OPINION

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Obama: A Drum Major for Change

America needs a new direction

BY JIMI JOHNSON

Sen. Barack Obama has campaigned on "change" in his run for president. He has stressed how important it is for America to change the way we do business at home and abroad.

The American people have try is a must. heard the call and have began to brighter, better and more tolerant is the lead singer.

Obama's message of change. Though the strategies on how to affect change may differ, Americans surely understand is that a

embrace the idea of a new, calchorusline for 2008 and Obama decades. Home foreclosures are

President Bush and the Re-Many politicians have echoed publican administration have had a "choke hold" on the White House for nearly eight years. Since Bush took office in January 2001, our national debt has risen change of direction for our coun- 70 percent to over \$9 trillion. The

at record highs and families are seeing the "American Dream" vanish before our eyes.

This country cannot withstand four more years of the Bush/Republican doctrine. Bush's two terms have undermined everything that is great about this namore about making money for the Chaney.

unemployment rate is the highest tion. The Bush administration has caused the economy to tail spin Change has become the politi- America has seen in nearly two shown the world an America that into a recession. At the same time is isolated and indifferent to the Halliburton Corporation is international community. They making billions of dollars in Iraq. have shown an America that cares The former C.E.O. of Halliburton little about its own citizens and is current Vice President Dick

Change has become the political chorus line for 2008 and Barack Obama is the lead singer.

richest one percent of this nation. -

shown an America that will unilaterally invade a sovereign nation without the support of the United Nations. This administration has tried to disregard and discard our First Amendment rights in the name of patriotism and national security.

We need a regime change. We must change our course and begin to engage our international partners and other world leaders in serious dialogue about the direction our world is headed.

While our economy is on a downward spiral, the current administration continues to spend tax dollars on an ill fated and unjustifiable war in Iraq. This was has brought our economy to the brink of collapse.

Since President Bush declared, 'mission accomplished" in May 2003, the United States have spent over \$500 billion in Iraq. And most importantly, we have lost over 4,000 U.S. soldiers dur- plan. ing this misled invasion.

The Bush foreign policy has

Scaling back is not an option

When Republican presidential The Bush administration has candidate John McCain was asked about the worsening conditions of the U.S. economy he said "the fundamentals of our economy are strong". I greatly question the leadership ability of a person that calls an economic recession a strong economy.

However, McCain voted with Bush over 90 percent while in the senate on issues affecting our nation. We cannot withstand another four years of the Bush/ Republican doctrine.

Obama was one of the first politicians to come out against the war in Iraq. He said invading Iraq was a "tragic mistake". He understood that the war on terror did not go through Iraq.

Obama showed great insight and judgment by standing up and outlining many reason s against invading Iraq. The potential loss of American lives, the cost of war when dollars could be better spent elsewhere, and an unclear exit

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Save College Pell Grants

BY JUDGE GREG MATHIS

For more than 30 years, federal Pell Grants have helped mostly needy students pay for college; without it many would not be able to further their education.

dents applied for a Pell grant than ever before. The high demand for these funds has put a strain on the program; the Department of Education faces a \$6 billion dollar shortfall in next year's funding for the grant. To balance the department's budget, Congress will either have to approve \$6 billion in new funds or cut dents. back on the program.

received - and continues to receive - federal bailouts, so too should the Pell Grant program. In this

funds would be put towards something that has a positive impact on the country's long term health.

Pell Grants are usually awarded to students - 90 percent of them low income - working toward their first college degree, whether they are recent graduates or older stu-

program is just over \$4,700. That's enough to fully fund a year at a community college.

At more expensive schools, the Over the last year, more stu- instance, at least the taxpayer Pell Grants forms the foundation for a financial aid package that includes other grants and, often, student loans. Without a Pell take on more loan debt.

for the grants for the current year, dustry.

but a failing economy and stagincreased demand, combined strapped insurance giant AIG. with a build up of shortfalls from Nor did it seem to have a probprevious years, the Education Department is now faced with this huge budget deficit in the Pell

Finding the money to save the program shouldn't be that diffi-Grant, students may have to ei- cult. After all, President Bush rether reduce their courseload or cently asked the American people to get behind a \$700 bil-Congress set aside \$14 billion lion bailout for the financial in-

lem giving million dollars to several other similarly troubled corporations over the last few months.

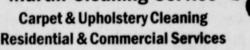
funds to support the Pell Grant business practices and greed creprogram would make sense: A well-educated workforce drives the economy. America's heavily outsourced job market needs educated, qualified candidates. Sustaining the Pell a board member of the Southern Grant program would help en-

The Federal Reserve didn't ers who would help the coun-The funds do not have to be nant job market pushed many seem to flinch when it dipped into try compete in a global market-Scaling back is not an repaid. The most any student can Americans, more than expected, its coffers and found an extra \$85 place. This competition would option. Just as Wall Street receive each a school under the to return to the classroom. The million to loan financially create jobs and America as a whole will benefit.

Congress needs to act quickly and assure students that there will be no cuts in the Pell Grant program. If the government is able to give what will total \$1 tril-At least the use of taxpayer lion to corporations whose bad ated the problems they currently face, surely they can find a mere \$6 billion for students in need.

> Judge Greg Mathis is vice president of Rainbow PUSH and Christian Leadership Confer-

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