

How to **MAKE YOUR VOTE COUNT** for Iowa's Children

After the Economy, the Health, Education, and Protection of Children Rank as the Second Most Important Issue for Iowa Voters*

On January 19th of 2004, Iowa's voters will be the first in the nation to participate in the selection process for the next President of the United States. This election will profoundly affect the lives of children in Iowa and throughout the United States but children will not be able to participate. It is up to you to make their voices heard.

Children face significant problems – last year over 40,000 in Iowa and more than eight million nationwide did not have health insurance, nearly three million children were reported as abused or neglected including 25,000 in Iowa, and many children need access to quality pre-kindergarten education and after-school programs.

This election season, when the Presidential candidates come into Iowa, ask the candidates tough questions and check their answers. One of the most important challenges to the candidate elected President in 2004 will be to provide opportunities for the next generation.

This guide presents specific facts and questions you can use to find out the candidates' positions on issues affecting children. Use these questions at candidate forums and in letters, emails, and telephone calls to the candidates.

IMPORTANT DATES

Oct. 23-24, 2003	Iowa Respite and Crisis Care Coalition Conference, Des Moines
Nov. 5, 2003	Planned Parenthood Presidential Forum
Nov. 7, 2003	Iowa GOP Ronald Reagan Dinner, Des Moines
Nov. 15, 2003	Iowa Democratic Party's Jefferson-Jackson Day Dinner
Nov. 18-19, 2003	Iowa Early Care, Health, & Education Congress, Ames
Nov. 21, 2003	Dubuque County Democrats Presidential Forum, Dubuque, Iowa
Dec. 6, 2003	Presidential candidate forum with Iowa College Democrats, Iowa City
Jan. 4, 2004	Des Moines Register's Democratic Candidate Presidential Debate
Jan. 19, 2004	Iowa caucuses

Be sure to participate on January 19 to make sure your voice counts for kids!

* According to a Mason-Dixon poll of 625 likely general election voters, 5/5-7/2003

Quiz the Candidates and Get Commitments!

Use these facts and questions to ask candidates about their positions. Attend candidate forums, call and email candidates. Write letters. Expect candidates to be true champions for children before they get your vote.

Child Abuse and Neglect

- In 2001, 37,507 children, almost 5% of all children in Iowa were reported as abused or neglected.
- In 2001, 9,192 children were confirmed as neglected, 2,396 were confirmed as physically abused, and 1,031 were confirmed as sexually abused in Iowa.
- Child abuse and neglect contributes to numerous other social problems such as poverty, crime, and alcohol and drug abuse.
- Child abuse can be prevented and stopped, and families strengthened, by proven programs that work. Legislation before the Congress would provide major new funds to Iowa to finance these programs.

Children's Health

- The hawk-i program has had success in insuring low-income children, but in the last year, more than 40,600 Iowa children, did not have health insurance.
- One out of every 5 two year-olds has not been immunized.
- Parents of many children in the hawk-i program do not have any insurance themselves.
- Uninsured children don't get the health care they need when they need it. Compared to children with health insurance, they are less likely to see a doctor and dentist regularly, less likely to be immunized, and less likely to be in good health.

QUESTION

As President, what will you do to help reduce the millions of reports annually of child abuse in neglect and what changes would you make to enable the federal government to better help child protective services in states like Iowa?

QUESTION

As President, what will you do to insure that every child in America has health insurance and is fully immunized? What else should the federal government do to help states provide health care options to families who can't get private coverage?

83% of potential caucus participants say they would be more likely to vote for a presidential candidate who talks about providing greater federal resources to help prevent child abuse and neglect.

96% of potential caucus participants find the issue of child health insurance very important to them when voting.

Pre-Kindergarten Education

- Landmark brain research confirms that a child's earliest years shape lifelong learning capacity and behavior.
- High quality pre-kindergarten programs have been proven to promote school success by decreasing grade retention and the need for special education.
- Quality pre-kindergarten programs have further been shown to prevent child abuse; reduce juvenile crime, drug use, school dropout, and smoking; improve family income
- In Iowa, pre-kindergarten education for three and four year olds costs more than tuition at Iowa's public universities.
- Only 8% of eligible children in Iowa receive pre-kindergarten education assistance through state and federally funded early childhood programs.
- Iowa needs better educated pre-kindergarten teachers to meet parent demand for high quality programs.

QUESTION

As President, what will you do to ensure that every child, regardless of income or background, has access to high quality pre-kindergarten education?

How would you help pre-kindergarten programs attract, hire and retain well educated pre-kindergarten teachers?

After-School Programs

- Currently, 69% of Iowa's children under six have mothers in the workforce and 79% of children between six and 17 live in households where both parents work.
- The federal government estimates that in the year 2002, the current number of out-of-school programs for school-age children will meet as little as 25% of the demand in some urban areas.
- 76% of potential caucus participants in Iowa say the issue of after-school programs for youth would be very important to them when deciding who to vote for.
- On school days, the hours from 3-6 PM are peak hours for:
 - kids to smoke, drink, do drugs, and engage in sex,
 - innocent kids to become crime victims,
 - 16 and 17 year olds to be in a car crash,
 - teens to commit crimes.

QUESTION

As President, what will you do to promote after-school programs that provide learning activities and connect kids with caring adults?

66% of potential caucus participants would increase funding for after-school programs.

64% of potential caucus participants voters would be more likely to vote for a candidate who talks about providing universal voluntary pre-kindergarten education for 3 and 4 year-olds.

THE IOWA CAUCUS PROCESS

Precinct caucuses are open meetings. Any one can attend and observe, but only registered Democrats (or 17 year olds who will be 18 by 11/2/2004) can participate.

Who Can Participate?

- All participants must be Democrats registered to vote in that precinct. A list of previous caucus attendees and active Democrats will be available at the caucuses. If you are not on the list, you will be asked to register as a Democrat that night.
- Seventeen-year-olds, who will be 18 by the general election on November 2, 2004, will be allowed to fully participate. If they will be 18 within six months of the caucus date, they will be required to fill out a voter registration card and register as a Democrat.

What is the Timing for the Caucus?

- The caucus is called to order by the temporary chair at 6:30 p.m.
- The caucus cannot divide into preference groups before 7:00 p.m.
- To be counted in a preference group, you must be there at the time the caucus divides. If you arrive after the count is taken, you will not be counted, although you can still participate.

How is Viability Determined?

- This depends on the number of delegates to be elected to the county conventions in that precinct.
- *If one delegate is to be elected, the caucus as a whole elects the delegate by majority rule.*
- *If two delegates are to be elected, preference groups must contain at least 25% of the caucus attendees in order to be viable.*
- *If three delegates are to be elected, the total caucus attendees are divided by six (6) to determine viability. (For example: 120 caucus attendees/6 =20 people to be viable.)*
- *If four or more delegates are to be elected, preference groups must contain at least 15% of the caucus attendees in order to be viable.*
- Any preference group that is not viable must be given time to realign with preference groups that are viable or with another preference group that is also not viable.
- You can not have more preference groups than the number of delegates to be elected. If this happens, the smallest preference groups must be given an opportunity to realign.

How Are Delegates Elected?

- Once preference groups are viable, the caucus chair will use the following formula to allocate the number of delegates for each preference group.

[Number of members in group X total number of delegates]/ total number of eligible caucus attendees = number of delegates

Example: 100 in group X 6 delegates = 600
600/200 caucus attendees = 3 delegates

Example: 75 in group X 4 delegates = 300
300/125 caucus attendees = 2.4
Round down to 2 delegates

- Once each preference group knows how many delegates they can elect, they do so within their preference group.
- Groups electing more than one delegate must try, to the extent possible, to elect equal numbers of men and women delegates.
- The number of alternate delegates that may be elected is not limited. Alternate delegates are also elected within preference groups.
- It is possible to nominate and elect someone who is not present at the caucus.
- Once preference groups elect all the delegates, the caucus comes back together as one group and must ratify the slate of delegates and alternates.

Election of Precinct Committee People and Convention Committee Members

- The entire caucus (not in preference groups) will elect these individuals.
- Each precinct elects two members to serve a two-year term on the county central committee. (In a few counties, more than two members may be elected.)
- Each precinct elects two individuals to serve on the county convention platform committee, which will meet several times to develop a proposed platform to be voted on at the county convention in March. (In a few counties, more than two members may be elected.)
- Each precinct elects two individuals to serve on the county convention committee on committees. These individuals will then serve on the rules, credentials or arrangement committees. (In a few counties, more than two members may be elected.)

EVERY CHILD *matters*
EDUCATION FUND

12 WAYS YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR IOWA'S CHILDREN

BEFORE THE ELECTION

1. Register to vote.
2. Contact the candidates directly. Ask candidates about their positions on issues that matter to you and on specific plans they have to help children and families.
3. Make your donations count. Give your dollars to candidates who share your stand on children's issues.
4. Volunteer for events that help others register to vote or learn about the issues affecting families.
5. Write a Letter to the Editor. This is a good way to share your views on children with the candidates. You will also communicate with a larger audience in your community. Some suggestions: Be brief. Be concise. Include your phone number.

ON CAUCUS DAY

6. GO TO THE CAUCUS!!

7. Submit a family and children's resolution at the precinct caucuses on January 19th.
8. Volunteer your time to help a candidate or initiative you support at the polls.

AFTER ELECTION DAY

9. Don't let candidates forget promises they made on issues relating to children and families.
10. Stay informed and involved. The Every Child Matters website – www.everychildmatters.org – is an excellent source of information and updates on critical issues.
11. Write to newspaper editors and call radio shows. Speak about what parents and children need. Share your perspective and talk about how community action can make a difference.
12. Contribute your personal and financial resources to organizations that make a real difference in the lives of real children. Homeless shelters, schools, mentoring programs, and community centers are always looking for support.

