



OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT  
WASHINGTON

## White House Announces Middle Class Task Force

[www.AStrongMiddleClass.Gov](http://www.AStrongMiddleClass.Gov)

*Washington, DC* – President Barack Obama today announced the creation of a White House Task Force on Middle Class Working Families to be chaired by Vice President Joe Biden. The Task Force is a major initiative targeted at raising the living standards of middle-class, working families in America. It is comprised of top-level administration policy makers, and in addition to regular meetings, it will conduct outreach sessions with representatives of labor, business, and the advocacy communities.

**President Obama said:** "The strength of our economy can be measured by the strength of our middle class. That is why I have signed a memorandum to create the Task Force on Middle-Class Working Families – and why I have asked my Vice President to lead it. This is a difficult moment. But I believe, if we act boldly and swiftly, it can be an American moment - when we work through our differences and overcome our divisions to face this crisis."

**Vice President Biden said:** "America's middle class is hurting. Trillions of dollars in home equity and retirement savings and college savings are gone. And every day, more and more Americans are losing their jobs. President Obama and I are determined to change this. Quite simply, a strong middle class equals a strong America. We can't have one without the other. This Task Force will be an important vehicle to assess new and existing policies across the board and determine if they are helping or hurting the middle class. It is our charge to get the middle class – the backbone of this country – up and running again."

The Vice President and members of the task force will work with a wide array of federal agencies that have responsibility for key issues facing middle class and working families, and expedite administrative reforms, propose Executive orders, and develop legislative and policy proposals that can be of special importance to working families.

The White House unveiled today the initial version of the Task Force's new website: [www.AStrongMiddleClass.gov](http://www.AStrongMiddleClass.gov). Transparency is a key priority for the taskforce and any materials from meetings or reports produced will be made available to the public and on the website. The website will be updated with additional content as the Task Force gets underway.

President Obama has set the following goals for the task force:

- Expanding education and lifelong training opportunities
- Improving work and family balance
- Restoring labor standards, including workplace safety
- Helping to protect middle-class and working-family incomes
- Protecting retirement security

(More)

Members of the White House Task Force on Middle Class Working Families will include the Secretaries of Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Commerce, as well as the Directors of the National Economic Council, the Office of Management and Budget, the Domestic Policy Council, and the Chair of the Council of Economic Advisors.

The Middle Class Task Force's first official meeting will be on February 27, 2009 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The topic of the first meeting will be: "Green Jobs: A Pathway to a Strong Middle Class."

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## **FACT SHEET: White House Task Force on Middle Class Working Families**

*A Strong Middle Class = A Strong America*

**About the White House Task Force on Middle Class Working Families:** The Task Force is a major initiative targeted at raising the living standards of middle-class, working families in America. It is comprised of top-level administration policy makers, and in addition to regular meetings, it will conduct outreach sessions with representatives of labor, business, and the advocacy communities. The Task Force will be chaired by Vice President Joe Biden. The Vice President and members of the task force will work with a wide array of federal agencies that have responsibility for key issues facing the middle class and expedite administrative reforms, propose Executive orders, and develop legislative and policy proposals that can be of special importance to working families.

**Members of the Middle Class Task Force include:** Vice President Biden, Chair; the Secretaries of Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Commerce, as well as the Directors of the National Economic Council, the Office of Management and Budget, the Domestic Policy Council, and the Chair of the Council of Economic Advisors.

### **Goals of the task force:**

- Expanding education and lifelong training opportunities
- Improving work and family balance
- Restoring labor standards, including workplace safety
- Helping to protect middle-class and working-family incomes
- Protecting retirement security

**Transparency:** The White House has launched the initial version of a new website dedicated specifically for the Task Force called: [www.AStrongMiddleClass.gov](http://www.AStrongMiddleClass.gov). Transparency is a key priority for the taskforce and any materials from meetings or reports produced will be made available to the public and on the website.

**First Meeting of the White House Task Force on Middle Class Working Families:** The Task Force's first official meeting will be on February 27, 2009 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The topic of the first meeting will be: "Green Jobs: A Pathway to a Strong Middle Class."

*For More Information please visit [www.AStrongMiddleClass.gov](http://www.AStrongMiddleClass.gov)*

# USA TODAY

## **Time to put middle class front and center**

**By Vice President Joe Biden**

**January 30, 2009**

For years, we had a White House that failed to put the middle class front and center in its economic policies.

President Barack Obama has made it clear that is going to change. And it's why he's asked me to lead a task force on the middle class.

America's middle class is hurting. Trillions of dollars in home equity and retirement savings and college savings are gone. And every day, more and more Americans are losing their jobs.

For the backbone of America, it's insult on top of injury. Over the course of America's last economic expansion, the middle class participated in very few of the benefits. But now in the midst of this historic economic downturn, the middle class sure is participating in all of the pain. Something is seriously wrong when the economic engine of this nation - the great middle class - is treated this way.

President Obama and I are determined to change this. Quite simply, a strong middle class equals a strong America. We can't have one without the other.

### **An economy for all Americans**

Right now, our most urgent task is to stabilize our economy and put it back on track. That is what our economic recovery package moving through the Congress is all about. We need to make these critical investments to jumpstart our economy.

On top of this urgent task, though, we have an important long-term task as well. Once this economy starts growing again, we need to make sure the benefits of that growth reach the people responsible for it. We can't stand by and watch as that narrow sliver of the top of the income scale wins a bigger piece of the pie - while everyone else gets a smaller and smaller slice.

One of the things that makes this task force distinctive is it brings together - in one place - those agencies that have the most impact on the well-being of the middle class in our country. We'll be looking at everything from access to college and training with the Department of Education, to business development with the Department of Commerce, to child care reform with Health and Human Services, to labor law with the Department of Labor. With this task force, we'll have a single, high-visibility group with one goal: To raise the living standards of middle-class families.

Over the upcoming months, we will focus on answering those concerns that matter most to families. What can we do to make retirement more secure? How can we make child and elder care more affordable? How do we improve workplace safety? How are we going to get the cost of college within reach? What can we do to help weary parents juggle work and family? And, above all else, what are the jobs of the future? Here, we'll be looking at green jobs, better-paying jobs, better-quality jobs.

## **Open to the public**

At the end of the day, it will be our responsibility to offer clear, specific steps we can take to meet these concerns and others.

Unlike some previous government task forces, our taskforce will operate in a fully transparent manner. We will consult openly and publicly with outside groups who have thought long and hard about these issues and can help us bring the most far-reaching and imaginative solutions to these problems. All the materials from our meetings, and any report we produce, will be up on our public website. None of this will happen behind closed doors.

In government, as in life, you need clear goals to succeed. In the Obama/Biden administration, we have set a very clear goal: Our administration will have succeeded if the middle class once again starts to share in the economic success of this nation.

*Joe Biden is vice president of the United States.*