

# MAKING PROGRESS

10 YEARS  
OF  IDEAS,  
ACTION   
 AND CHANGE

# Progressive Ideas for a Strong, Just, and Free America



Ten years ago, I with John Podesta and our colleague Sarah Wartell helped draft an ambitious prospectus for a new “independent think tank and communications center dedicated to developing and marketing a progressive agenda of policies, ideas, and values.” Ten years later, the Center for American Progress has flown higher and achieved more than anyone could have ever imagined. And while it continues to hew to its founding mission, it has never lost its spirit of innovation or its core belief in the power of new ideas.

The year 2003 was a dark time for progressives. Republicans held power in the House of Representatives and the Senate and President George W. Bush sat in the White House. But as CAP’s original prospectus observed, conservatives had also built an “ideas infrastructure outside of government” that was “devoted to positioning, packaging, and pressing their values and the policies that flow from them.”

It was clear that progressives needed to fight fire with fire, and so we set forth several core objectives for the new organization. We would generate new ideas and evidence-based analysis, effectively communicate the progressive perspective, and quickly counter conservative ideas. But we also believed that the manner in which we pursued these goals mattered—from the first, CAP was committed to innovating across the organization and celebrating entrepreneurship and new ideas. And indeed, some of our best ideas have come from our newest and youngest staffers.

Ten years out, CAP has helped change the country for the better. From producing the blueprints to achieve universal health care coverage and end the Iraq War to developing a new middle-out economic-growth agenda and showing the economic benefits of clean energy, our ideas are helping address the country’s most pressing challenges.

We have also built a news blog that provides cutting-edge journalism and analysis to more than 5 million monthly readers. CAP has become an indispensable anchor of the progressive movement. Today, progressives are no longer hustling to play catch up; instead, it is conservatives who now openly seek to mimic CAP’s model.

None of CAP’s successes would have been possible without the intelligence, creativity, and commitment of the hundreds of tremendously talented professionals who have passed through its offices and cubicles and the thousands of supporters who have made their work possible. Our staff, alumni, and sponsors are simply second to none.

But I want to especially thank our founding president John Podesta, who built this institution into the organization it is today and who has earned the unending gratitude and respect of the entire CAP family. It’s an honor to be able to carry his legacy forward into this new decade.

For in spite of all CAP’s accomplishments, our work is still far from finished. The threat of catastrophic climate change still looms on the horizon, people are struggling to get back on their feet, and the promise of real opportunity for every American is still far from realized.

CAP’s original prospectus concluded by cautioning that this would be a long-term undertaking. Its ultimate success would not be measured in short-term political victories but “by whether it survives as a central hub of a lasting [progressive] infrastructure ... and by whether the progressive values held by a majority of Americans are better reflected in the policies of all our branches of government.”

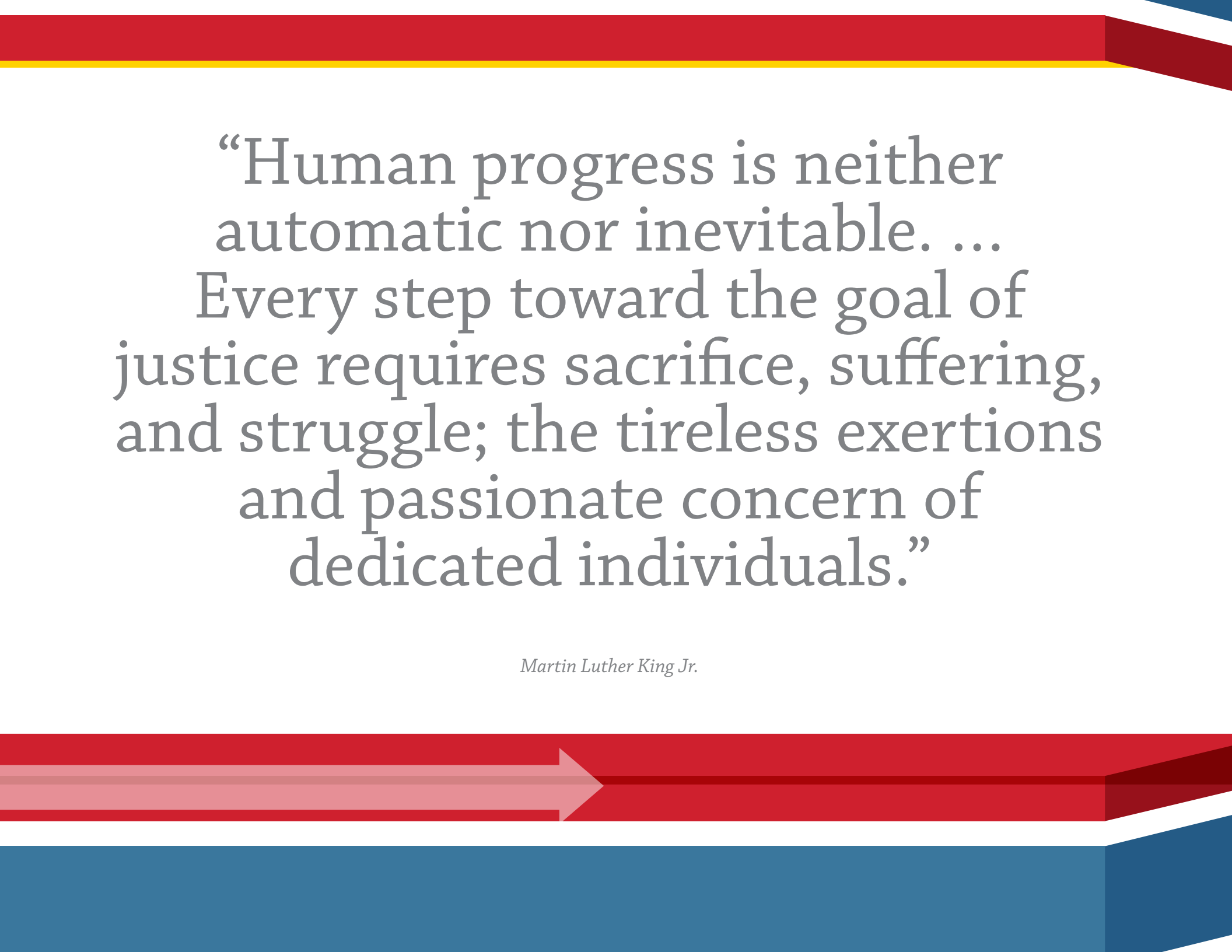
CAP has hit that mark. But there is so much work still to be done. Over our next 10 years, we will continue to work to make America stronger, freer, and more equal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Neera', written in a cursive, fluid style.

Neera Tanden

President of the Center for American Progress



“Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable. ... Every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering, and struggle; the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals.”

*Martin Luther King Jr.*



# History and Mission



## 10 Years of Making Progress

Economic Growth and Opportunity • National Security and Foreign Policy

Climate Change and Clean Energy • Health Care • Education

A Changing America • Communications, Media, and Outreach



## Building an Institution for the Long Term



# History and Mission





The Center for American Progress, or CAP, and its sister organization the Center for American Progress Action Fund, or CAP Action, officially opened their doors in October 2003. Created at a time of rising conservatism in American politics, American Progress has played a major role in developing progressive policies and strategies for governing the country. From a comprehensive plan for achieving universal health care coverage and a new middle-out economic-growth model to a concrete plan to end the war in Iraq and new ideas to address global climate change, American Progress has been at the forefront of critical transformations in government and society over the past decade. CAP Action's innovative and highly influential communications platform—including its award-winning blog, ThinkProgress.org—helps shape the policy agenda on a daily basis and advance progressive ideas at the national, state, and local levels.

Founded by John D. Podesta, American Progress is divided into two separate nonprofit entities that work together to advance a progressive agenda. The Center for American Progress is a nonpartisan 501(c)(3) research and public education institute, and the Center for American Progress Action Fund is a nonpartisan 501(c)(4) organization that turns these ideas into action through strategic communications and outreach. American Progress is designed as an “action” think tank that combines rigorous policy research and analysis with a robust communications and advocacy apparatus to improve the lives

of every American. In its first decade, American Progress has grown from a small staff of around 20 people and a budget of \$10 million into an influential organization with 270 full-time staff and fellows and an annual budget of more than \$35 million.

Our work is grounded in the core American values of equality, freedom, and opportunity for all and is based on the simple principle of progress—steady improvements to American life that allow us to achieve our goals for a fairer, more just, and inclusive society. As progressives, we believe both government and the private sector are necessary to advance common purposes and create widely shared economic prosperity. This simple framework of mutually reinforcing public, private, and individual actions to advance national goals and human liberty has served us well since the nation's founding. It is the essence of the Constitution's promise to help build “a more perfect union.” Coupled with basic beliefs in fair play, cooperation, and human dignity, this progressive vision of America helped build the strongest economy in history and enabled millions of people to move out of poverty and into the middle class during the last century. It is the basis for American peace and prosperity and greater global cooperation in the post-World War II era.

These values have defined American Progress's work over the past decade. And they will drive our efforts over the next 10 years, as we seek new ideas and communications tools to reduce economic inequality, invest in the middle

class, address global climate change, empower women and families, expand opportunity for all people, protect our nation, and build a more stable and democratic international order.

Since its inception, American Progress has been organized around three major objectives: 1) generating new progressive ideas and policy proposals that meet the needs of Americans; 2) developing a long-term vision for a progressive America; and 3) responding effectively and rapidly to conservative proposals with empirical evidence and clear progressive messages for the American public, elected officials, and opinion elites.

**“CAP has done a great job in lifting up some of the important issues that we face in the country in a thoughtful, intelligent, reasoned way based on facts and not ideology.”**

*Senator Barack Obama*



“This is what we decided at the very beginning, back when the entire staff of the Center for American Progress could meet on my back porch: Everything we built, every action we took, every idea and message we crafted, would only have meaning or the possibility of success if we understood clearly the values that made us progressives from the start.”

*John D. Podesta  
Founder and Chair of  
CAP and CAP Action*



Tom Perriello, President  
and CEO of CAP Action



John Podesta  
and Neera Tanden



# History and Mission

## Turning ideas into action

### OUR MISSION

The Center for American Progress is an independent and nonpartisan educational institute dedicated to improving the lives of Americans through progressive ideas and action. As progressives, we believe America is a land of boundless opportunity, where people can better themselves, their children, their families, and their communities through education, hard work, and the freedom to climb the ladder of economic mobility. We believe an open and effective government can champion the common good over narrow self-interest, harness the strength of our diversity, and secure the rights and safety of its people. And we believe our nation must always be a beacon of hope and strength to the rest of the world.

Progressives are idealistic enough to believe change is possible and practical enough to make it happen.

Building on the achievements of progressive pioneers such as Theodore Roosevelt and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., our work addresses 21st century challenges such as economic growth and opportunity, national security, energy and climate change, immigration, education, and health care. We develop new policy ideas, critique the policy that stems from conservative values, challenge the media to cover the issues that truly matter, and shape the national debate.

### HOW WE WORK...


**Policy.** We develop new arguments and policy solutions that establish the framework for the public debate and offer progressive proposals for solving America's biggest challenges.

**Communications.** We report news, develop and amplify messages, analyze and expose competing ideologies, connect new ideas with those people who can make change, and coordinate strategies across groups that advance progressive policies to inject new issues and values into the public debate.

**Outreach.** We bring together thinkers, activists, policy-makers, and strategists to build a more cohesive progressive movement and mobilize Americans to support a progressive agenda in cities, states, and the nation's capital.

“The institution has always been about looking at where the country was going, looking at the challenges it faces, and providing real ideas, real solutions to those challenges, and in that way moving the debate in a progressive direction. We’ve always believed ideas matter, and the heart of what we do is aggressively communicate those ideas, but those ideas themselves are the most important.”

*Neera Tanden  
President of the Center  
for American Progress*



“In our seeking for economic  
and political progress as a  
nation, we all go up, or else we  
all go down, as one people.”

*President Franklin D. Roosevelt*





# 10 Years of Making Progress



# CAP team, then and now



2003



2013

This is what we decided at the very beginning, back when the entire staff of the Center for American Progress could meet on my back porch: Everything we built, every action we took, every idea and message we crafted, would only have meaning or the possibility of success if we understood clearly the values that made us progressives from the start.

That initial conversation about progressive values made it possible for CAP to embrace the broad scope of issues, projects, and brands that defined us and—most importantly—gave us the tremendous impact we have had ever since.

From the beginning, we realized that progressive values are actually quite straightforward. Progressives believe in giving everyone a fair chance to succeed, no matter where they're born, or when, or to whom. We believe in hard work and fair play, in legal and social equality, and in shared prosperity.

Progressives believe diversity should be embraced as one of our country's greatest civic virtues. We believe in tolerance and understanding. We believe in lending a helping hand to our fellow Americans when they fall on hard times.

At our core, progressives believe we should strive to leave behind a more just, more peaceful, and greener world for our children. That belief, that most basic and human wish, has pushed CAP forward every day for the last decade, whether we are in the anguish of a temporary setback or the flush of a legislative victory sought for generations.

The universality of these values—the sheer common sense of them—has made CAP the unique organization it is. CAP's mission is immediately understandable to people of every age and walk of life. Both fresh-faced recent college graduates and grizzled veterans of decades on Capitol Hill can find a place at CAP, a way to contribute to furthering the progressive agenda.

It's our values as progressives that make CAP diverse in our composition and energetic in our work. Perhaps because our ranks are filled with so many “young” scholars and activists, no matter their actual age, CAP's staff is filled with a youthful enthusiasm, an incorrigible optimism that—by embracing those progressive values of hard work, tolerance, and fair play—we can, together, make America stronger, safer, and more prosperous.

William F. Buckley Jr., in the inaugural issue of the *National Review*, wrote, “A conservative is someone who stands athwart history, yelling Stop.”

We progressives see that as a fool's errand. A progressive accepts positive social change and works ceaselessly for the common good. A progressive looks at the march of history and says, “Let's go.”

I founded the Center for American Progress because I believe in the American Dream. How could I not? My grandparents arrived in America at the turn of the last century. My father spent his life working in Chicago factories.

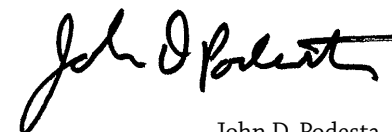
My brother and I went to college on scholarships. And less than a century after my family started new lives in a new country, I stood in the Oval Office with the president of the United States.

Progressives believe that America should work like that for every family.

Thanks to your passion, your hard work, your support, and—above all—your belief, I believe we will make that dream a reality.

Let's go.

Yours sincerely,




John D. Podesta  
Founder and Chair of  
CAP and CAP Action

# Economic Growth and Opportunity







A treacherous mix of conservative economic policies during the George W. Bush administration led our economy to the brink after years of solid job creation and growth in the 1990s. The era of conservative stewardship left the nation in financial collapse, with record deficits, greater inequality, and fewer job opportunities and declining wages for American workers. In response, **CAP and CAP Action set out to create policies that would build a more stable economy that works for everyone through investments in future growth, a more competitive workforce, a resurgent middle class, and a more balanced fiscal future.**

In a larger context, we now have clear evidence that the true legacy of trickle-down economics since the late 1970s has been rising inequality, slower growth, a weakened and smaller middle class, and a citizenry increasingly suspicious that government only caters to powerful elites. Yet despite a nearly four-decade-long track record of failure—one with brief interludes in times of progressive governance—the supply-side economic theory continues to drive conservative politics and policymaking ideas in Washington.

American Progress has dedicated itself to developing an alternative approach—one that recognizes that it was an industrious and inventive middle class, not a few privileged elites, who built the United States into the greatest economic force in world history. We pioneered the “middle-out” approach to economic development, arguing that economic growth is best encouraged not by top-down policies but by growing the middle class and making necessary

investments to ensure that all people are prepared for future work. Beginning with the article “Growth and the Middle Class” in the journal *Democracy* in 2011, CAP has used the middle-out framing as the centerpiece for multiple papers and events focused on economic growth, job creation, and the middle class. As a result of this effort, CAP has been recognized as one of the originators of the idea, and President Barack Obama has adopted the middle-out approach as a central tenant of his economic platform.

Our fundamental premise is that the middle class is the heartbeat of the American economy. Middle-class Americans are indispensable workers and all-important consumers who buy things and create demand for more goods and services in our demand-driven economy. The great American entrepreneurs and inventors have come from the middle class. The education and skills of the middle class are responsible for the rise in productivity that underpins our prosperity. And a stable and large middle class keeps the United States largely free from internal political turmoil, while demanding vital investments in education, roads, and other economically important infrastructure. **America’s ascent to the richest nation on the planet is fundamentally a middle-class achievement.**

Although America still has a long way to go in order to realize its economic potential, our ideas and actions over the past decade have helped move the country toward fulfilling this new agenda for the middle class and restoring national prosperity and economic opportunity for all people.

## AN AMERICAN PROGRESS TIMELINE

# 2003:

**October:** American Progress officially opens; CAP’s first conference, “New American Strategies for Security and Peace”



# 2004:

**January:** Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-MA) gives a major speech against the war in Iraq; “Progress Report” launched

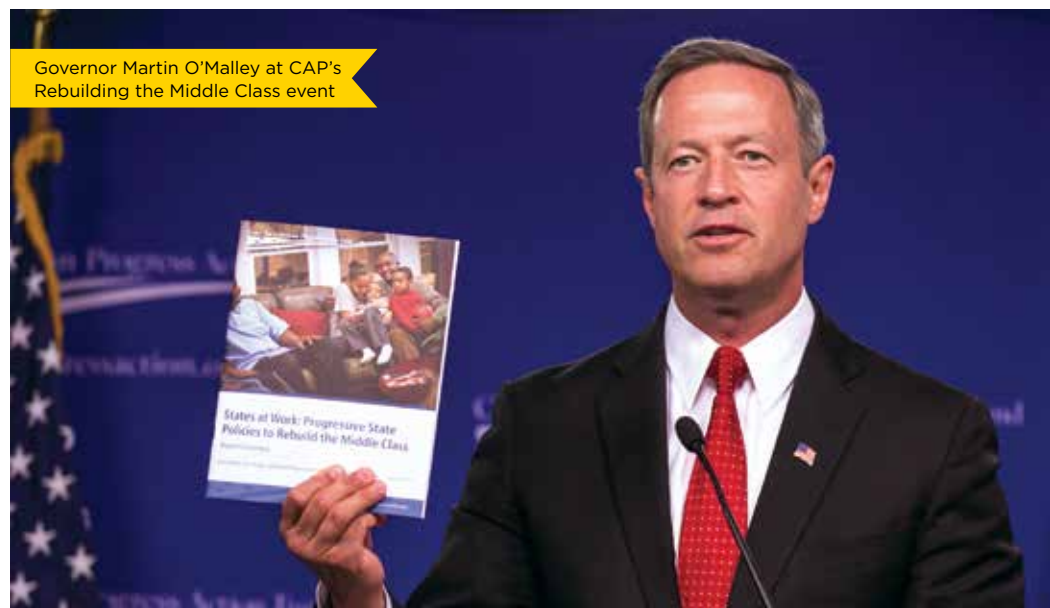
**March:** “Who’s Funnier: The Left or the Right?”, an American Progress-sponsored panel at the U.S. Comedy Arts Festival in Aspen, Colorado



Former President Bill Clinton and John Podesta  
at CAP's Securing the Common Good conference



Chicago Mayor  
Rahm Emanuel



Governor Martin O'Malley at CAP's  
Rebuilding the Middle Class event

# Economic Growth and Opportunity

Other highlights of American Progress's economic work over the past 10 years include:

**American Progress's ideas for stimulus spending became a direct part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.** In December 2008, CAP released "How to Spend \$350 Billion in a First Year of Stimulus and Recovery." Our report called for significant spending to spur demand, aid states and local governments, invest in infrastructure such as green jobs, and cut taxes to further stimulate consumer spending. While the final Recovery Act ended up being far larger than \$350 billion as the full scope and scale of the crisis became clear, we worked directly with then-President-elect Obama's transition team and members of Congress and their staff to shape the final legislation. When it was introduced in January 2009, the Recovery Act's spending component clearly mirrored our recommendations.

**CAP's policy analysis and proposals during the housing crisis drove legislative and executive action to help the overall economy and homeowners.** Our Housing team proposed bulk refinancing of Fannie Mae- and Freddie Mac-owned mortgages and refinancing of private-label mortgages through the Federal Housing Administration, Fannie, or Freddie. Our proposals have influenced major programs, such as the Home Affordable Refinance Program, or HARP, and continue to drive proposals in Congress to enable more borrowers to refinance. Our ideas for funding the Neighborhood Stabilization Program were part of the 2008 Housing and Economic Recovery Act, with additional funding in the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and the 2010 Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act.

**CAP developed a comprehensive tax reform and deficit proposal designed to increase government revenues, restore fairness, and make necessary investments to help promote future growth.** CAP convened a group of leading economic experts in 2012—including former White House chiefs of staff, former U.S. Treasury Department secretaries, and former directors of the National Economic Council—to develop a plan that would address some of the most serious flaws in the federal tax code and achieve meaningful deficit reduction. The plan proposed to raise approximately \$1.8 trillion more in federal revenues than we would under current tax policies; simplify the tax-filing system; increase rates on high-income earners and treat different types of income equally for tax purposes; and, through smart cuts to defense and Medicare spending, eventually reduce federal budget deficits by \$4.1 trillion over the next decade.

**CAP's 250-page report, "300 Million Engines of Growth: A Middle-Out Plan for Jobs, Business, and a Growing Economy," outlined a bold and comprehensive progressive agenda for restarting growth, reducing inequality, and investing in our nation.** The report outlined specific steps to achieve major goals to help jumpstart our economy: a well-educated, secure, and growing middle class that underpins strong demand, entrepreneurialism, innovation, and productivity; greater private and public investments deployed more strategically; a fair playing field for business and workers, both domestically and internationally; leadership in science and technology; and effective institutions and governance.

**June:** Faith and Progressive Policy Initiative launched

**September:** CAP and the Political Economy Research Institute's "Economic Analysis of Florida Minimum Wage Proposal" report

**December:** CAP's "Saving the All Volunteer Army" event; CAP's "Seeking New Opportunities to Prevent Global Warming" report

## 2005:

**January:** CAP's "A Fair and Simple Tax System for our Future" report and event


**March:** Health Affairs article on universal health care plan





# National Security and Foreign Policy





The Iraq War, one of the worst national security blunders in U.S. history, highlighted the consequences of conservatives' overreliance on military force and the relegation of other economic and diplomatic powers to secondary status. Since our beginning, **American Progress has led the way in offering an alternative vision for national security that employs all aspects of American power—tough diplomacy with adversaries, continued vigilance on homeland security, investment in intelligence, and focus on larger global problems—to complement our overwhelming military strength.**

CAP's National Security and International Policy team helps refocus public attention on global economic and environmental threats that cross national borders, including pandemic disease, the destabilizing effects of climate change, the competition for declining energy resources, and the threat of fragile states.

Over our first 10 years, American Progress has developed a new framework of sustainable security to help shift our national security policies toward a more comprehensive understanding of collective security, human security, and a rebalancing of defense, diplomacy, and development to better address contemporary challenges. We know the 21st century will be shaped by transnational threats such as terrorism, money laundering, illicit trade, criminal and drug syndicates, and global warming. Because these problems cross borders, no state can tackle them alone. All countries are responsible for them, and their impact will be felt everywhere. It is also well-known that poverty and deprivation foster conflict, crime, violence, and extremism. Sustainable economic development is

therefore the key to long-term stability and security. Development promotes human welfare and facilitates a rise in living standards abroad that can create new markets for American goods and services. Human security thus advances our strategic, moral, and economic interests. Finally, sustainable security argues for a rebalancing of the so-called 3Ds—defense, diplomacy, and development. Diplomacy and development must be rehabilitated, and all three tools must work together if we are to advance our national, collective, and human security interests.

In addition to this larger strategic framework for action, American Progress has developed concrete plans for reducing defense spending in a manner that balances our national security needs and our economic priorities at home through reductions in personnel stationed overseas, cuts to unnecessary weapons programs, and the reform of military pay and health care programs. We pushed for a more unified national security budget to better align priorities and resources and played a direct role in ending “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policies in the U.S. military. Our analysis and policy development helped shift U.S. strategies in Afghanistan and Pakistan. With the current uprisings and conflicts in the Middle East, American Progress is now focusing on concrete policies and larger strategies for increasing pluralism and democracy in countries involved in the Arab Spring and encouraging greater stability across the region.

Over the coming years, American Progress will continue to develop ideas for balancing America’s security leadership in the world with its economic challenges at home and promote strategic collaboration with other countries to reform international institutions and make them stronger.

**August:** “Getting Smarter, Becoming Fairer,” a report and an event from the education task force of CAP and the Institute for America’s Future

**September:** “Strategic Redeployment,” CAP’s plan to end the Iraq War

**October:** CAP’s “The Middle Class At Risk” event with Elizabeth Warren and Paul Krugman

**November:** CAP’s “Lessons of Katrina” event with Gov. Jim Gilmore (R-VA); CAP Action’s ThinkProgress launched

## 2006:

**January:** CAP’s “A Progressive Quadrennial Defense Review” report

**April:** CAP’s “Bioethics and Policy: Past, Present, and Future” conference; “The Politics of Definition,” a paper published in *The American Prospect* on the emerging progressive majority

**July:** “Energy Security in the 21st Century,” a report from CAP’s National Security Task Force on Energy, which included former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright





Neera Tanden and Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton

“[CAP] has been a great inspiration for the political thinking on both sides of the Atlantic. And I thank you very much for your hard work in doing that, I think it is very important the work that you do.”

*Helle Thorning-Schmidt,  
Prime Minister of Denmark*



Then-Senator and now Secretary of State John Kerry discussing U.S.-China relations



Former U.N. Ambassador Susan Rice at CAP



# National Security and Foreign Policy

Some of the highlights of American Progress's work on national security and foreign affairs include:

**American Progress led the way in developing a responsible plan for the phased withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq that eventually became the Obama administration's model for ending the war.** Through numerous reports, starting with "Strategic Redeployment" in 2005, CAP pushed for realignment of U.S. military assets to better counter the threat of global extremism, new diplomatic initiatives to engage more partners in the global war on extremism, and smarter support for Iraqi development. Our redeployment recommendations were supported by members of Congress and greatly influenced the Bush administration's reworking of its Iraq strategy. The report was endorsed by Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), and, after meetings with CAP staff, it was influential in getting then-Republican Sen. Gordon Smith (OR) to break ranks with the Bush administration. It influenced the bipartisan Iraq Study Group's report and was used as a basis for Rep. Martin Meehan's (D-MA) resolution—H.R. 41—which called for a redeployment from Iraq. The plan eventually became part of the Obama administration's plans to withdraw American troops and end the war in Iraq.

**CAP's research and direct working dialogues with China have produced pragmatic ideas for advancing U.S. interests and values with this emerging superpower.** CAP's China work has focused on ways to advance U.S. goals on clean energy, economic cooperation, a level playing field for trade, nuclear nonproliferation, pandemic diseases, human and religious rights, and regional development. CAP has participated in a regular series of track-two

discussions with China to help the United States figure out how to deal with an emerging superpower. The recent interaction between President Obama and Chinese President Xi Jinping produced agreement on a CAP recommendation for hydrofluorocarbon, or HFC, reduction to help fight climate change.

**CAP's deep understanding of the complex situation in the Middle East shaped specific U.S. actions in response to the Arab Spring, including recommendations on how to reform U.S. aid to Egypt.** CAP's Middle East experts have long focused on the region's shifting demographic, economic, and security terrain. After the uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, and Libya, CAP was instrumental in advising the Obama administration and explaining to key progressive audiences and the media the complicated changes underway in the region. With the third anniversary of the Arab uprisings approaching, CAP's Middle East team will continue to offer concrete recommendations on how the United States can most effectively manage these changes and recommend actions the United States can take to shape the future of economic and political reform in the region.

**CAP launched the Enough Project to help end genocide and crimes against humanity.** The Enough Project has emerged as one of the leading institutions gathering facts on the ground in troubled areas, analyzing policy solutions, educating citizens and elected officials, and mobilizing people to prevent, mitigate, and end these humanitarian disasters. Enough is actively fighting human rights crimes in Sudan, South Sudan, Congo, Somalia, and other areas affected by the Lord's Resistance Army, a militant movement accused of untold human rights violations.

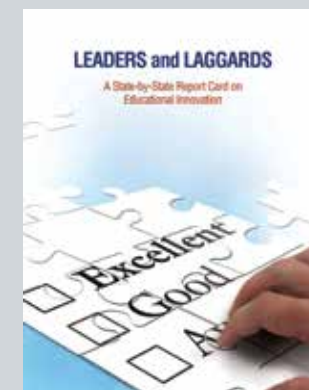
**July/August:** "The Terrorism Index," a CAP report with Foreign Policy

**October:** CAP's "Securing the Common Good" conference with former President Bill Clinton

**November:** CAP's "Expanding Learning Time in High Schools" report


## 2007:

**February:** "Leaders and Laggards: A State-by-State Report Card on Educational Effectiveness," a CAP report with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and Frederick M. Hess of the American Enterprise Institute



# Climate Change and Clean Energy





The climate and energy challenge we face today is unprecedented in human history. Decades of unchecked fossil fuel use have produced a rapidly warming planet that is already yielding devastating consequences that will only grow in severity unless we change course. Extreme weather events globally are happening with greater frequency and with greater intensity, as seen with record temperatures, catastrophic rains, wildfires, and hurricanes, which have provided the most-tangible evidence yet that climate change is a critical challenge facing our nation.

American Progress has argued from its start that we need a sharp break from this energy-dependent status quo. **As progressives, we believe America has a moral obligation to address global climate change and develop a more sustainable economy** that meets our needs, protects our natural resources, and provides adequate stewardship of our planet for future generations. Our overarching goal is to help convert America's economic model from one based on high-carbon, fossil fuel energy sources to one built on low-carbon, renewable energy sources.

In its first 10 years, American Progress has advanced ideas to improve our transportation system to make cars more fuel efficient, commercialize electric vehicles, develop cleaner alternative fuels, and invest in public transportation infrastructure. We stressed the priority of establishing a strong national renewable energy standard to foster the long-term market stability essential to our competitiveness in renewable energy manufacturing, an idea taken up by President Obama.

We created the influential National Clean Energy Summits to bring together clean energy leaders, public officials, business executives, and energy policy experts to discuss empowering Americans to develop our clean energy supplies, secure greater energy independence, and create jobs. American Progress also pushed the federal government to play a stronger role in ensuring that financing is available for new clean energy investments, including stimulus investments and ideas for a public Green Bank to finance new energy ventures. We pushed for executive actions to reduce emissions from power plants and other sources in the face of fierce resistance to action on climate change in Congress.

CAP was one of the first organizations to call for a 2 degrees Celsius target for global temperature increases, a goal which was later embraced by the global community in Copenhagen during the 2009 U.N. Climate Change Conference. Early on, CAP established the International Climate Change Taskforce with the Institute for Public Policy Research and the Australia Institute that was co-chaired by then-Sen. Olympia Snowe (R-ME) and former British Member of Parliament Stephen Byers. In January 2005, the task force published a report recommending that, "A long-term objective be established to prevent global average temperature from rising more than 2°C (3.6°F) above the pre-industrial level, to limit the extent and magnitude of climate-change impacts." Ultimately, this goal was embraced by the United Kingdom, the European Union, the G-20, and the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change.

**March:** CAP Action's "New Leadership on Health Care: A Presidential Forum," hosted with the Service Employees International Union, or SEIU

**April:** Launch of Half in Ten's From Poverty to Prosperity anti-poverty campaign

**June:** CAP and Free Press's "The Structural Imbalance of Political Talk Radio" report

**September:** CAP's "Serving America: A National Service Agenda for the Next Decade" report

**October:** CAP's "Green Collar Jobs: Building a Just and Sustainable Economy" event

**November:** CAP's "The Forgotten Front" report and event

## 2008:

**February:** CAP's "State of the Americas 2008" event; Critical: What We Can Do About the Health-Care Crisis, a book by Sen. Tom Daschle (D-SD)

**March:** CAP's "New Leaders for New Schools" event with Rep. George Miller (D-CA)





Then-Senator and now President Barack Obama addresses the annual Campus Progress National Conference.



Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid and CAP's Carol Browner



CAP Action's National Clean Energy Project summit in Washington, D.C.

“The Center for American Progress has been an engine driving the progressive movement. It’s hard to imagine what we ever did without CAP.”

*Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi*



# Climate Change and Clean Energy

American Progress has been at the forefront of the climate and energy debates over the past decade. In the coming years, we will continue to develop policy ideas and frameworks for taking practical steps to reduce emissions, diversify our energy production system, and work with other nations to mitigate potential disruptions due to climate disasters, extreme weather, and forced migration. CAP Action and ThinkProgress recently launched one of the largest blogs dedicated to investigative journalism and reporting on climate change and energy, Climate Progress.

A few additional highlights from our first 10 years include:

**CAP and CAP Action led advocacy efforts for clean energy economic-recovery efforts that became keystones of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.** A September 2008 report by CAP and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, “Green Recovery: A Program to Create Good Jobs and Start Building a Low-Carbon Economy,” proposed a series of major clean energy investments to be included in any economic-recovery package. These included the long-term extension of tax incentives for wind and solar electricity generation, an energy efficiency block-grant program that increased funding for weatherization, and increased funding for the Loan Guarantee Program to assist companies building renewable electricity capacity. Ninety percent of CAP’s total recommendations for clean energy investment levels were included in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act along with additional revenue for most of the programs in the CAP proposal.

**CAP developed the foundation for the Home Star Energy Retrofit Act of 2010, a residential energy efficiency pro-**

**gram also known as “cash for caulkers.”** CAP’s report “Wired for Progress 2.0” was the basis of a federal energy efficiency agenda that included residential energy efficiency measures to help stimulate the economy. CAP formed two coalitions, Home Star and Building Star, to advocate for legislation to create jobs in both construction and manufacturing, while saving families money on their energy bills. The Home Star Energy Retrofit Act of 2010, or H.R. 5019, passed the House of Representatives in May 2010.

**CAP helped make the case for large-scale renewable energy development on public lands, which led to the first-ever solar projects on public lands permitted under President Obama.** The Obama administration reached its goal to permit up to 10,000 megawatts of renewable energy on public lands in less than four years. In June of this year, President Obama doubled down on that achievement by unveiling his comprehensive Climate Action Plan. As part of that effort, the president directed the Department of the Interior to permit another 10,000 megawatts’ worth of renewable electricity projects on public lands.

**CAP was the first major nongovernmental organization, or NGO, to get behind a strategy for reducing super pollutants, also known as short-lived climate pollutants.** CAP coordinated with the State Department to form the Climate and Clean Air Coalition to Reduce Short-Lived Climate Pollutants, or CCAC, in February 2012. CAP prioritized action on super pollutants, particularly a phase down of hydrofluorocarbons, or HFCs, in the Montreal Protocol in its agenda for President Obama’s second term and urged that this issue become a priority at the leadership level with China, India, and Brazil.

**April:** “The Future of Human Rights,” a conference co-sponsored by CAP and Georgetown Law; The Future of Human Rights book

**August:** CAP’s “A Progressive Strategy Toward China” event; The Power of Progress book release; first National Clean Energy Summit

**September:** CAP’s “One Simple Step for Equality” report

**October:** CAP’s “Rethinking Mortgage Finance after the Meltdown” event

**November:** “Change for America: A Progressive Blueprint for the 44th President” book




**December:** Launch of CAP Action War Room



# Health Care





After a decade of inaction, in 2010, our country took the historic step of reforming the American health care system. With the passage of the Affordable Care Act, roughly 32 million Americans will gain health insurance, and families and small businesses alike will gain new consumer safeguards from the economic burden of growing health care costs. American Progress played a key role in helping this bill get to President Obama's desk, working on everything from the development of the policy framework of the law on coverage and cost containment to communications efforts to build support for universal health care.

American Progress was engaged in every step of this debate short of casting an actual vote. We demonstrated a path to success for policymakers. We brought together key players in the debate. We successfully linked economic growth to a reformed health care system. And we made the public case against a decade of conservative opposition and demagoguery. Now, **American Progress is working to ensure that the Affordable Care Act is implemented successfully and that the provisions for expanded coverage, cost containment, preventive services, and improved health technology become reality.**

With the seemingly unending fights over government spending and entitlement reforms, CAP's Health Policy team is also focusing on recommendations aimed at saving the federal government billions of dollars in fraudulent Medicare and Medicaid payments. Recognizing that large cuts to entitlement programs are difficult to enact, we are looking for ways to cut billions of dollars in unnecessary Medicare spending through bundling, competitive bidding for health care products, payment simplification, and reductions in spending on technologies that are no more effective than cheaper alternatives. We also recently published a series of concrete and innovative ideas for containing long-term health care costs in *The New England Journal of Medicine*.

CAP's proposed Medicare savings would avoid harming beneficiaries and focus national attention on the more pressing need to reduce overall health care costs. While many proposals would slash federal spending by simply shifting costs to seniors, low-income families, employers, and states, our approach would actually lower overall health care spending. Our plan aims to directly improve the efficiency of the health care system, eliminate waste, and improve the quality of care. And our plan serves as a viable alternative to the "cut and shift" approach of conservatives, which would raise the Medicare eligibility age and transform Medicare into a voucher program. The Obama administration has subsequently adopted this framework, agreeing that we should aim to lower overall health care costs, not simply shift those costs onto those who cannot bear them.

## 2009:

**January:** CAP's "Closing Guantanamo" event; "After Midnight," a report on the deregulation of the George W. Bush administration by CAP and OMB Watch

**March:** CAP's "State of American Political Ideology, 2009" report

**May:** CAP's "Meeting the Challenges in Pakistan" report

**June:** "Todd Stern on China and the Global Climate Challenge," a CAP event with U.S. Special Envoy for Climate Change Todd Stern

**October:** Launch of CAP's "Progressivism on Tap" lecture and book discussion series; *The Shriver Report: A Woman's Nation Changes Everything*, by Maria Shriver and CAP; Launch of LGBT Research and Communications Project

**November:** CAP's conference on middle-class economics with Vice President Joseph Biden; "Leaders and Laggards: A State-by-State Report Card on Educational Innovation," a report by CAP, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and Frederick M. Hess of the American Enterprise Institute





President Barack Obama signs the Affordable Care Act on March 23, 2010.

“Because of the excellent work that is done by the researchers and those working at CAP you’re getting out the facts, you’re helping to make the argument, and you’re putting universal health care coverage at the top of the nation’s agenda.”

*Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton*



CAP's Distinguished Fellow Tom Daschle



# Health Care

Looking ahead, CAP is dedicating staff and resources to continued work on the array of issues around efforts to lower costs in the health care system and make certain that the new coverage opportunities work for all Americans. Highlights of our health care work include:

**CAP devised the policy and strategic blueprint for providing affordable, high-quality health coverage to every American—a progressive goal dating back to the early 20th century.** The plan, first featured in the influential journal *Health Affairs* in March 2005, focused on three priorities: making coverage affordable for all, improving the value of coverage for all, and financing the investment necessary to achieve a seamless, high-quality health system. The article outlined a viable plan that would ensure all and improve the cost effectiveness of health care by knitting together employer-sponsored insurance and Medicaid; promoting prevention, research, and information technology; and financing its investments through a dedicated value-added tax. CAP's proposal also included a political strategy for passing major health reform legislation. CAP's blueprint eventually became the policy framework for the Affordable Care Act, passed in 2010.

**CAP Action and our partners at the Service Employees International Union, or SEIU, co-hosted the first presidential debate specifically on the issue of universal health care.** The forum pushed presidential candidates in 2007 to take seriously the need for health care reform in America and promote

and debate concrete, real proposals that moved beyond hypothetical talking points. It has been reported that this forum propelled then-Sen. Obama to put forward his own health care proposal. This forum played a major role in shaping the national debate around health care reform, leading to the passage of the Affordable Care Act.

**CAP proposed several payment and delivery system reforms under the Affordable Care Act, including bundled payments and Accountable Care Organizations, or ACOs.** The CAP report "Achieving Accountable and Affordable Care" particularly influenced the ACO regulation with its ideas for giving consumers an option to opt out from being assigned to an ACO, demonstrations with different risk corridors, and both physician-led and hospital-led ACOs in Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Innovation, or CMMI, projects.

**CAP proposed the "The Senior Protection Plan," which includes an estimated \$385 billion in federal health care savings without harming beneficiaries.** According to a December 2012 Congressional Quarterly news story, when asked about the health care savings in President Obama's proposal for a fiscal cliff remedy, a White House aide responded that "most of it can be found by looking at the Center for American Progress report and the President's budget." In 2013, four provisions from CAP's "The Senior Protection Plan" that improve the accuracy of Medicare payments to hospitals, Medicare Advantage Plans, and dialysis facilities were included in the January 2013 fiscal cliff deal.

## 2010:

**January:** CAP's "Community Colleges and Competitiveness" event with Jill Biden; CAP and the Center for Work-Life Law's "The Three Faces of Work-Family Conflict" report

**February:** CAP's "The Science of Climate Change" event; "Doing What Works: Building a Government That Delivers Greater Value and Results to the American People," a Doing What Works report on government reform




**March:** CAP's "The Global Implications of Climate Migration" event

**April:** CAP's "The Progressive Intellectual Tradition in America" report; launch of "Progressive Tradition" paper series

# Education







America's education system continues to suffer from growing inequality and diminishing mobility in many of our communities. Three decades after the National Commission on Excellence in Education released its seminal "A Nation at Risk" report on the need for fundamental education reform, U.S. public education still fails to make the grade. While most American students need better-quality education, the challenge is most severe for low-income students and students of color. The gap in test scores between rich and poor children is now about 40 percent larger than it was 30 years ago, and nearly half of African American and Latino students fail to graduate from high school.

We know clear linkages exist between educational attainment and an individual's health and wealth and that delay in reforming education imposes a lifetime penalty on our most at-risk kids.

American Progress is helping shape an educational system that gets results for all children, yields a high return on investment, and is flexible and innovative so we can graduate the best students in the world. We know the biggest gaps are not only between us and other countries but also between the wealthiest and poorest school districts in the United States. We have pushed for reform efforts designed to stimulate excellence and improve educational equity by calling for a significant federal investment to provide high-quality preschool for all children; promoting more-equitable federal, state, and local funding for schools; expanding the school calendar to provide a more well-rounded school day that includes both academics and enrichment opportunities; and attracting the best and brightest educators to the most-challenged districts and schools.

Early on, CAP partnered with the Institute for America's Future to create the influential Renewing Our Schools, Securing Our Future education task force. The task force created a new agenda for investing in our public schools, and its work became widely recognized as a blueprint for the Obama administration's education priorities and policies. The task force report, "Getting Smarter, Becoming Fairer: A Progressive Education Agenda for a Stronger Nation," called for extending the school day, reorganizing the school year, and providing learning opportunities to students before kindergarten and after high school. We have also partnered with allies to put forth concrete ideas for addressing the country's alarming high school dropout rate—proposals that were later included in the momentous Graduation Promise Act of 2007. Moreover, with additional partners we helped found the nonpartisan Policy Innovators in Education Network, which supports and promotes a network of 39 education advocacy organizations in 26 states working to improve education in their states.

In the coming years, **our Education Policy team will continue to work on ideas for improving our schools and teacher workforce, ensuring greater opportunities for at-risk children, and maintaining adequate funding mechanisms to ensure our schools can produce a well-educated workforce for the future.** Some additional highlights from our first 10 years include:

**May:** Certification language adopted into "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" repeal

**June:** CAP's "In Search of Secure Borders" event; CAP's "On the Streets: The Federal Response to Gay and Transgender Homeless Youth" report

**September:** CAP's "The Affordable Care Act at Six Months" event; CAP's "Strong and Sustainable" report

**October:** CAP's "Challenging Islamophobia" event; gun violence reduction project launched; CAP's "Just Jobs" report

**December:** Global Progress conference in New York with British Prime Minister Tony Blair and President Clinton

## 2011:

**January:** Doing What Works's "Return on Educational Investment" report

**February:** CAP's "Turning Around the Nation's Lowest Performing Schools" event; Doing What Works's "Restoring Tricare" report

**April:** CAP's "Who Is the Libyan Opposition?" event; CAP's "Proof that Health



Secretary Arne Duncan  
speaks on education at CAP



“CAP has taken its place as a leading voice in America for progressive policy. Not only do they set the opinions of the day but they create the debates. They provide enormous treasure troves of research and analysis about why these policies make a difference for every day families in America. CAP has provided some of the strongest advocacy and research that actually will build our middle class and make a difference for America’s future.”

*Senator Kirsten Gillibrand*



Carmel Martin, CAP Executive  
Vice President, Policy



# Education

**CAP produced the highly influential “Leaders and Laggards: A State-by-State Report Card on Educational Innovation” series in partnership with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the American Enterprise Institute.**

Partnering at times with conservative allies, we have promoted innovative practices to help achieve transformational change in our schools. These reports had a significant impact on state-level education policies and drew national attention to the state-by-state assessments of educational innovation and performance.

**American Progress’s advocacy for expanded learning time has resulted in victories on the Hill and in the administration.** In 2008, Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-MA) and Rep. Donald Payne (D-NJ) introduced the Time for Innovation Matters in Education, or TIME, Act, which is designed to jumpstart state and district initiatives to expand learning time by 25 percent to 30 percent. CAP helped develop the bill in partnership with the National Center on Time & Learning. The Obama administration has since used its bully pulpit to promote expanded learning time and has made regulatory changes to facilitate state efforts to increase learning time at high-poverty and struggling schools.

**CAP released “Investing in Our Children,” a groundbreaking report that outlined a policy for expanding preschool to all children ages 3 and 4.** Shortly after the report’s release, President Obama included a call for universal preschool in his 2013 State of the Union address. Many of CAP’s policy recommendations to improve access to high-quality, affordable child care were included in the president’s fiscal year 2014 budget request.

**CAP and Generation Progress played a key role in keeping the interest-rate discussion alive, making a deal possible.**

American Progress has been deeply involved in higher-education policy, focusing on expanding the access and affordable financing necessary for young people to pursue postsecondary education and career training. CAP’s products and educational activities pointed the way toward the ultimate compromise—one that will save the 11 million students and parents who borrow money for the 2013-14 academic year an average of \$1,500 over the lives of their loans. The 2013 work built on several years of effort to highlight the problems of student-loan debt.

**American Progress has been a leading progressive voice in promoting the teaching profession and ensuring equitable funding for low-income schools.** By underscoring the critical role that teachers play in ensuring that students—particularly high poverty and of color—are successful, CAP has influenced federal policy on teacher supports and teacher-evaluation systems. The U.S. Department of Education’s Race to the Top program and more recent efforts to grant states flexibility from No Child Left Behind requirements have encouraged states and districts to develop and implement more-robust teacher-evaluation systems and to use these systems to drive additional supports for teachers and school leaders. CAP’s recommendations to use federal funds to drive more-equitable funding at the state and local levels in order to ensure that low-income schools have a level playing field are reflected in congressional efforts to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

Care Reform Works: Experience from Massachusetts” event with Gov. Deval Patrick (D-MA); CAP’s “Prosperity 2050: Is Equity a Superior Growth Model?” event

**July:** CAP’s “A Return to Responsibility” report

**August:** CAP’s “A Unified Security Budget for the United States” event; CAP’s “Fear, Inc.” report

**November:** CAP’s “The Path to 270” report; Neera Tanden begins as President of the Center for American Progress

## 2012:

**January:** CAP’s “The Rise and Consequences of Inequality” event with Alan Krueger; Tom Perriello begins as President and CEO of the Center for American Progress Action Fund

**February:** CAP’s “Rebuilding the Middle Class” event with Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA)


**May:** CAP’s “Reforming Military Compensation” report

**June:** CAP’s “U.S. Policy on Egypt’s Transition” event

**July:** CAP’s “After Aurora: Dispelling the Myth of NRA Power” event

# A Changing America





Today, we live in an America that is more racially and ethnically diverse than ever. In November 2012, we were reminded of this when President Obama was re-elected by the most diverse electorate in U.S. history, winning among people of color by a margin of roughly 80 percent to 18 percent. This new electorate also added a number of new faces to the 113th Congress, including members from every race and ethnic group, a record number of women, and the country's first openly gay elected senator.

America's rising demographic tide presents tremendous opportunities to build a robust, sustainable, and competitive economy, but seizing these opportunities will require a major change in course. **We cannot afford to leave anyone behind and must ensure that all people—including women, the poor, communities of color, immigrants, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people—enjoy equal rights and have opportunities to contribute fully to American life.**

CAP focused early on the broad issue of poverty with the release of an influential task force report, "From Poverty to Prosperity: A National Strategy to Cut Poverty in Half," and CAP Action created the Half in Ten campaign with partners to fight for poverty reduction. The seminal report and subsequent campaign work have advanced concrete policies to cut poverty in half within a decade through bolstering low-wage work, education, health care, housing, and social opportunities for tens of millions of people. American Progress successfully pushed

for key anti-poverty provisions in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, including expansions of the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit.

Similarly, CAP's Progress 2050 team and our partners at PolicyLink released the book *All-In Nation: An America that Works for All*, which highlights a new equity agenda to reduce racial and ethnic inequality in America through investments in education, job training, and infrastructure development. American Progress also recently launched its new Bobby Kennedy Project to explore how America's changing demography influences politics and policy debates. This new project aims to develop strategies, messages, and value frameworks to help unite communities of color, young people, women, and other progressive constituencies with segments of the white working class to help drive a progressive vision for America. This project builds on the work of CAP's Progressive Studies Program, which produces original research on demographic and public opinion trends, such as the influential report "The Path to 270," which correctly predicted the percentage of people of color nationally in the 2012 presidential election.

In the coming years, American Progress will continue to focus on opportunities for all people through our work on LGBT rights, women's advancement, immigration, and racial and ethnic diversity. Additional highlights of this work over the past 10 years include:

**American Progress has led the charge to create a legal pathway to citizenship for our 11 million undocumented immigrants and improve the status of immigrant families in America.** We recognize immigration reform is central to the

**August:** CAP's "300 Million Engines of Growth: The Middle Class and the U.S. Economy" event

**September to October:** CAP Action's "The True Cost of Romney" state tour

**December:** "Women's Political Power in 2012," a CAP event with Sen. Claire McCaskill (D-MO) and Rep. Gwen Moore (D-WI); "Caught in the Budget Battle: How the 'Fiscal Showdown' Impacts Gay and Transgender Americans," a report by CAP, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, and 23 other LGBT groups; CAP's "The Obama Coalition in the 2012 Election and Beyond" report



# 2013:

**February:** Universal pre-K plan unveiled; CAP's "The Real-World Effect of the

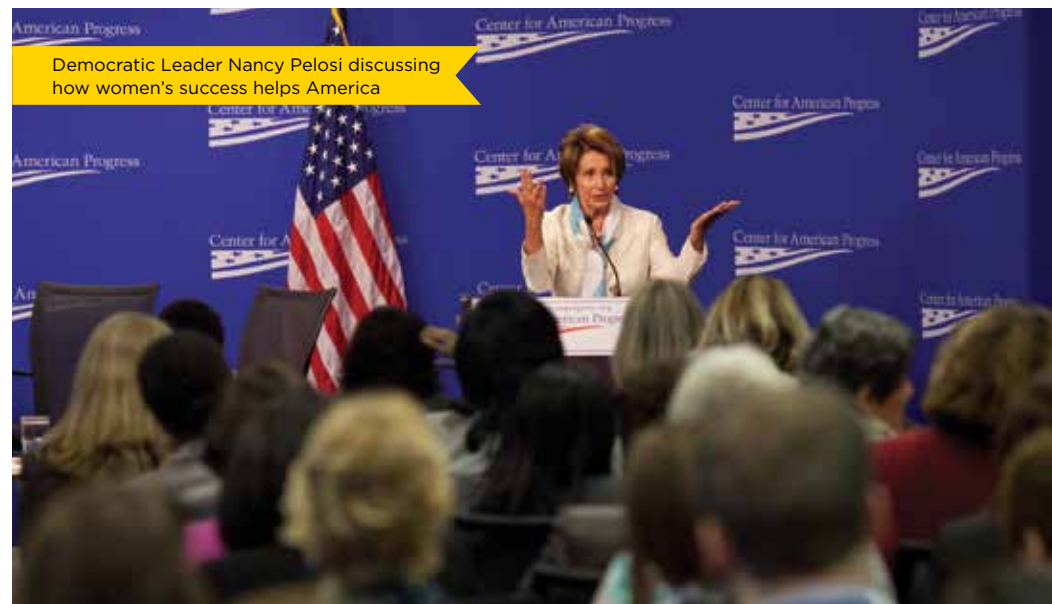




Salon editor at large Joan Walsh moderating discussion on women's economic security



White House senior advisor Valerie Jarrett speaking at launch of CAP's Fair Shot Campaign



Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi discussing how women's success helps America

# A Changing America

progressive cause. American Progress's Immigration team has analyzed the economic and social impacts of comprehensive immigration reform and documented the consequences of foregoing legal status for the 11 million undocumented people living in the country. Our work has shown that if we provide legal status to these undocumented immigrants in 2013, over the next 10 years, it would lead to a 15 percent increase in their wages, which in turn would add a cumulative \$832 billion to our gross domestic product, or GDP, through taxes paid and other economic activity. The team's work has played a central role in the legislative action over immigration reform since 2009.

**American Progress launched its Fair Shot campaign to articulate public policy solutions to the challenges women and families face today.** Building on our ongoing work on the role of women in the economy, including the report "A Woman's Nation Changes Everything," our new Fair Shot campaign with American Women, Planned Parenthood Action Fund, and the SEIU will focus on economic security, leadership, and health and reproductive rights. CAP's Fair Shot campaign released two groundbreaking reports in 2013 highlighting the challenges and opportunities faced by women in the workplace.

**CAP released a far-reaching proposal for a national paid family and medical leave program.** This program will ensure wage replacement for workers who temporarily need to take time off from their jobs to tend to their own medical condition, care for an ill family member, or take care of and bond with a newborn or newly adopted child.

**American Progress was instrumental in crafting the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell."** Our LGBT and National Security teams outlined the specific steps the military could follow to repeal the discriminatory law in the report "Ending Don't Ask, Don't Tell," and LGBT Progress continually held lawmakers accountable for moving forward with repeal of the law. The bill to repeal "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" included CAP's certification language and eventually passed with bipartisan support, and the president signed it into law in 2010.

**CAP launched its Faith and Progressive Policy Initiative to provide a unique focus on the role of religious and spiritual values in shaping a more equal society.** Since its inception, CAP has worked with faith communities to identify and articulate the moral, ethical, and spiritual values underpinning policy issues, while also safeguarding the healthy separation of church and state. Our Faith team works on a range of issues—from reproductive justice and LGBT rights to the environment and immigration—and seeks to strengthen religious diversity through efforts such as the Young Muslim American Voices Project.

'Sequester'" event; "The Arab Spring and Climate Change," a report by CAP, The Stimson Center, and the Center for Climate and Security

**March:** CAP's "The Economics of Legalizing the Undocumented: What a Path to Citizenship Means for the U.S. Economy" event

**April:** CAP's "Getting the Best People into the Toughest Jobs: Changes in Talent Management in Education" report; "Progressive Governance: Toward Shared Growth and Prosperity," a Global Progress and Policy Network conference in Copenhagen with Danish Prime Minister Helle Thorning-Schmidt

**June:** CAP's "300 Million Engines of Growth: A Middle-Out Plan for Jobs, Business, and a Growing Economy" report; "Toward Convergence: An Agenda for U.S.-India Cooperation in Afghanistan," a report by CAP and the Observer Research Foundation

**July:** *All-In Nation: An America that Works for All*, a book by CAP and PolicyLink; "The United States and the Asia Pacific," a CAP event with Vice President Biden

**September:** CAP's "Why We Need a Fair Shot: A Plan for Women and Families to Get Ahead" report; launch of CAP's Fair Shot campaign






# Communications, Media, and Outreach



# “Ideas without action are worthless.” — *Helen Keller*



A decade ago, the nation’s leading progressive thinkers created American Progress with the intention to create results that make the world a more progressive, equal, and fair place. Success was to be measured by the impact on people’s lives, particularly those facing structural injustices. Central to this results-oriented strategy was the deeply wrought relationship between the think tank and our advocacy organization the Center for American Progress Action Fund, or CAP Action.

Today, CAP Action, including the groundbreaking work of ThinkProgress, stands as one of the most powerful news engines in America, a primary source of rapid-response information and communications and a strategic hub for the broader progressive movement. We simultaneously function as one of the nation’s leading advocacy groups on climate, LGBT equality, voting rights, women’s empowerment, health care reform, immigration, and basic economic fairness.

Before joining American Progress’s leadership, I had the chance to observe its work as a member of Congress, as a progressive activist, and through my work on transitional justice overseas. From each vantage point, I saw American Progress having no peers in terms of baseline effectiveness on changing public policy and debate. The unique combination of big ideas, trusted information, and powerful advocacy has changed the American political landscape. Created to rival the right’s informational infrastructure, American Progress has taken less than a decade to surpass it.

Today, CAP Action’s ThinkProgress.org consistently ranks as one of the most influential blogs in the country, and it averages more than 5 million unique visitors every month and more than 1 million active members of various social-media channels. Its reporters have broken major stories over the past two years on voter suppression, early aspects of the Trayvon Martin case, climate change’s impacts, and the underground infrastructure of hate groups and their donors. On a daily basis, our reporting and fact checking make their way through cable news and comedy shows, organizational emails to members, media briefings for journalists, and directly to policymakers and other leaders.

Today, the CAP Action War Room is a strategic communications hub working at the center of progressive advocacy, driving communications and strategy on the budget and economy, climate, gun violence prevention, health care, voting, and dozens of other topics. The War Room operates on the principle that it takes more than having the right message—it takes a permanent campaign focused on animating the stakes of that debate every day.

In dozens of conversations with journalists and editors over the past year, I have noticed a recurring theme of why CAP and CAP Action are so effective. The media knows that there are plenty of think tanks that produce theories and perhaps facts but are unable to make them relevant or clear; it also knows that there are plenty of advocacy groups that produce reader-friendly information without

the methodology to back up their arguments. American Progress’s power comes from combining the credibility of our think tank—an organization that reporters and elected officials know they can trust—with a communications operation that knows who this information needs to reach and how to get it to them.

Progressives believe facts matter, but we also know facts alone are not enough. We have learned how to fight and win the increasingly brief news cycles of social media and cable news, as well as the generational struggle over ideas and values. And yet, as we head into our second decade, we face spiking inequality and economic insecurity, the worst attacks on voting and women’s rights in a generation, and catastrophic impacts on our climate. We are in a stronger position to win because of what we have built and because we will not stop innovating, coordinating, and communicating our way to a more progressive America.

Sincerely,



Tom Perriello

President and CEO of CAP Action



Reel Progress showing of *Beasts of the Southern Wild* with Quvenzhané Wallis

“And I have watched the evolution of this organization, which has done as much as any organization in the history of the country, certainly during the time that I’ve been in Congress, to change the way we look at issues. For once, in my congressional service, more than three decades, the progressive voice is being heard, loud and clear all over America.”

*Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid*



Neera Tanden on Meet the Press

# Communications, Media, and Outreach

To exert influence in the fast-evolving information age, good ideas alone do not suffice. American Progress set out to create a think tank for the 21st century that put good ideas into action through an unparalleled investment in communications and outreach.

At CAP and CAP Action, we have a proven model of success that drives the debate and impacts influential people who can carry forward our ideas and help us create real change, from lawmakers and policy professionals to academics, advocates, and the media. To reach them, CAP and CAP Action combine a multipronged communications strategy with hard-hitting research, analysis, impact journalism, and organizing. CAP Action's groundbreaking blog, ThinkProgress.org, and its permanent campaign structure, the CAP Action War Room, are indispensable parts of the progressive architecture. ThinkProgress writers have reported live on the ground from hundreds of events in more than three dozen states and countries from China to Brazil to Australia. The CAP Action War Room provides factual analysis and state-by-state reports and works with state allies on rapid response and building communications capacity on issues such as health care, gun violence prevention, and voting rights. As a strategic communications hub, the CAP Action War Room arms state and national allies with the tools necessary to take on the fight daily.

American Progress has also created one of the most extensive and sophisticated social-media programs of

any progressive organization working today. Hundreds of thousands of people every hour of every day follow our policy work, ThinkProgress reporting, and analysis through Twitter, Facebook, Tumblr, and other social-media platforms. This contributed to The Huffington Post calling American Progress the progressive “mothership”:

*... a think tank combined with an advocacy group, equipped with a blog and rapid-fire twitter feed. Its capacity to produce narrative-changing news—whether through its own trackers or investigative researchers—is envied even by seasoned political reporters.*

We are constantly creating new means for communicating with Americans, and our innovative media and outreach platform is now a model for both conservative and progressive institutions engaged in shaping the debate.

Other highlights of our communications, advocacy, and media work over the past 10 years include:

**CAP Action created the widely read “Progress Report” newsletter to provide daily email news and messaging summaries for nearly 65,000 activists and influential readers.** One of CAP Action's earliest projects, each edition of the “Progress Report” continues to cover the most-important issues of the day in Washington and the states and provides direct talking points to progressive leaders debating these issues in the media and in their communities.

“When we were in the White House before, there was no progressive entity, infrastructure, political operation that went out and endorsed ideas, advocated for ideas, put research out. ... It was all incoming and unless the White House organized it, it was just incoming on the White House. Today we have allies. And they start with the way CAP has organized, both intellectually and politically, and on a message basis.”

*Rahm Emmanuel, Mayor of Chicago*





Audience at  
CAP event



The Enough Project's  
Raise Hope for Congo Rally.



CAP senior fellow Bishop Gene Robinson talking with Uganda  
Bishop Christopher Senyonjo about LGBT rights globally.

# Communications, Media, and Outreach

**CAP Action started its highly influential blog, ThinkProgress, to generate and disseminate original news, research, and commentary on the most-important political and policy topics of the day.** ThinkProgress is on pace to reach 60 million unique visitors this year because of its innovative social-media strategy and its hard-hitting content on policy, politics, and society. Starting from scratch, the blog built its huge audience and influence among opinion leaders, policymakers, the media, and millions of progressives across the country. ThinkProgress, now a full-fledged media operation employing more than 30 full-time reporters, writers, and editors, is a bona fide leader in social news distribution and is now outperforming many of the world's largest media organizations.


**Campus Progress, now called Generation Progress, was launched to reach the next generation of progressive activists, writers, and organizers.** Generation Progress reaches more than 1 million young Americans every year through policy work, campus organizing, and communications outlets. It runs the largest annual

progressive student conference in the country, with more than 2,400 young people attending its events from all 50 states, and it funds 64 progressive campus publications. Generation Progress has been at the forefront of national efforts to reform the student-loan program, end the war in Iraq, protect voting rights, and pass comprehensive immigration legislation.

**CAP launched Legal Progress, its legal policy and communications program dedicated to a more progressive judiciary.** Legal Progress is focused on building Why Courts Matter, a multidimensional campaign around judicial nominations and the importance of the courts. The campaign connects, educates, and empowers advocates and the public to learn more about the practical impact of the courts on their own lives and to take action to get vacancies on the federal bench filled. Legal Progress has also significantly raised the profile of special-interest and corporate money in state courts, demonstrating that this money has led to a corresponding shift in the law in a pro-corporate, anti-consumer way.

“We can count on ThinkProgress to provide top tier reporting on the economic issues facing working Americans. In the age of billions of dollars in corporate spending on elections, it is more important than ever that we have outlets like ThinkProgress. From voter suppression to Medicare cuts, ThinkProgress brings national attention to political power grabs that target those without a voice.”

*Rep. Keith Ellison*



“I think the Center is basically the intellectual engine of progressive politics, not just for the national government, but for all of us in our citizen capacities.”

*Former President Bill Clinton*







# Building an Institution for the Long Term

# Center for American Progress • Center for American Progress Action Fund

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