



# BARACK H. OBAMA

## President of the United States

---

Barack Obama (Democrat) was sworn in as the 44th President of the United States on Jan. 20, 2009, the first African-American to hold the office. From the Illinois State House to the White House, President Obama's public service has been based on his unwavering belief in the ability to unite people around the politics of hope and common purpose.

Facing one of the worst recessions in decades upon taking office, President Obama led passage of the largest economic stimulus bill in the nation's history. He also initiated a major health-care reform bill to expand coverage to millions of uninsured Americans, lifted restrictions on federally funded embryonic stem cell research, and signed legislation expanding children's health insurance and improving the ability of women to sue employers for pay discrimination. In addition, he ordered the closing of the military detention facility at Guantanamo Bay and banned torture as an interrogation technique.

As a candidate for the U.S. Senate in 2004, Obama delivered the keynote address at the Democratic National Convention in Boston. His inspirational speech elevated him to national prominence and in the 2004 general election he won by the largest margin in Illinois history. As the junior Senator from Illinois, Obama reached across the aisle to pass groundbreaking lobbying and ethics reform, initiated efforts to find and secure weapons of mass destruction, and brought transparency to government by allowing the public to track federal spending online.

As a member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, Obama fought to help Illinois veterans get the disability pay they were promised and prepared for the care of thousands of injured veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. Recognizing the economic and security threat from America's dependence on foreign oil, Obama has promoted the greater use of alternative fuels and higher fuel standards in vehicles.

Obama was elected to the Illinois Senate in 1996, representing Chicago's Hyde Park neighborhood. As a state Senator for eight years, he garnered bipartisan support in creating the state's Earned Income Tax Credit, and worked with law enforcement to require the videotaping of interrogations and confessions in all capital cases.

President Obama was born Aug. 4, 1961, in Honolulu, Hawaii, to a father from Kenya and a mother from Kansas. He graduated from Columbia University in 1982 and moved to Chicago in 1985 where he worked as a community organizer with a church-based group. After obtaining his J.D. degree from Harvard Law School in 1991, where he was the first African-American president of the *Harvard Law Review*, he returned to Chicago and taught constitutional law at the University of Chicago.

President Barack Obama has published two books and was awarded the 2009 Nobel Peace Prize. He and his wife, Michelle, have two daughters.

---

The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington, D.C. 20500  
(202) 456-1414; (202) 456-6213 (TTY/TDD); [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov)