

# THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL COMMITTEE WEEKLY UPDATE

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE DNC COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

**March 23, 2012**

This week, the White House marked the two-year anniversary of the President signing the Affordable Care Act into law – releasing a new report that highlights the benefits that millions of Americans are already experiencing thanks to health reform. In Florida, Vice President Biden delivered a speech laying out the Ryan budget plan and how it would harm countless seniors by turning Medicare into a voucher program – forcing seniors to pay thousands more a year for their health care in order to give massive tax cuts to millionaires and billionaires. President Obama embarked on a four-state energy tour to highlight his “all-of-the-above” strategy for American energy. First he visited the Cooper Mountain Solar 1 Facility in Boulder City, Nevada, followed by a visit to oil and gas production fields located on federal lands outside of Maljamar, New Mexico. In Cushing, Oklahoma, the President committed to expediting an oil pipeline connecting Cushing to the Gulf Coast. The last stop was at Ohio State University, where the President discussed the importance of American energy innovation.

It was a difficult week for Mitt Romney. He won the Illinois primary on Tuesday, but his momentum was soon stopped when a senior advisor compared his candidacy to an Etch-a-Sketch that would reset policy positions after the primary concluded. Meanwhile, the Democratic National Committee and Democrats across the country worked to hold Mitt Romney and the rest of the Republican field accountable for their failed policies – and, in particular, Romney’s willingness to say anything to get elected.

## **The White House Marks Two-Year Anniversary of the President Signing Affordable Care Act into Law**

This week, the White House released a new report titled, “Affordable Care Act: The New Health Care Law at Two Years.” Since the President signed health reform into law two years ago, millions of Americans have already seen many of its positive benefits – including 86 million Americans receiving free preventive care, 180 million Americans gaining protection from the worst abuses by insurance companies, 2.5 million young Americans now being able to stay on their parents’ health insurance plan, and 47 million Americans being able to take advantage of a stronger Medicare program.

You can read the report [here](#).

## **Vice President Biden Discusses Medicare and Consequences of Ryan Budget in Florida**

On Friday, Vice President Biden delivered a speech in Florida that laid out the Ryan budget plan and how it would harm America’s seniors by turning Medicare into a voucher program – forcing seniors to pay thousands more a year for their health care in order to give massive tax cuts to millionaires and billionaires. The Vice President also demonstrated the stark contrast between the Republicans’ extreme agenda and the President and Vice President’s vision for an economy built to last, which would strengthen the middle class and protect the vital programs our seniors rely on to make ends meet. During his remarks, Vice President Biden said:



"Look, folks, the vast majority of the American people -- whether they're Democrats, Republicans, or independents -- know there is a fundamental difference between us and the Republicans on this issue. We believe in strengthening Medicare, they don't. Make no mistake about it, if the Republicans in Congress -- and their amen corner of Romney, Santorum, and Gingrich -- if any one of them gets their hands on the White House, the keys of the White House, I promise you will see Medicare ended as you know it.

"And it's not just about what they want to do to Medicare. It's about the other benefits for seniors that they want to undo. We passed a law that has been referenced already to close the donut hole -- a significant portion closed already, but it will be totally closed when this law comes fully into effect in 2014, saving the average senior with high drug costs \$600 just this last year alone. And that will increase. They want to repeal it. They simply say they want to repeal it."

### **In New Mexico and Nevada, the President Discusses His All-of-the-Above Strategy for American Energy**

This week in Nevada and New Mexico, President Obama reiterated his all-of-the-above American energy strategy. He pledged to continue to drill domestically -- citing the nation's increase in oil production since he took office -- but



also made it clear that drilling alone won't be sufficient. The President's strategy also promotes the production of biofuels and more fuel-efficient cars, as well as greater investments in wind and solar power. President Obama's plan will reduce our nation's dependence on foreign oil and work to lower high gas prices that hurt working families across the country. During his remarks in New Mexico, President Obama said:

"I'm here to talk about what we're calling an all-of-the-above energy strategy -- a strategy that relies on producing more oil and gas

here in America, but also producing more biofuels in America, more fuel-efficient cars in America, more wind power in America, and more solar power in America. I believe this all-of-the-above approach is the only way we can continue to reduce our dependence on foreign oil, and ultimately put an end to some of these gas spikes that we're going through right now and that obviously hurt a lot of families all across the country."

You can watch the President's speech in Nevada [here](#). To watch his speech in New Mexico, you can go [here](#).

### **President Obama Visits Oklahoma to Outline Plans for Modernizing Pipeline Infrastructure**

On Thursday, President Obama visited Cushing, Oklahoma as part of his cross-country tour discussing his plans for American energy production. The President talked about the need to modernize pipeline infrastructure and expand its ability to deliver oil to refineries and consumers around the country. With domestic oil production at its highest level in eight years, production is outpacing pipeline capacity and causing bottlenecks in places like Cushing. In response, the Obama Administration is expediting the permit and construction process of a new pipeline that will allow more crude oil to be transported to oil refineries on the Gulf Coast. During his remarks, the President said:

"I've come to Cushing, an oil town because producing more oil and gas here at home has been, and will continue to be, a critical part of an all-of-the-above energy strategy.

"Now, under my administration, America is producing more oil today than at any time in the last eight years. That's important to know. Over the last three years, I've directed my administration to open up millions of acres for gas and oil exploration across 23 different states. We're opening up more than 75 percent of our potential oil resources offshore. We've quadrupled the number of operating rigs to a record high. We've added enough new oil and gas pipeline to encircle the Earth and then some.



"So we are drilling all over the place -- right now. That's not the challenge. That's not the problem. In fact, the problem in a place like Cushing is that we're actually producing so much oil and gas in places like North Dakota and Colorado that we don't have enough pipeline capacity to transport all of it to where it needs to go -- both to refineries, and then, eventually, all across the country and around the world. There's a bottleneck right here because we can't get enough of the oil to our refineries fast enough. And if we could, then we would be able to increase our oil supplies at a time when they're needed as much as possible."

You can watch the President's speech [here](#).

### **The President Discusses Energy Innovation at Ohio State University's Center for Automotive Research**

The final stop on the President's energy tour this week was Columbus, Ohio, where he visited one of the country's epicenters for innovation in the fields of energy production and advanced vehicles: Ohio State University's Center for Automotive Research. During his visit, the President reaffirmed his commitment to developing new energy technologies, and he said:

"As long as I'm President, we are going to keep on making those investments. I am not going to cede the wind and solar and advanced battery industries to countries like China and Germany that are making those investments. I





want those technologies developed and manufactured here in Ohio, here in the Midwest, here in America. By American workers. That's the future we want."

You can watch the President's remarks [here](#).

### **Holding Republicans Accountable**

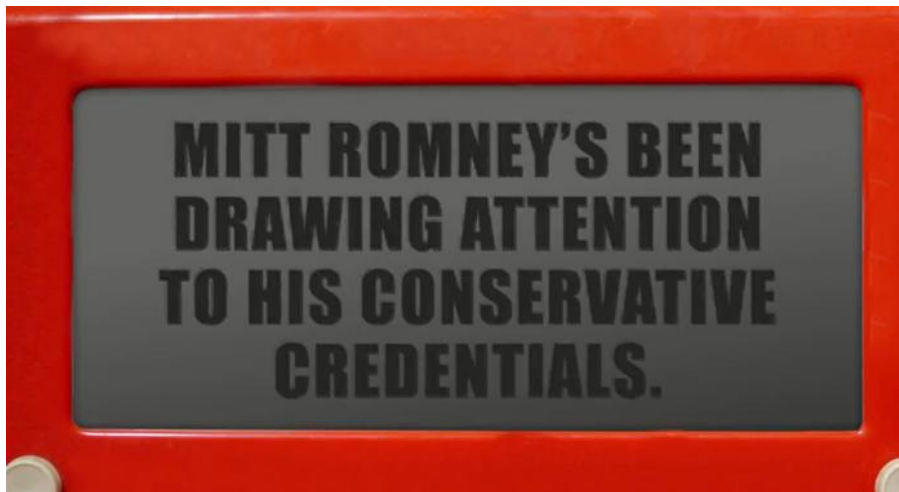
The GOP primary contest continued this week in Illinois, where Mitt Romney and his SuperPAC outspent Rick Santorum 7-to-1 heading into the state's primary. Romney may have overwhelmed his opposition in Illinois with negative attack ads, but the DNC did not let him get through the week without reminding voters about his willingness to say anything to get elected.

On Monday, the *New York Times* detailed a new National Women's Law Center report showing how women continue to pay more than men for the same health insurance coverage – an unfair gender gap that will continue until the part of President Obama's health reform law that bans this practice goes into effect in 2014. DNC Chair Debbie Wasserman Schultz released a statement on the report's findings, saying:

"Right now, women pay up to 50% more than men for the very same health coverage. Even if a woman's policy does not cover maternity care, she can still be charged more because the insurance company fears it will be on the hook for complications from a pregnancy. When the part of the law that bans this practice goes into effect in 2014, being a woman will no longer be considered a pre-existing condition. That's good news for women and their families, and will make it easier for women to get basic health care services they need.

"But we know that if Mitt Romney, Newt Gingrich, or Rick Santorum get their way this discriminatory practice will continue."

The DNC also released a blog post titled, "Under a GOP President, Being a Woman Would Continue to be a Pre-Existing Condition." You can read the post [here](#). Eva Longoria, a co-chair of President Obama's re-election campaign, also stopped by MSNBC to talk about how important the Affordable Care Act is and why Mitt Romney is wrong on every issue that is important to Latinos. You can view her interview [here](#). The DNC released a web video titled, "Romney and the GOP: Allowing Health Insurance Companies to Discriminate against Women." You can watch the video [here](#).



On Tuesday, the DNC released a video titled, "Mitt Romney to Women: You're On Your Own." You can view it [here](#). Following the results of the Republican primary in Illinois on Tuesday, DNC Chair Wasserman Schultz released a statement on the results, which said:

"Mitt Romney and his allies may have bought their way to another victory tonight in Illinois by outspending Rick

Santorum and his allies 7-to-1 in the state, but it comes with a heavy price. His pandering to his party's extreme-right flank is hurting him among moderates, independents and women voters."

On Wednesday, the DNC released a new video titled, "Mitt Romney: Wrong for Women, Wrong for Maryland." You can watch the video [here](#). U.S. House Democratic Whip Steny Hoyer and Maryland Democratic Party Chair Yvette

Lewis highlighted why Romney and his policies are wrong for Maryland ahead of Romney's visit to the state. The DNC also helped drive coverage of Mitt Romney advisor Eric Fehrnstrom's remarks, where he compared the Romney campaign to an Etch-A-Sketch and said they could just reset for the general election. In response, the DNC released a video titled, "Mitt Romney: Some Things You Can't Shake Off" – view it [here](#).

On Thursday, the DNC released two new videos. The first was titled, "Even Mitt Romney Knows an Etch-A-Sketch Can't Erase his Extreme Positions," and it can be viewed [here](#). The second – "Unshakably Extreme" – can be watched [here](#). In addition, the Massachusetts Democratic Party delivered Etch-A-Sketches to Romney's Boston campaign headquarters.

Democratic state parties across the country made sure voters knew about Mitt Romney's blatant hypocrisy this week for attacking the President on high gas prices – driving the message home that while President Obama is helping America's working families save money at pump, Romney actually has a record of doing the opposite. Romney's hypocrisy was detailed in an article in *The New Republic* this week, which said:

"Curiously overlooked, though, is just what a shift this rhetoric is from the approach that Romney took on the issue of gas prices while governor of Massachusetts. Befitting his profile as a moderate Republican who cared about the environment, Governor Romney responded to price spikes by describing them as the natural result of global market pressures and by calling for increases in fuel efficiency—the same approach that he now derides Obama for taking as president.

"At moments, Romney went so far as to make high gas prices out to be a welcome reality for the foreseeable future, one that people needed to learn to live with. When lieutenant governor Kerry Healey, a fellow Republican, called for suspending the state's 23.5 cent gas tax during a price spike in May 2006, Romney rejected the idea, saying it would only further drive up gasoline consumption. 'I don't think that now is the time, and I'm not sure there will be the right time, for us to encourage the use of more gasoline,' Romney said, according to the Quincy *Patriot Ledger's* report at the time. 'I'm very much in favor of people recognizing that these high gasoline prices are probably here to stay.'"

On Friday, while Mitt Romney was in Shreveport, Louisiana raising money, Louisiana Democratic Party Chairman Buddy Leach held a press conference outside the Romney fundraiser at the Petroleum Club of Shreveport.

### **Key Issues in the News and Background**

#### **Mitt Romney Brings the Massachusetts Myth to Chicago, But Voters Deserve the Truth (3/19/12)**

**Key Point:** Mitt Romney is bringing the Massachusetts myth to Chicago today, but voters deserve the truth.

- Ahead of tomorrow's Illinois primary, Mitt Romney will give another economic policy speech today. His speech in Chicago comes six months after he released a 59-point plan and only three weeks after his last major economic speech at Ford Field. With all the speeches, Americans deserve the truth about Romney's economic policies.
  - Please see [this campaign memo](#) on Romney's Massachusetts myth.
- Romney will repeat his claims that as governor he created jobs, cut debt and shrank the Massachusetts government. But the reality is much different. Romney took job creation in the wrong direction. Under Romney:
  - Massachusetts was 47th out of 50 in job creation, down from 35th in the nation in the four years prior, and wages dropped by 2 percent.
  - The state's long-term debt increased by \$2.6 billion, or more than 16 percent.
  - Government employment grew at six times the rate of private-sector employment.

- Like he did in Massachusetts, Romney is putting forward policies that would increase the deficit, including a tax cut plan that costs \$5 trillion over the next 10 years and would run up deficits while risking steep cuts to Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid.
- Like he did in Massachusetts when he raised taxes and fees by \$750 million a year on middle-class families, Romney's tax plan is also unfair to the middle class, cutting taxes for a millionaire 800 times more than for a middle-class family. Romney has opposed reforms like the Buffett Rule that would make our tax code fairer and ensure that middle-class Americans don't pay a higher rate on their income than the wealthiest.
- Instead of revitalizing American manufacturing, Romney's economic policies would force the United States into a race to the bottom and send jobs overseas. While President Obama would reform business taxes to make American manufacturers more competitive in the world and bring jobs home, Romney's record demonstrates he would take the opposite approach. Romney:
  - Cut key manufacturing programs in Massachusetts and manufacturing jobs declined by twice the national average, the third worst record in the country. He would make deep budget cuts in infrastructure and research and development while rejecting efforts to capitalize on the clean energy market.
  - Promoted outsourcing American jobs as governor of Massachusetts and shipped jobs overseas as a corporate-buyout specialist at Bain Capital. He would completely eliminate U.S. taxes on companies' overseas plants and facilities, giving more incentive for American companies to ship jobs overseas.
- Finally, Mitt Romney would do nothing to protect consumers by decreasing our dependence on foreign oil. Romney's rhetoric on energy is dishonest and misleading. Here's the truth:
  - Under President Obama, domestic oil and natural gas production have gone up every year. Last year, oil production reached an 8-year high, natural gas production reached an all-time high, and both should continue to rise.
  - Drilling alone won't make gas prices go down. That's why the President has pursued an all-of-the-above energy strategy that's decreasing our dependence on foreign oil so we're less vulnerable to price spikes on the international oil market.
  - Our dependence on foreign oil is at a 16-year low, and President Obama's historic new fuel-economy standards will save consumers about \$8,000 during the life of their vehicle.
  - Romney opposed raising fuel economy standards, and he wants to continue charging taxpayers \$4 billion a year to subsidize oil and gas companies that are making record profits. In Massachusetts, he increased a tax on gasoline by 400 percent, hurting every motorist in the state.
- Mitt Romney can give yet another economic speech today. But his rhetoric can't hide his record, and his record of losing jobs and leaving the middle-class behind is turning off the very voters he would need in November.

###

### **Republicans Would Repeal Health Reform, Making Women Pay More Than Men For Health Care (3/19/12)**

**Key Point:** Every Republican candidate would repeal the new health care law and let insurance companies keep charging women more than men for the same health insurance.

- President Obama's landmark health insurance reform will stop insurance companies from charging women more than men for the same coverage starting in 2014. Meanwhile, Mitt Romney and the rest of the

Republican presidential candidates would repeal the new health care law, letting insurance companies keep charging women more than men for the same health insurance.

- Please see [this New York Times article](#) on the subject.
- For years, health insurance companies unfairly charged women more than men for the same health insurance. Women pay up to 50 percent more than men for the very same coverage.
  - Even if a woman's policy doesn't cover maternity care, insurance companies charge more out of fear for losing money on complications from a pregnancy.
  - President Obama believes women shouldn't have to pay higher premiums just because of their gender, and his health insurance reforms would make that illegal by 2014. But if Romney and the Republicans got their way, that progress would be erased.
- Women are already seeing health reform's benefits, but Republicans want to take it all away. In addition to letting health insurers charge women more than men for the same coverage, repealing the health care law would mean:
  - More than 2 million women with Medicare would have to pay double for their brand name prescription drugs every year, and 6 million women with Medicare would be charged expensive co-pays for their mammograms every year.
  - More than 20 million women with private insurance could once again be charged co-pays and deductibles for preventive services like lifesaving breast and cervical cancer screenings, birth control and well-woman visits.
  - Nearly 40 million women would once again have lifetime caps on their insurance, so their insurance company could cut off their coverage just when they needed it the most.

###

### **President Obama Kept His Word and Brought the Iraq War to a Responsible End (3/19/12)**

**Key Point:** President Obama kept his word to the American people and brought the Iraq war to a responsible end.

- The Iraq war began nine years ago today. As a state senator at the time, Barack Obama spoke out passionately against the war in Iraq, and when he ran for president in 2008, he pledged to bring the war to a responsible end. He kept his word and brought our troops home safely. This is a promise kept.
- The Iraqi people are taking full responsibility for the security of their nation. While Iraq still faces challenges, Iraqi forces are prepared to deal with them thanks to the dedication, skill, and sacrifices of our service men and women.
- We have a sacred trust with the more than one million Americans who served in Iraq over the past nine years.
  - Nearly 4,500 soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines gave their lives.
  - Tens of thousands more came home injured.
  - Millions of family members bravely sacrificed at home while their loved ones served overseas.
- With American troops no longer in Iraq, we once again affirm our commitment and responsibility to support our service members and their families, just as they supported us.
- President Obama said, "Part of ending a war responsibly is standing by those who have fought it." He's:
  - Helping returning veterans find jobs by creating new tax credits to encourage businesses to hire unemployed veterans.

- Making sure our veterans get the health care and benefits they earned, like treatment for post-traumatic stress and traumatic brain injury.
- Helping veterans and their spouses pay for college by expanding and improving the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill.
- Republican presidential candidates have criticized the President for ending the Iraq war and bringing our troops home safely. Their positions on Iraq have been all over the map, offering no clear strategy to end the war and some even leaving our troops in Iraq for years to come.

###

### **Ryan, Romney Budgets Not So Different, Both Are Bad For The Middle Class (3/20/12)**

**Key Point:** The Ryan budget plan is the same as Mitt Romney's: bad for the middle class.

- Congressman Paul Ryan released the Republican budget plan today. It shares key elements of Mitt Romney's budget plan:
  - Turning Medicare into a voucher program.
  - Increasing health care costs to seniors by thousands of dollars.
  - Making arbitrary cuts to programs essential to middle-class families like education and clean energy.
  - Giving massive tax cuts to the wealthiest and protecting taxpayer subsidies to oil companies and hedge fund managers.
    - Please see [this side-by-side comparison](#) of the two budget plans.
- Romney has said he is on the same page as Ryan – even “applauding” today’s budget – so America’s seniors and the middle class need to take note of what this budget means for them.
- The Romney and Ryan budgets would turn Medicare into a voucher program. What does this mean for seniors and middle class families?
  - Over time, traditional Medicare would wither on the vine, risking the guaranteed coverage seniors have earned and paid for.
  - Seniors would be forced into private plans and pay more for their health care.
  - At the end of the day, Ryan’s plan – which Romney has called “bold and right” – would end Medicare as we know it for millions of seniors.
- That’s not the only similarity between the Ryan and Romney budgets. Neither the Ryan nor Romney budget plans ask millionaires and billionaires to pay their fair share. President Obama has proposed the Buffett Rule, which asks the wealthiest to pay their fair share and not pay a lower tax rate than middle-class families – but both Ryan and Romney oppose it.
- And even as the Romney and Ryan budgets make deep cuts that both cost jobs and hurt average Americans, both budget plans keep in place:
  - Needless taxpayer subsidies for oil and gas companies that are making record profits.
  - Tax loopholes that let some of the wealthiest on Wall Street get away with not paying their fair share.
- While Romney’s budget and tax plans will either explode the deficit or destroy the middle class’s economic security, President Obama’s do the opposite.
  - He actually reduces the deficit by \$4 trillion over 10 years – while Romney and Ryan’s proposals would increase them by trillions of dollars.



- His budget reduces the deficit in a balanced way that asks millionaires and billionaires to pay their fair share.
- The President's blueprint is for an economy built to last, where hard work pays off and responsibility is rewarded, where everyone does their fair share, plays by the same rules and gets a fair shot at the American Dream.
- We can't do the same thing and expect a different result – and today's embrace of the Ryan budget proves once again that Mitt Romney would implement a carbon copy of the policies that led to the economic crisis.

###

### **Romney and His Allies Outspent the Competition by More Than 7-to-1 to win Illinois (3/21/12)**

**Key Point:** As he continues to lose support from critical voting groups, Mitt Romney and his allies were forced to outspend the competition by more than 7-to-1 to win Illinois.

- Mitt Romney won the Illinois primary by carpet-bombing the competition: he and his allies outspent the competition by more than 7-to-1 in the state and nearly 21-to-1 in Chicago.
- This continues a trend we've seen in many of the states he's won. Romney has to spend so much because in many of these crucial states he's consistently alienating and losing among:
  - Working-class voters.
  - Voters who care most about strong moral character.
  - Voters who want a candidate who understands average Americans' problems.
  - Voters who are confident in their candidate.
- With Romney applauding the Ryan budget plan that would end Medicare as we know it and continue to erode middle-class economic security, it's no wonder voters aren't excited to support him.
  - More than 50 percent of Illinois voters had reservations about their candidates or voted for their candidate because they disliked the other choices even more.
  - Illinois Republican primary voters aren't excited about the Republican field, much like the rest of the country.

###

### **Top Romney Advisor on Romney's Flip-Flops: "It's Almost Like an Etch-A-Sketch" (3/21/12)**

**Key Point:** Mitt Romney's top advisor confirmed today that Romney has no core and will say anything to get elected.

- Mitt Romney has had a reputation for years that he'll say and stand for anything to get elected. As if Romney's record of flip-flops didn't prove that point enough, his top advisor confirmed today that Romney has no core and will in fact say anything to get elected. He said that Romney would "hit a reset button" for the general election and that "it's almost like an Etch-A-Sketch. You can kind of shake it up and restart all over again."
  - Please see [this new DNC video](#) on the subject.
- Romney's willingness to say and stand for anything to get elected is nothing new. He has flip-flopped on issue after issue to try to win over Republican voters:
  - Once he said that "abortion should be safe and legal in this country," but now he says he's pro-life.
  - Once he said that undocumented immigrants "should be able to sign up for permanent residency or citizenship" but now he says he would veto the DREAM Act, denying young immigrants here

through no fault of their own and who know no other home a chance to earn a path to citizenship by going to college or serving our country.

- He's also flip-flopped on contraception, health reform, climate change, Afghanistan, Don't Ask Don't Tell, China trade enforcement, and just about everything else.
  - He even faked a Southern accent while campaigning in Mississippi and Alabama.
- With Romney's repeated flip-flops on almost every single issue, it's no wonder why voters don't trust him.

###

### **President Obama's Budget Plan Would Reduce the Deficit by \$4 Trillion (3/21/12)**

**Key point:** Unlike plans proposed by Mitt Romney and House Republicans, the President's balanced plan would reduce the deficit by \$4 trillion.

- While Mitt Romney's budget and tax plans will either explode the deficit by \$5 trillion or destroy the middle class's economic security with deep cuts to Social Security and Medicare, President Obama's do the opposite. Unlike plans proposed by Romney and House Republicans, the President's balanced plan would reduce the deficit by \$4 trillion.
- President Obama has put forward a serious plan to reduce the deficit by \$4 trillion. It looks for savings in every part of the budget and puts our country back on a sustainable fiscal path.
  - The President's budget blueprint is for an economy built to last, where hard work pays off and responsibility is rewarded, where everyone does their fair share, plays by the same rules and gets a fair shot at the American Dream.
  - While the President's budget reduces the deficit in a balanced way that asks millionaires and billionaires to pay their fair share, Romney's budget would continue to let the wealthiest pay taxes at a lower rate than many middle-class families.
- The President's plan looks for savings in every part of the budget. It includes:
  - Last year's agreement with Congress to cap discretionary spending and reduce the deficit by \$1 trillion.
  - \$360 billion in savings from Medicare, Medicaid and other health programs, on top of deficit reductions in the new health care law. It's making them more effective and efficient while ensuring they continue to support the middle class and the seniors, low-income children and people with disabilities who depend on them.
  - \$200 billion in savings from so-called "mandatory" spending in areas like agricultural subsidies and federal worker retirement.
  - Savings from the President's decisions to responsibly end the war in Iraq and drawing down forces in Afghanistan.

###

### **The President's All-Of-The-Above Energy Strategy Helps Families Save at the Gas Pump (3/21/12)**

**Key Point:** President Obama's all-of-the-above energy strategy is reducing our dependence on foreign oil and will help families save at the pump.

- President Obama is speaking in Nevada and New Mexico today about his all-of-the-above energy strategy that's reducing our dependence on foreign oil and will help families save at the pump.

- President Obama knows that rising gas prices are hitting families hard. As long as America has been dependent on foreign oil, consumers have been subjected to unpredictable price swings at the pump.
- The President knows we can't just drill our way to lower gas prices and we won't solve this problem overnight. That's why he's focused on an all-of-the-above strategy to develop all of America's natural resources – including domestic oil, gas, wind, solar and biofuels – and encouraging fuel efficiency so that we can reduce our dependence on foreign oil over time.
- Oil and gas development has increased every year of the Obama administration and domestic oil production is now at an eight-year high – and our dependence on foreign oil is now at a 16-year low. Last year, we cut net oil and petroleum imports by 1 million barrels a day. President Obama has also:
  - Expanded domestic oil production by offering millions of acres of land for lease and improving safety measures to prevent future spills.
  - Proposed opening up more than 75 percent of undiscovered offshore oil and gas resources for development in the Gulf of Mexico and the Arctic.
  - Taken an important step forward in allowing safe exploration of one of the Arctic Seas, which could yield up to 15 billion barrels of oil.
  - Promoting the safe, responsible development of America's near 100-year supply of natural gas that will help create more than 600,000 jobs. In 2009, America regained its position as the world's leading producer of natural gas.
- President Obama has also made record gains in clean energy development, including:
  - Nearly doubling renewable wind, solar and geothermal energy since 2008.
  - Agreeing with automakers to nearly double fuel efficiency standards for cars and trucks. That will help to save families more than \$8,000 per vehicle at the pump and decrease our oil consumption by an estimated 2.2 million barrels a day.
  - Boosting our use of cleaner fuels, including increasing the level of ethanol that can be blended into gasoline and implementing a new Renewable Fuel Standard that will save nearly 14 billion gallons of fuel in 2022.
  - Positioning America to be the world's leading manufacturer of the high-tech batteries that will drive the next generation of clean energy vehicles.
- While President Obama is helping families save money at the pump, Mitt Romney did the opposite.
  - As governor, Romney increased a tax on gas by 400 percent.
  - Romney opposed increasing fuel-efficiency standards that are helping families save at the pump.
  - Romney wants to repeal Wall Street reforms that are preventing corporations from manipulating the energy market like Enron did.

###

### **Romney's Budget Plan Is Just Like Ryan's: Bad For Seniors And The Middle Class (3/22/12)**

**Key Point:** Mitt Romney's budget plan is just like Ryan's: bad for seniors and the middle class.

- Mitt Romney's budget plan is just like the one Congressman Paul Ryan released the Republican budget plan this week: they're both bad for seniors and the middle class. Both Romney's and Ryan's budget plans turn Medicare into a voucher program, increase health care costs to seniors by thousands of dollars, and give massive tax cuts to the wealthiest.
  - Please see [this campaign memo](#) titled "Let Seniors Go Bankrupt: Republican Plans for Medicare and Social Security."

- Romney has said he is on the same page as Ryan – even “applauding” this week’s budget – so America’s seniors need to take note of what this budget means for them.
- The Romney and Ryan budgets would turn Medicare into a voucher program. What does this mean for seniors and middle class families?
  - Over time, traditional Medicare would wither on the vine, risking the guaranteed coverage seniors have earned and paid for.
  - Seniors would be forced into private plans and pay more for their health care.
  - At the end of the day, Ryan’s plan – which Romney has called “bold and right” – would end Medicare as we know it for millions of seniors.
- Romney likes to say that his Social Security plans wouldn’t change anything for current or soon-to-be retirees. But Romney never mentions what would happen for everybody else. In fact, a plan like Romney’s for Social Security could actually cut benefits by \$2,400 a year for workers in their forties and by \$4,700 for those in their twenties.
- Neither the Romney nor Ryan budget plans ask millionaires and billionaires to pay their fair share.
  - President Obama has proposed the Buffett Rule, which asks the wealthiest to pay their fair share and not pay a lower tax rate than middle-class families – but both Romney and Ryan oppose it.
  - Paul Ryan’s plan would use deep budget cuts to help pay for \$150,000 in tax breaks for millionaires and billionaires, while Romney’s plan would provide even deeper tax cuts for the wealthy, adding trillions to the deficit.
- While Mitt Romney and the Republicans want to end Medicare as we know it and devastate Social Security, President Obama is doing the opposite.
  - Vice President Biden will be in Florida tomorrow talking about President Obama’s commitment to preserving and protecting our sacred compact with America’s seniors and middle-class families.
  - The President believes that anyone who works hard and plays by the rules should be able to retire with dignity and security.

###

### **Vice President Biden Delivers Campaign Speech on Retirement Security (3/23/12)**

**Key Point:** Vice President Biden gave his second campaign speech today, about President’s commitment to preserving and protecting our sacred compact with America’s seniors.

- Vice President Biden gave his second campaign speech today in Coconut Creek, Florida. It was the second of four speeches laying out the stark contrast between the President and the Vice President, and the Republican field.
- Vice President Biden spoke about the President’s commitment to preserving and protecting our sacred compact with America’s seniors – that if you work hard and play by the rules, you can retire with dignity and security. President Obama and Vice President Biden are fighting to grow the middle class and help working Americans recovering the economic security they have lost.
- President Obama has a balanced approach to strengthening Medicare, Social Security and other programs critical to the economic security of America’s seniors and the middle class – and Mitt Romney’s is the opposite.
  - While President Obama proposed the Buffett Rule, which asks the wealthiest to pay their fair share instead of paying a lower tax rate than middle-class families, Romney opposes it.

- Instead Romney wants to give millionaires and billionaires massive tax cuts that would add trillions to the deficit.
- To help pay for his tax cuts for the wealthiest, Romney has proposed a plan to end Medicare as we know it and turn it into a voucher program. Under similar plans, seniors would have to pay more than \$6,000 more a year for their health care. Romney also wants to repeal the President's health reforms that keep Medicare solvent through 2026 and are helping seniors save money on prescription drugs
  - Please see [this infographic](#) contrasting the President's and Romney's Medicare plans.
- Romney likes to say that his Social Security plans wouldn't change anything for current or soon-to-be retirees. But Romney never mentions what would happen for everybody else. In fact, a Social Security plan like Romney's could actually cut benefits by \$2,400 a year for workers in their forties and by \$4,700 for those in their twenties.

###

### **President Obama's Health Reforms Are Helping Millions Save Money And Live Healthier Lives (3/23/12)**

**Key Point:** President Obama's landmark health reforms are already helping millions of Americans save money and live healthier lives.

- Today is the second anniversary of President Obama's landmark health reforms, which are already helping millions of Americans save money and live healthier lives.
  - Please see [these new videos](#) highlighting health reform's benefits for families across the country.
- Medicare is now stronger for seniors, and women can now get life-saving mammograms at no extra cost. Children won't lose their coverage just because they were born with pre-existing conditions like asthma – and American families are seeing how reform is saving lives and saving money.
- Since we passed reform almost two years ago, Americans have seen its positive impact:
  - 180 million Americans are now protected against the worst insurance abuses, like denying health care to the sick, excessive premium increases, lifetime caps on the amount of care a patient can receive, and soon will be protected against gender discrimination.
  - 86 million Americans received free preventive care. That means they got live-saving cancer screenings like mammograms and colonoscopies, and soon women can have their contraception covered without paying a co-pay or deductible. They're living healthier lives while saving money at the same time.
  - An additional 2.5 million young adults now have insurance. That's because President Obama's health reform made sure they could stay on parents' plans as they enter the workforce, until they turn 26.
  - 47 million Americans now benefit from a stronger Medicare program. The solvency of the program has been extended by eight years, and new prescription drug discounts have saved 3.6 million people with Medicare an average of \$600.
- That's just the beginning. As the law continues to phase in over the coming months, so will more of its benefits. New reforms will lower costs and raise the quality of care. Seniors will see their Medicare coverage continue to improve, and see the doughnut hole completely close.
- And in two years, every single American, regardless of their circumstances – whether they want to change jobs, start a business or retire early, or even if they lose their job – will have access to affordable, quality



health insurance. Presidents have been trying to make that happen for 70 years. President Obama got it done.

###

### **Romney Pays Lip Service To Big Oil Donors at Louisiana's Petroleum Club (3/23/12)**

**Key Point:** Mitt Romney is pandering to his Big Oil donors and telling them exactly what they want to hear.

- Mitt Romney is speaking tonight at the Petroleum Club in Shreveport, Louisiana. He's speaking to a roomful of Big Oil executives, who have given money to his campaign and who would benefit from the pro-oil policies Romney supports as a presidential candidate.
- In this election alone, Romney has raised more than \$750,000 from oil and gas special interests. Romney is pandering to his Big Oil donors and telling them exactly what they want to hear. Romney would maintain \$4 billion in taxpayer subsidies to oil and gas companies that are posting record profits, and he opposes President Obama's all-of-the-above energy strategy to help decrease our dependence on foreign oil.
  - Please see [this Politico article](#) on Romney's Big Oil donors.
- Romney's rhetoric on energy is dishonest and misleading. Here's the truth:
  - Under President Obama, domestic oil and natural gas production have gone up every year. Last year, oil production reached an 8-year high, natural gas production reached an all-time high, and both should continue to rise.
  - Drilling alone won't make gas prices go down. That's why the President has pursued an all-of-the-above energy strategy that's decreasing our dependence on foreign oil so we're less vulnerable to price spikes on the international oil market.
  - Our dependence on foreign oil is at a 16-year low, and President Obama's historic new fuel-economy standards will save consumers about \$8,000 during the life of their vehicle.
- While President Obama is helping families save money at the pump, Mitt Romney did the opposite. Romney criticized the fuel-economy standards that are helping families save at the pump. He also wants to repeal Wall Street reforms that are preventing corporations from manipulating the energy market to profit off of high prices at the pump.
- Romney's also trying to etch away his time as governor of Massachusetts, when he said he was "very much in favor of people recognizing that these high gasoline prices are probably here to stay." Romney also increased a tax on gas by 400 percent, impacting every motorist in the state.