

How they Match up in Space Exploration, Government Transparency, and the UFO Disclosure Issue

Grant Cameron

The 2008 presidential election campaign has become one that for the first time includes UFOs as at least a small issue that most campaigns were forced to address. Combined with this, the excessive secrecy of the Bush administration has also made the 2008 campaign one where determining who is the “most transparent presidential hopeful” has become an issue.

This openness topic became one all the final three candidates (Obama, Clinton, and McCain) were forced to address when it was made public that a survey conducted by Scripps Howard News Service and Ohio University showed that “75 percent of Americans view the federal government as ‘secretive,’ and that nearly 9 out of 10 say it is important to know presidential and congressional candidates’ positions on open government when choosing a candidate.” [\[1\]](#)

So how do the three remaining candidates vying for the White House stack up on outer space and government transparency, and more importantly how do they stack up on the thorny issue of UFO disclosure?

Hillary Clinton

Hillary Clinton on Outer Space – Grade A

- Hillary wanted to be an astronaut. As a young 14 year old girl she wrote to NASA to become an astronaut, and was told they were not taking women.
- Played a role in the appointment and public announcement of the first female shuttle Commander Eileen Collins. [\[2\]](#)
- She recently voted in favor of a Senate bill to add a billion dollars to NASA's budget in 2008, and claims former US Senator John Glenn as an advisor. Glenn was the first American to orbit the earth in 1962, and the oldest person ever to fly in space in 1998, when he flew aboard

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the shuttle Discovery. [\[3\]](#)

- Hillary claims she will double NASA's and FAA's aeronautics R&D budgets as part of her plan to reverse the Bush administration's war on science. [\[4\]](#)

- Bill Clinton stated, "Hillary has always supported the manned space program just as I did when I was president. Her opponent (Obama) says we should downgrade man space travel and upgrade robotic travel." [\[5\]](#)

Hillary Clinton on Government Transparency - Grade C+

- Hillary was the only one of the three remaining candidates to reply to the Sunshineweek.com survey on government openness.

- Hillary was open in the one time she was questioned (in early February) on the subject of UFOs in the Clinton administration.

- Clinton claims to be "committed to restoring open government," both by mandating more open meetings and release of public documents and by nominating "an attorney general who has a proven commitment to open government." [\[6\]](#)

- Clinton promises to nominate an attorney general who will roll back John Ashcroft's infamous and still-standing order for bureaucrats to favor non-disclosure over disclosure in freedom of information requests. [\[7\]](#)

- Hillary was present in the White House during one of the biggest government efforts to release classified files. Steven Aftergood, director of the Project on Government Secrecy at the Federation of American Scientists, said the attacks on Clinton for failing to release her records from the IRS and the National Archives are all "minor blemishes." "The Bill Clinton administration was the most open in living memory, with the strongest declassification program in our lifetime," said Aftergood, an authority on government secrecy issues. [\[8\]](#)

- Hillary promised she would "replace secrecy and mystery with transparency," includes ending no-bid government contracts and posting all contracts online, publishing budgets of every government agency and putting more services online. She also wants to protect government whistle-blowers. [\[9\]](#)

- Hillary Clinton said she has urged the release of records as soon as possible from the National Archives and Records Administration. "It's a cumbersome process set up by law," Clinton said. However, in the files that have been released she has not waved any of the many exceptions that are used to withhold various documents. Therefore great portions of processed FOIA requests are still secret. The one appeal filed on the withdrawn UFO files was denied by the Clinton Library.

- "She didn't put a lot in writing," said Carl Sferrazza Anthony, who is based in Los Angeles and has written extensively about first ladies. "She explicitly told me she didn't put a lot in writing because everything in writing, including a personal diary, could be subpoenaed." [\[10\]](#)

Hillary Clinton on UFOs – Grade B+

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- Hillary was clearly the point person on an effort by Laurance Rockefeller to bring UFO disclosure to the Clinton White House.
- "She was particularly interested at one point," said researcher William Laparl, "and she was asking a lot of questions...She was almost an equal mover with him on this. I would not give him any more weight at all on this UFO thing. If anything she may have slightly been pushing it more than he was. That's the way I read the situation."
- It is known that Hillary, while first lady, tried to collect UFO information from UFO researchers using intermediaries.
- In a conversation with Rob Simone in February 2008, Hillary did not try and hide her UFO role during the Clinton administration.
- Hillary has not mentioned UFOs in any campaign speech. It still does not seem to be an issue she thinks will help her by talking about it.

Barack Obama

Barack Obama on Outer Space – Grade F

- His website clearly spells out that money to finance his proposed \$18 billion education plan will come from delaying the NASA Constellation program (to return humans to the moon) in five years.
- Obama downplayed the role of future manned space flights saying the next president would need, a practical sense of what investments deliver the most scientific and technological spinoffs — and not just assume that human space exploration, actually sending bodies into space, is always the best investment.” [\[11\]](#)

Barack Obama on Government Openness – Grade A

- In the February 21, 2008 Dallas Democratic debate, “I believe very strongly in transparency...” [\[12\]](#)
- In the foreign policy section of his website Obama promises that he “will institute a National Declassification Center to make declassification secure but routine, efficient, and cost-effective. [\[13\]](#)
- In an October 2007 speech Obama promised to "turn the page on a growing empire of classified information" and "help connect government to its citizens and engage citizens in a democracy.” [\[14\]](#)
- In a December 2007 speech in the Senate Obama declared, “I have been very troubled by the extent to which America has become a nation of government secrets. More and more

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information is kept secret or made intolerably complicated and inaccessible. More and more decisions are made behind closed doors with access limited to insiders and lobbyists." [\[15\]](#)
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- In a speech at St. Paul University, "I'll lead a new era of openness," "I'll turn the page on a growing empire of classified information, and restore the balance we've lost between the necessarily secret and the necessity of openness in a democratic society by creating a new National Declassification Center." which would "serve as a clearinghouse to set rules and regulations for declassification for federal agencies, and to make declassification secure but routine, efficient, and cost-effective." "We'll protect sources and methods, but we won't use sources and methods as pretexts to hide the truth. Our history doesn't belong to Washington, it belongs to America." [\[16\]](#)

- Barack Obama did not reply to Shineshineweek.com survey on government openness.

Obama on UFO Disclosure – Grade C

- Despite Obama's lack of interest in life in outer space, his naïve view of complete transparency would make him quite open to releasing any UFO files he could find despite the fact that he is an unbeliever.

- Obama has now major backing from Bill Richardson who has a background related to UFOs.

- Asked in a Democratic debate if he believed there was life in outer space replied, "You know, I don't know, and I don't presume to know. What I know is there is life here on Earth -- and -- and that we're not attending to life here on Earth. We're not taking care of kids who are alive and, unfortunately, are not getting health care. We're not taking care of senior citizens who are alive and are seeing their heating prices go up. So as president, those are the people I will be attending to first. There may be some other folks on their way."

- Asked about the truth embargo on UFOs by the Washington Post, Obama's spokesman said, "'We're more focused on lifting the government-imposed truth embargo on issues like the war in Iraq.'" [\[17\]](#)

John McCain

On Space – Grade B+

- McCain stated "...very enamored of Mars... since I was a child." [\[18\]](#)
- "There's a certain romanticism associated with exploration of space, which is one of the major factors why we'll continue," [\[19\]](#)
- McCain said he strongly supports missions to Mars and that Florida should continue to

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play a major role in space exploration. "There's too much invested there. There's infrastructure that's very expensive and very extensive there," he said." [\[20\]](#)

- Stated of space exploration ""Let us now embark upon this great journey into the stars to find whatever may await us." [\[21\]](#)

- McCain's website says, "He is proud to have sponsored legislation authorizing funding consistent with the President's vision for the space program, which includes a return of astronauts to the Moon in preparation for a manned mission to Mars. He believes support for a continued US presence in space is of major importance to America's future innovation and security. He has also been a staunch advocate for ensuring that NASA funding is accompanied by proper management and oversight to ensure that the taxpayers receive the maximum return on their investment. John McCain believes curiosity and a drive to explore have always been quintessential American traits."

On Government Transparency – Grade C

- McCain has so far refused to release his income tax returns, and personal medical records. Sunshine Week research reports that he supports continuing to classify certain records from the Vietnam War.

- A survey on government openness sent to candidates by sunshineweek.org was answered only Clinton campaigns. McCain's campaign did not reply. [\[22\]](#)

- McCain has made lobbying and ethics reform a cornerstone of his campaign, saying "a democratic government operates best in the disinfecting light of the public eye."

- McCain has supported the release of Congressional Research Service reports. These reports, paid for with tax dollars, provide in-depth research about government programs.

- He has also pressed for a federal law to protect the confidential sources of reporters in most cases. [\[23\]](#)

- McCain stated "Excessive administration secrecy ... feeds conspiracy theories and reduces the public's confidence in government," [\[24\]](#)

McCain on UFO Disclosure – Grade B

- Speaking of UFOs McCain said "It is always of great interest to me. It is always of great interest." He then went on to state that there were a series of lights spotted over Phoenix and that "those have never been fully explained." [\[25\]](#)

- McCain tasked the Air Force and other government agencies to provide information on the Phoenix lights but was given the runaround. [\[26\]](#)

- Asked by Chris Wallace at Fox if he had seen a UFO as a Navy pilot. McCain replied, "I can't say that I did, but I kept looking all the time." [\[27\]](#)

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- [1] <http://www.statesman.com/news/content/news/stories/nation/03/16/0316secrecy.html>
- [2] <http://www.cnn.com/TECH/space/9803/05/nasa.commander/>
- [3] <http://www.aero-news.net/index.cfm?printable=1&ContentBlockID=9fe5aaf3-24a0-4ccc-914d-d05e595226e2>
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- [11] <http://www.spacepolitics.com/2008/02/16/obama-human-spaceflight-not-necessarily-the-best-investment/>
- [12] http://www.ontheissues.org/Archive/2008_Dems_Texas_Barack_Obama.htm
- [13] <http://www.barackobama.com/issues/foreignpolicy/>
- [14] <http://www.sunshineweek.org/sunshineweek/candidates>
- [15] <http://www.fas.org/sgp/congress/2007/obama121307.html>
- [16] Sen. Barack Obama, St. Paul University, 2 Oct. 2007.
- [17] http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/09/17/AR2007091701780_pf.html
- [18] <http://www.aero-news.net/news/aerospace.cfm?ContentBlockID=9fe5aaf3-24a0-4ccc-914d-d05e595226e2&Dynamic=1>
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