

John McCain -- 61 Flip-Flops and Counting

National Security Policy

1. McCain thought Bush's warrantless wiretap program circumvented the law; now he believes the opposite.

2. McCain insisted that everyone, even "terrible killers," "the worst kind of scum of humanity," and detainees at Guantanamo Bay, "deserve to have some adjudication of their cases," even if that means "releasing some of them." McCain now believes the opposite.

3. He opposed indefinite detention of terrorist suspects. When the Supreme Court reached the same conclusion, he called it "one of the worst decisions in the history of this country."

4. In February, McCain reversed course on prohibiting waterboarding.

5. McCain favored closing the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay before he was against it.

6. When Barack Obama talked about going after terrorists in Pakistani mountains with Predators, McCain criticized him for it. He's since come to the opposite conclusion.

Foreign Policy

7. McCain was for kicking Russia out of the G8 before he was against it.

8. McCain supported moving "toward normalization of relations" with Cuba. Now he believes the opposite.

9. McCain believed the United States should engage in diplomacy with Hamas. Now he believes the opposite.

10. McCain believed the United States should engage in diplomacy with Syria. Now he believes the opposite.

11. McCain is both for and against a "rogue state rollback" as a focus of his foreign policy vision.

12. McCain used to champion the Law of the Sea convention, even volunteering to testify on the treaty's behalf before a Senate committee. Now he opposes it.

13. McCain was against divestment from South Africa before he was for it.

Military Policy

14. McCain recently claimed that he was the "greatest critic" of Rumsfeld's failed Iraq policy. In December 2003, McCain praised the same strategy as "a mission accomplished." In March 2004, he said, "I'm confident we're on the right course." In December 2005, he said, "Overall, I think a year from now, we will have made a fair amount of progress if we stay the course."

15. McCain has changed his mind about a long-term U.S. military presence in Iraq on multiple occasions, concluding, on multiple occasions, that a Korea-like presence is both a good idea and a bad idea.

16. McCain said before the war in Iraq, "We will win this conflict. We will win it easily." Four years later, McCain said he knew all along that the war in Iraq was "probably going to be long and hard and tough."

17. McCain has repeatedly said it's a dangerous mistake to tell the "enemy" when U.S. troops would be out of Iraq. In May, McCain announced that most American troops would be home from Iraq by 2013.

McCain argues that flip-flops are an example of a political leader who can't be trusted -- so he might as well drop out of the race.

18. McCain was against expanding the GI Bill before he was for it <<http://www.thecarpetbaggerreport.com/archives/16022.html>> .

Domestic Policy

19. McCain defended "privatizing <http://www.thecarpetbaggerreport.com/archives/15863.html>> " Social Security. Now he says he's against privatization (though he actually still supports it.)

20. McCain wanted to change http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2008/05/10/mccain-flips-on-abortion_n_101115.html> the Republican Party platform to protect abortion rights in cases of rape and incest. Now he doesn't.

21. McCain supported storing spent nuclear fuel at Yucca Mountain <http://www.lasvegassun.com/news/2008/may/28/mccains-about-face-yucca/>> in Nevada. Now he believes the opposite.

22. He argued that the NRA should not have a role <http://www.thecarpetbaggerreport.com/archives/15573.html>> in the Republican Party's policy making. Now he believes the opposite.

23. In 1998, he championed raising cigarette taxes to fund programs to cut underage smoking, insisting that it would prevent illnesses and provide resources for public health programs. Now, McCain opposes <http://www.thecarpetbaggerreport.com/archives/15033.html>> a \$0.61-per-pack tax increase, won't commit to supporting a regulation bill he's co-sponsoring, and has hired Philip Morris' former lobbyist as his senior campaign adviser.

24. McCain is both for and against <http://thinkprogress.org/2008/01/06/mccain-earmark/>> earmarks for Arizona.

25. McCain's first mortgage plan was premised on the notion that homeowners facing foreclosure shouldn't be "rewarded" for acting "irresponsibly." His second mortgage plan took largely the opposite position <http://www.thecarpetbaggerreport.com/archives/15176.html>> .

26. McCain went from saying gay marriage should be allowed <http://www.thecarpetbaggerreport.com/archives/8809.html>> , to saying gay marriage shouldn't be allowed <http://www.vanityfair.com/politics/features/2007/02/mccain200702?printable=true¤tPage=all>> .

27. McCain opposed a holiday to honor Martin Luther King Jr. before he supported it.

28. McCain was anti-ethanol. Now he's pro-ethanol <<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/15637887/>> .

29. McCain was both for and against state promotion of the Confederate flag <<http://mediamatters.org/items/200610310003>> .

30. In 2005 <<http://thinkprogress.org/2007/02/12/mccain-creationism/>> , McCain endorsed <<http://www.azstarnet.com/sn/opinion/90521>> intelligent design creationism, a year later he said the opposite <<http://www.aspentimes.com/article/20060702/NEWS/107020079>> , and a few months after that, he was both <<http://www.vanityfair.com/politics/features/2007/02/mccain200702?printable=true¤tPage=all>> for and against creationism at the same time.

Economic Policy

31. McCain was against Bush's tax cuts for the very wealthy before he was for them <<http://www.thecarpetbaggerreport.com/archives/6731.html>> .

32. John McCain initially argued that economics is not an area of expertise for him, saying, "I'm going to be honest: I know a lot less about economics than I do about military and foreign policy issues; I still need to be educated," and "The issue of economics is not something I've understood as well as I should." He now falsely denies ever having made these remarks and insists that he has a "very strong <<http://www.thecarpetbaggerreport.com/archives/16070.html>> " understanding of economics.

33. McCain vowed, if elected, to balance the federal budget by the end of his first term. Soon after, he decided he would no longer even try <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/16/us/politics/16mccain.html?_r=1&hp&oref=slogin> to reach that goal. And soon after that, McCain abandoned his second position and went back to his first <<http://www.thecarpetbaggerreport.com/archives/16112.html>> .

34. McCain said in 2005 that he opposed the tax cuts because they were "too tilted to the wealthy <<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/03/us/politics/03mccain.html?ref=us>> ." By 2007, he denied ever having said this, and falsely argued that he opposed the cuts because of increased government spending.

35. McCain thought the estate tax <<http://www.thecarpetbaggerreport.com/archives/15825.html>> was perfectly fair. Now he believes the opposite.

36. McCain pledged in February 2008 that he would not, under any circumstances, raise taxes. Specifically, McCain was asked if he is a "'read my lips' candidate, no new taxes, no matter what?" referring to George H.W. Bush's 1988 pledge. "No new taxes," McCain responded. Two weeks later, McCain said <http://www.thecarpetbaggerreport.com/archives/14761.html> , "I'm not making a 'read my lips' statement, in that I will not raise taxes."

37. McCain has changed his entire economic worldview on multiple occasions <http://www.thecarpetbaggerreport.com/archives/15337.html> .

38. McCain believes Americans are both better and worse off <http://thinkprogress.org/2008/04/19/mccain-economy-bloomberg/> economically than they were before Bush took office.

Energy Policy

39. McCain supported the moratorium on coastal drilling <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/06/16/AR2008061602148.html> ; now he's against it.

40. McCain recently announced his strong opposition to a windfall tax on oil company profits. Three weeks earlier, he was perfectly comfortable with the idea http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2008/06/18/mccains-offshore-drilling_n_107872.html .

41. McCain endorsed a cap-and-trade policy with a mandatory emissions cap. In mid-June, McCain announced he wants the caps to be voluntary <http://www.thecarpetbaggerreport.com/archives/15897.html> .

42. McCain explained his belief that a temporary suspension of the federal gas tax would provide an immediate economic stimulus. Shortly thereafter, he argued the exact opposite <http://www.thecarpetbaggerreport.com/archives/15982.html> .

43. McCain supported the Lieberman/Warner legislation <http://www.thecarpetbaggerreport.com/archives/15699.html> to combat global warming. Now he doesn't.

Immigration Policy

44. McCain was a co-sponsor of the DREAM Act <<http://www.washingtontimes.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20071031/NATION/110310071/1001>> , which would grant legal status to illegal immigrants' kids who graduate from high school. Now he's against it.

45. On immigration policy in general, McCain announced in February 2008 that he would vote against his own bill <<http://www.thecarpetbaggerreport.com/archives/14447.html>> .

46. In April, McCain promised voters that he would secure the borders "before proceeding to other reform measures." Two months later, he abandoned his public pledge <<http://www.thecarpetbaggerreport.com/archives/16038.html>> , pretended that he'd never made the promise in the first place, and vowed that a comprehensive immigration reform policy has always been, and would always be, his "top priority."

Judicial Policy and the Rule of Law

47. McCain said he would "not impose a litmus test <<http://www.americablog.com/2008/06/now-mccain-is-flip-flopping-on-judges.html>> on any nominee." He used to promise the opposite.

48. McCain believes the telecoms should be forced to explain their role in the administration's warrantless surveillance program as a condition for retroactive immunity <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/05/28/AR2008052802967.html>> . He used to believe the opposite.

49. McCain went from saying he would not support repeal <<http://mediamatters.org/items/200610310003>> of Roe v. Wade to saying the exact opposite <<http://thinkprogress.org/2006/11/19/mccain-abortion/>> .

Campaign, Ethics, and Lobbying Reform

50. McCain supported his own lobbying-reform legislation <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2008/05/20/mccains-97-lobbyist-bill_n_102662.html> from 1997. Now he doesn't.

51. In 2006, McCain sponsored legislation to require grassroots lobbying coalitions to reveal their financial donors. In 2007, after receiving "feedback" on the proposal, McCain told far-right activist groups that he opposes his own measure <<http://www.thecarpetbaggerreport.com/archives/9658.html>> .

52. McCain supported a campaign-finance bill, which bore his name, on strengthening the public-financing system. In June 2007, he abandoned <http://www.nysun.com/article/36949>> his own legislation.

Politics and Associations

53. McCain wanted political support from radical televangelist John Hagee <http://www.thecarpetbaggerreport.com/archives/15633.html>> . Now he doesn't.

54. McCain wanted political support from radical televangelist Rod Parsley <http://www.thecarpetbaggerreport.com/archives/15633.html>> . Now he doesn't.

55. McCain says he considered and did not consider <http://www.thecarpetbaggerreport.com/archives/14818.html>> joining John Kerry's Democratic ticket in 2004.

56. McCain is both for and against <http://www.thecarpetbaggerreport.com/archives/15358.html>> attacking Barack Obama over his former pastor at his former church.

57. McCain criticized TV preacher Jerry Falwell as "an agent of intolerance" in 2002, but then decided to cozy up to the man <http://www.thecarpetbaggerreport.com/archives/6988.html>> who said Americans "deserved" the 9/11 attacks.

58. In 2000, McCain accused Texas businessmen Sam and Charles Wyly of being corrupt, spending "dirty money" to help finance Bush's presidential campaign. McCain not only filed a complaint against the Wyls for allegedly violating campaign finance law, he also lashed out at them publicly. In April, McCain reached out to the Wyls for support <http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/story?id=1880630&page=1>> .

59. McCain was against presidential candidates campaigning at Bob Jones University before he was for it <http://www.thecarpetbaggerreport.com/archives/8313.html>> .

60. McCain decided <http://nymag.com/news/people/24750/index5.html>> in 2000 that he didn't want anything to do with former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, believing he "would taint the image of the 'Straight Talk Express.'" Kissinger is now the honorary co-chair <http://thinkprogress.org/2006/12/19/mccain-kissinger/>> for his presidential campaign in New York.

61. McCain believed powerful right-wing activist/lobbyist Grover Norquist was "corrupt, a shill for dictators, and (with just a dose of sarcasm) Jack Abramoff's gay lover." McCain now considers Norquist a key political ally <http://blogs.tnr.com/tnr/blogs/the_stump/archive/2008/06/23/mccain-and-grover-now-officially-simpatico.aspx> .

And while I realize there are some who believe these constant flip-flops are irrelevant, I respectfully disagree <<http://www.thecarpetbaggerreport.com/archives/16071.html>> .