young people in my group that are excited about this opportunity.

### Close:

Thank you very much for your time, we look forward to seeing [Senator X/Congressman/woman X] on [Date, Time] at [Venue/Campus]. Have a fantastic day.



## APPENDIX II – LETTER OF SUPPORT

Dear Rep./Sen. So-and-So,

I/we are writing to urge you to support a federal budget for 2010 that will make long overdue investments in real progressive priorities. We need green jobs, affordable education, and universal health care now. These policies are necessary to keep us on the path of recovery, and make us strong and competitive in the 21st Century.

A strong progressive budget, containing many of the policies found in President Obama's proposal, will lay the foundation to rebuild our future by putting Americans to work in a clean energy economy, reforming our education system to provide access for all, and making quality healthcare available for all Americans.

The President's budget proposal addresses our need for a clean energy economy by proposing a cap and trade policy that would generate an estimated \$75 billion a year in auction revenues which, in addition to offsetting energy costs for middle and low-income families, would invest in programs to modernize federal buildings and cut energy bills for millions of American families. These investments would build on programs from the Recovery and Reinvestment Act, such as the Weatherization Assistance Program, and create millions of new jobs.

The proposed budget will also open the doors of college to millions of students by creating a \$2.5 billion fund supporting state-federal partnerships that help disadvantaged students access a higher education and overcome the obstacles they face to earn a degree. Obama's proposal will also expand the Pell Grant award and reform the Perkins Loan program to help low-income students who are often forced to take out costly private loans to receive their education. Finally, the budget will reform financial aid for students, ending the Federal Family Education Loan Program to cut out the middleman and allowing the government to loan directly to students. This will create an estimated \$94 billion in savings over ten years that will help to fund student aid programs.

Americans are also struggling under the burden of the cost of healthcare. Obama's budget will make the immediate investment needed to computerize all of America's medical records within five years while protecting the privacy of patients. This is a necessary step to reducing waste, eliminating red tape, and avoiding the need to repeat expensive medical tests. The proposed budget will also fundamentally reform our healthcare system by establishing a reserve fund of \$630 billion over 10 years to finance the reform and expand health coverage to low-income Americans.

It is vital that you support the bold investments in the President's budget to strengthen America and transform the government's priorities for its citizens. When voting to pass this proposal in Congress, and opposition begins to mount over spending, please remember that this budget will be investing in my future and the future of millions like me.

Sincerely,



## APPENDIX III – THANK YOU LETTERS

### FOLLOW-UP LETTER TO LEGISLATORS

Dear Rep./Sen. So and So,

I am writing to thank you for meeting with the student delegation from the University of Pluto on April 6, 2009 at your office in Pluto City. With so many important issues that will affect our generation's future hanging in the balance—like climate change, health care, and college access and affordability—we are happy that we had a chance to discuss the importance of passing a 2010 budget with bold progressive priorities.

The US, once a world leader in educating its citizens, is now lagging behind. This is bad news for the millions of young people who will never get the education they need to be successful, it also spells trouble for our country's long term economic health. You can help put our education system on sure footing by ending wasteful subsidies to student loan companies, reforming and expanding the Pell grant and Perkins loan programs, and creating federal-state partnerships for access and completion.

Another challenge our generation faces is global warming and other environmental problems caused by dirty industries like coal and other fossil fuels. Young people will inherit the consequences of global warming. That is why we urgently need a budget that allows for a strong climate change bill that will make polluters pay by auctioning 100% of available polluting permits. We think strong action on climate change will also put Americans back to work to build a green economy that is strong enough to create good jobs that will stay in the US, revitalize parts our manufacturing sector, and lift people out of poverty.

Finally, neither the long-term economy nor the well-being of many young people will survive without both a dramatic expansion of health care coverage and policies that will lower health care costs.

We urge you to not only vote for these important policies, but to also become a champion in the House/Senate for a progressive 2010 budget. All of the students that visited your office will remain engaged in this issue, and will be in touch about how we can help to build a prosperous, free, and just America.

Sincerely,

Robert Johnson  
Treasurer, UP Environmental Club  
University of Pluto Freshman  
sweethomechicago@wahoo.com  
222-222-2222

Charlie Chaplin  
University of Pluto Sophomore  
moderntimes@dmail.com  
111-111-1111



## FOLLOW-UP LETTER TO STUDENT PARTICIPANTS

Dear Charlie, Robert, and Juliette,

I wanted to thank you for all of your help in setting-up and attending the meeting with Sen./Rep. SoandSo on Tuesday.

While we were only a few students meeting with one member of Congress, we were part of a nationwide movement to transform the priorities of the government. Your involvement has gone a long way in building momentum for strong progressive change in 2010 and beyond on college affordability and access, health care, and climate change.

There is still much to do, however. Congress will be working on the final budget resolution, budget reconciliation bills, and other legislation that affect our generation's future through out the rest of spring and during the summer. We need to make sure that we continue to engage Congress and the public, and counter the influence of special interest groups like the dirty coal or student loan industries.

As you know, I have been working with Campus Progress to help set this meeting, and I would love to continue working with this organization and all of you to make sure that the voice of young people is heard in the halls of Congress. I will be in touch about other ways to be involved, and would love to hear what ideas you might have to continue working for progressive change.

Sincerely,  
Bukka White  
Campus Progress Student Representative  
[shakemondown@lotmail.com](mailto:shakemondown@lotmail.com)  
333-333-3333

PS: One great way to remain involved in this issue is to attend the 2009 Campus Progress National Conference, which will include a lobby day on these issues. You can find out more here: [campusprogress.org/events/3577/campus-progress-national-conference](http://campusprogress.org/events/3577/campus-progress-national-conference)



## **APPENDIX IV – EVALUATION FORM**

Thank you for fighting for a progressive budget that will invest in our future! Today is only the beginning: we need to keep working hard to make sure that our elected officials are putting young people, and the future of all Americans, before special interests like the student loan and dirty coal industries. In order to help you fight for a green, just, and prosperous country, we need to keep track of where our lawmakers stand on the issues that matter to us. Please answer these questions the best that you can, and either: email the answers to [organize@campusprogress.org](mailto:organize@campusprogress.org); fax this sheet to 202-682-1867; or snail-mail it to Campus Progress, The Center for American Progress, 1333 H St. NW, Washington, DC 20005.

- 1. Who were you Scheduled to meet with? Please include the name of the Sen. or Rep., any relevant staffers, and contact info for the person or people that you actually met with.**
  
- 2. How long did the meeting last?**
  
- 3. Were you received cordially or dismissively? Please describe in detail.**
  
- 4. Please describe the conversations about policy in as much detail as possible.**
  
- 5. Were they excited about any points in particular? Did they make any commitments? Please be detailed.**
  
- 6. What follow-up steps did you establish?**
  
- 7. Did you take any pictures or video of the member? Where can we access them? We want to post or link to it on our website.**

## Affordable College Education for All Americans

*“By 2020, America will once again have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world.” –  
President Barack Obama*

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### Summary:

The United States was once the best educated country in the world, and much of our prosperity rested on this unprecedented investment in the talents and creativity of the American people. Unfortunately, decades of public divestment from education and student aid programs, along with the progress of other countries, has led the United States to slip in its level of educational attainment.

In order to build a sustainable economy in the long-term while making sure that students and young people are not denied a college education because of the financial crisis, we need serious reform to the student financial aid system, and a major investment in college access, completion, and affordability. Passing President Obama’s budget proposal for 2010 would be an important step in putting our country back on track.

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### Problem:

- The current generation is less educated than earlier generations. Americans that are 35-65 years old are second only to Canadians when it comes to post-secondary degree attainment, but 25-34 year old Americans are ranked 10<sup>th</sup> place. The US currently ranks 15<sup>th</sup> in the number of degrees and certificates awarded per 100 students enrolled.
- The Lumina Foundation estimates that the American Economy will face a shortage of 16 million college-educated workers by 2025.
- A college graduate can be expected to make \$1 million more over the course of his or her working life than a high school graduate.
- Student aid has often failed to keep up with college costs. The Pell grant, which helps low and middle income families, covered 72% of the average cost of attendance for a public four year college in 1976, but only 33% of this cost in 2006.
- We are leaving too many talented young people behind, especially those from low-income or minority families. The most academically prepared low-income high school graduates go to school at about the same rate as the least prepared students from wealthy families. For young people that do attend college, large class and racial disparities exist in completion rates. Almost 67% of non-Hispanic White students earn a bachelor’s degree from any school within six years, while the same can be said for only 45.7% of non-Hispanic Black students.
- Nearly one in four public college graduates, and four in ten graduates from private colleges, have student debt levels that would be unmanageable at the starting salary of a teacher.



## **Progressive Budget Priorities:**

### **I. Make Pell Grants More Reliable**

The Pell grant is the most important source of aid for middle and low income students. Currently, Congress must fund the program through the annual discretionary budget process, which in practice has meant that the maximum award tends to remain the same for long periods of time. Congress should make sure that the 2010 budget provides for swift passage of legislation to increase the maximum award to \$5,550 for the 2010-11 school year, make the Pell Grant a mandatory program, and tie the maximum award to 1% over the Consumer Price Index to prevent declines in the grant's purchasing power.

### **II. Create State/Federal Partnerships for College Access and Completion Rates**

Currently, there are too few programs addressing the issues of college access and completion on a large scale, and these programs do not always provide the kinds of information that could be used to refine future efforts on this issue. Congress should create a \$2.5 billion fund for the development of state-federal partnerships that aim to increase access and completion rates, particularly for disadvantaged and underrepresented students. Congress should make sure that these partnerships include a research component to ensure improve our knowledge of what kinds of programs work, and which do not.

### **III. End Wasteful Financial Aid Programs, and Make Student Loans Reliable**

The Department of Education manages two programs to provide the same federal loans to students: the Federal Family Education Loan Program (FFELP) and the William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program (DLP). In the DLP, the government lends directly to students, but in the FFELP the government grants private companies subsidies and guarantees against default. The Congressional Budget Office estimated that originating all future federal student loans from the DLP will save taxpayers \$94 billion over ten years. In addition to being more expensive, FFELP is has a higher cohort default rate, is more prone to corruption, and is less reliable for students. As Education Secretary Arne Duncan said, this program is "on life support." The Department of Education was forced to begin purchasing FFELP loans to keep the program from collapsing, essentially providing lenders with the capital they need to make new loans. Congress should originate all new student loans from the DLP, and utilize the savings to reform and expand student aid programs like the Pell Grant. The budget should provide additional resources to the Department of Education in order to help schools with the transition to the DLP.

### **IV. Reform and Expand the Perkins Loan Program**

Perkins loans have a low interest rate (5%), and must be used to help cover demonstrated financial need. They differ from other federal loan programs in the degree of leeway that college financial aid offices have as to who receives the award. Unfortunately, the current formula for distributing the funds to schools tends to disproportionately benefit wealthier schools like Harvard, rather than community colleges and public four-year universities. Congress should expand the current program by making up to six billion dollars available each year, and change the formula to encourage institutional need-based aid and reward schools that graduate students from working families while keeping tuition under control. These reforms will provide targeted assistance to students that would otherwise turn to private loans, and are a good alternative to raising federal student loan limits, which would cause student debt levels to spike.

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## Building a Sustainable Future with Green Jobs

*“We will put Americans to work making our homes and buildings more efficient so that we can save billions of dollars on our energy bills.” – President Barack Obama*

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### Summary:

The United States is facing a convergence of crises. Our economy is in shambles and young people are entering the worst job market since the great depression, more and more young people are being sent overseas to fight wars over few remaining oil reserves, and the stability of our future is threatened by the violent repercussions of the climate crisis.

In order to build a sustainable economy, end our oil wars, and guarantee a livable planet for future generations, we need to wean ourselves off our addiction to fossil fuels. President Obama called for a price on carbon, deployment of renewable energy, and the creation of millions of green jobs by making our houses and buildings more energy efficient. Passing President Obama’s budget proposal for 2010 is an important step in putting our country back on track, but we need to get even more ambitious.

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### Problem:

- Greenhouse Gasses are accumulating in the atmosphere, warming up our climate and changing weather patterns. If nothing is done to address this problem, fresh water scarcity, sea level rise, and desertification will cause a global humanitarian crisis.
- The global economic crisis was spurred in part by the extreme increase in the price of oil. There isn’t enough oil to satisfy predicted world demand increase while alternatives already exist. What lacks is political will.
- The current unemployment rate in the United States is 8.1%, the highest it’s been in 25 years. We need to make investments to put Americans back to work. Our generation is graduating in the worst job market in many years.
- Energy prices have been steadily increasing due to increasing demand and shrinking supply of fossil fuels. A cap on carbon and deployment of renewable energy is the only thing that will stop the steady upward trend.
- Natural gas, oil and coal companies and utilities are deploying legions of lobbyists to reduce revenue from a cap and trade bill which would make consumers pay for their unwillingness to clean up their act.
- Inaction is not an option. Conservative legislators have been lying to the American public claiming that putting a price on carbon would cost \$3,100 to every family per year. The study they are citing actually says it will cost less than \$30. Inaction on the other hand would end up costing trillions of dollars in weather damage, lost productivity and the economic collapse of most developing economies.



## Progressive Budget Priorities:

### I. Cut global warming pollution and make polluters pay

The best scientific estimates (the United Nation's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) say that we need to **reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 25-40% below 1990 levels by 2020 and by 80-95% by 2050.** Anything below these targets is unacceptable as it will cause unacceptable sea level rise, extensive deforestation, and massive species extinction. **The cap and trade bill needs to auction 100% of pollution permits without using offsets.** The failure of the European Union's cap and trade bill is an example of what happens when these simple criteria aren't met. Consumer's energy bills spiked while corporations took in windfall profits, all this while causing a negligible decrease in emissions.

### II. Power our nation with clean, renewable energy

We have unparalleled renewable energy resources in the United States. Using already available technology we can harness the power of the wind, sun and ground to produce much more than our current and projected energy use. We need to implement a national Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard to mandate that **30% of the electricity produced in the United States come from clean and renewable energy sources by 2020.** We must help states with less available resources achieve this goal by investing in workforce training programs to modernize the national electric grid and connect renewable energy rich areas to the rest of the country.

### III. Reduce energy bills through energy efficiency

California implemented strict regulations to decrease the state's energy use during the first oil crisis in the late seventies. Since then, California's overall electricity use remained constant while its economy soared. We need to learn from the leadership exhibited by the state and go even further. We need to implement a Federal Energy Efficiency Resource Standard (EERS) to require utilities to reduce electricity demand by 15 percent and natural gas demand by 10 percent by 2020. We also need to build upon the \$5 billion provided in the Recovery Act for weatherization assistance in order to meet the dual objective of reducing the nation's greenhouse gas emissions and help low-income families save up to \$350 per year on energy bills.

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## **Affordable & Quality Health Care for All**

*“Health care reform cannot wait, it must not wait, and it will not wait another year.”– President Barack Obama*

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### **Summary:**

The United States currently spends \$2.3 trillion dollars on health care, yet we are one of the unhealthiest developed nations in the world, with 46 million Americans lacking health care coverage. Our health care system is inefficient, the economy and our families are drowning in health care costs that are out of control, and health insurance companies are making outrageous profits. We need to make the investments in health care now, to fix the broken system and ensure coverage for all, in order to achieve longer-term saving in the future.

President Obama identified \$634 billion in funding over ten years as a down payment on fixing health care. The President and others serious about health reform understand that additional funding will be needed. Congress must match the President’s commitment and work with the President to provide sufficient funding for doing health care reform right.

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### **Problem:**

- We spend billions more than other nations on health care, and yet we still have 46 million uninsured.
- Young adults have the highest uninsured rate of any age group. If we don’t act now, we fall even farther behind.
- The cost of health care has crippled the American manufacturing industry, stalling our strongest job-creation engine. The President’s budget solves this problem without adding to the deficit.
- Our economy and our families are drowning in health care costs that are out of control, while insurance companies profit.
- Costs of care for the uninsured are largely borne by those with insurance, but creating a new public plan option would spread the costs to a larger pool of insured people, lowering costs for everyone.
- Our current system is based on quantity of care, not quality. Therefore doctors are being paid for how many procedures they provide, not how healthy their patients are.
- We support budget language that assures that if a majority of our Senators and Representatives support health care reform, the insurance and drug companies can’t get a minority of Senators to filibuster and stop this critical change that we need.

## **Progressive Budget Priorities:**

### **I. Provide an inclusive and accessible health care system in which no one is left out**

This can be accomplished with a *choice* of a private insurance plan, including keeping the insurance you have if you like it, or a public insurance plan, without a private insurer middleman, that guarantees affordable coverage. This will ensure health coverage through the largest possible pools in order to achieve affordable, quality coverage for the entire population and to share risk fairly.

### **II. Guarantee a standard for quality and preventative health benefits**

Health care benefits should cover all necessary care including preventative services and treatment needed by those with serious and chronic diseases and conditions. Our system is currently based on quantity of care rather than quality. With an unhealthy population that is not receiving quality and preventative care, costs will just continue to rise. With a standard for quality care and a focus on prevention and wellness, our health care costs will decrease as our nation's health increases.

### **III. Ensure equity in health care access, treatment, research and resources**

Disparity in health care is characterized by differences in the quality of medical care that is provided and its availability to diverse populations. While only one-third of the U.S. population is made up of racial and ethnic minorities, they represent over half of the uninsured — over 30 percent of racial and ethnic minorities are without health care coverage. Disparities in the health status involve increased rates of mortality and level of chronic disease burden. We need to address these disparities through research and ensure equality in access to treatment and resources.

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# { CAMPUS ★ PROGRESS }

## ONLINE RESOURCES

1. Progressive Budget Action Alert: [campusprogress.org/budgetforprogress](http://campusprogress.org/budgetforprogress)
  - Find new ways to take action on and off line
2. “Bring the PowerShift Home” climate campaign: [powershift09.org](http://powershift09.org)
  - Find out how to keep fighting for a green & just future
3. Wellstone Action organizing tools: [wellstone.org/organizing-tools](http://wellstone.org/organizing-tools)
  - Learn the skills you need to make real progressive social change
4. Health Care for America NOW!: [healthcareforamericanow.org](http://healthcareforamericanow.org)
  - Learn more about health care policy from a strong national coalition

## ABOUT CAMPUS PROGRESS

Here are just a few ways to get more involved with Campus Progress:

- Visit our events page to see our upcoming events (<http://campusprogress.org/events>), and get in touch with our events team to host your own. Email [speakers@campusprogress.org](mailto:speakers@campusprogress.org).
- Sign up for our weekly mailing on the home page of [campusprogress.org](http://campusprogress.org) for the latest articles, blog posts, events, and announcements from Campus Progress.org.
- Sign up at [campusprogress.org/page/content/main](http://campusprogress.org/page/content/main) for our monthly activist newsletter for the latest news, headlines, action alerts, profiles of awesome student leaders, and updates on issues like Climate Change and College Affordability.
- Apply for an action grant to get training and funding for your campaign. Sign up at [campusprogress.org/page/s/actiongrant](http://campusprogress.org/page/s/actiongrant).
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