

# BARACK OBAMA

October 6, 2008

Open Debate Coalition  
VIA EMAIL: [opendebatecoalition@gmail.com](mailto:opendebatecoalition@gmail.com)

Dear Friends:

I am writing in support of the Open Debate Coalition's recent call to make the presidential debates more "of the people" by making them more accessible to the Internet community. In May 2007, I echoed the Open Debate Coalition's call to have the primary debates made freely available to the public for fair use and distribution. I have also championed citizen participation using technology in this campaign and as a function of government.

I wrote last year to the Chairman of my Party: "The Internet has enabled an extraordinary range of citizens to participate in the political dialogue around this election. Much of that participation will take the form of citizen generated content. We, as a Party, should do everything that we can to encourage this participation... I am a strong believer in the importance of copyright, especially in a digital age. But there is no reason that this particular class of content needs the protection. We have incentive enough to debate. The networks have incentive enough to broadcast those debates. Rather than restricting the product of those debates, we should instead make sure that our democracy and citizens have the chance to benefit from them in all the ways that technology makes possible."

Town hall debates such as the October 7 debate provide an excellent opportunity to utilize technology to give voters more of a role in determining which questions are selected and asked. For example, during the MTV forum in which I participated last year, the Internet community voted to ask a question regarding my position on network neutrality, which I support. I support the use of such technology in debates as the Coalition proposes in its letter.

I urge both the Commission on Presidential Debates and the television networks to take action to free the content the Presidential debates produce and to engage voters more directly in the questions asked during debates. Technology and the Internet continue to play a revolutionary role in this campaign. I fully intend to engage the technology community and its expertise as President, and we will continue to let loose the power of innovation and technology to help Americans take their government and the public debate into their own hands.

Sincerely,



Barack Obama



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