

THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL COMMITTEE WEEKLY UPDATE

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE DNC COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

November 11, 2011

This week, President Obama continued his “We Can’t Wait” campaign, announcing changes to the Head Start Program that will increase accountability and lead to higher standards. He also signed an Executive Order that will reduce waste and encourage more efficient federal government spending across the board. Democrats scored a number of important victories during the 2011 election on Tuesday night, in what was a full-scale repudiation of extreme Republican policies by middle-class voters. On the eve of Veterans Day, Republicans in the Senate ended weeks of partisan inaction and helped pass pieces of the American Jobs Act that will put America’s veterans back to work – a step forward that the DNC advocated for in a new television ad earlier in the week, which ran in the key states of Ohio, North Carolina and New Mexico. And the DNC, Democratic state parties and local Democratic leaders continued their efforts to hold Republicans accountable, with major events in Michigan and Minnesota as well as a range of advertisements, videos and statements.

President Obama Continues “We Can’t Wait” Push with Changes to Head Start Program

This week, President Obama traveled to Philadelphia, where he visited Yeadon Regional Head Start Center and delivered remarks announcing the next step in his “We Can’t Wait” campaign: the Obama Administration is proceeding with reforms requiring Head Start programs that are failing to meet high standards to compete within their communities for federal funds, as opposed to automatically receiving them. These changes will lead to greater accountability and higher-quality Head Start programs. During his remarks, the President said:



“Now, I firmly believe that Head Start is an outstanding program and a critical investment. The children who have the chance to go to the best Head Start programs have an experience that can literally change their lives for years to come. We’re making today’s announcement because we believe that every child in Head Start deserves that same chance.

“Now, under the old rules governing Head Start, there just wasn’t enough accountability. If a program wasn’t providing kids with quality services, there was no

incentive to improve. Under the new rule, programs are going to be regularly evaluated against a set of clear, high standards. If a program meets these standards -- and we believe the majority of Head Start programs will -- then their grants will be renewed. But if a program isn’t giving children the support they need to be ready for school, if classrooms are unsafe, if finances aren’t in order, if kids aren’t learning what they need to learn, then other organizations will be able to compete for that grant. We’re not just going to put money into programs that don’t work. We will take money and put them into programs that do.
(Applause.)”

Watch video of the President’s remarks [here](#).

The President Signs Executive Order Cutting Wasteful Spending, Promoting Efficiency in Government

On Wednesday, President Obama signed an Executive Order that will reduce waste and encourage more efficient federal government spending across the board. The President's Executive Order will lay out goals that are bold but reachable, and which flow from the work carried out by the Campaign to Cut Waste that President Obama and Vice President Biden launched earlier in the year. The President gave brief remarks before signing the Executive Order, in which he said:

"It directs agencies to slash spending in each of these areas -- travel, printing, IT -- because we believe that we can get better results for less using technology. And overall, spending in the areas covered by this executive order will shrink by 20 percent. And members of my Cabinet will keep reporting on their progress to Joe Biden, and ultimately to me. And we're going to hold them accountable for meeting this 20 percent reduction goal.



"These are important steps that can save taxpayers billions of dollars over the next several years. It

doesn't replace the importance of the work that Congress needs to do in coming up with a balanced, bold plan to reduce our deficit, but it indicates once again that there are things that we can do right now that will actually deliver better government more efficiently, more consumer-friendly for less money. And we're going to keep on finding every possible way that we can do that even if Congress is not acting."

Watch video of the President's remarks [here](#).

Democrats Hail Victories Across the Country Tuesday Night in 2011 Election

On Tuesday night, voters came out to the polls to defeat Republican initiatives and candidates across the country in a full-scale repudiation of the extreme and divisive Republican policies supported by Mitt Romney and the other presidential candidates - from anti-immigration efforts and attacks on women's reproductive rights to limiting ballot access and anti-worker initiatives. The Democratic National Committee released a memo on the results titled, "Election Night 2011: A Repudiation of Extreme Republican Policies, A Victory for the Middle Class." The memo said:

"Whether in the West, Northeast, Midwest, South, or any corner of our nation, the American people see Republicans and the extreme-policies for which they are advocating as out of step with the vast majority of Americans. Voters are tired of Republican attempts to balance our economic recovery solely on the backs of the middle class without asking the wealthiest and special interests to pitch in and pay their fair share. And they're tired of the Republican Party's anti-women, anti-worker, anti-immigrant, and anti-middle class policy positions, which are falling flat with voters and do not bode well for their electoral prospects in 2012. Unfortunately that's all they seem to be getting from state elected officials, Republicans in Washington, and the Republican presidential candidates on the campaign trail.

“As bad a night as it was for Republicans, it was a big night for Democrats. We won on both the policy front and on the organizing front—showing a turnout operation, led by Organized Labor, particularly in Ohio, that gives Democrats a boost going in to 2012. With less than a year to go until the 2012 elections, the Republican Party is licking its wounds and paying a price for its far right wing, Tea Party-dictated agenda.”

Senate Passes President’s Plan to Put America’s Veterans Back to Work

On Thursday, following three different instances in recent weeks where Republicans in the Senate blocked part or all of the American Jobs Act, Senate Republicans finally agreed to cooperate and helped pass two components of the President’s jobs plan: the Returning Heroes and Wounded Warrior Tax Credits, which provide incentives to businesses that hire veterans. Following this vote, DNC Chair Debbie Wasserman Schultz released a statement in which she said:

“On the eve of Veterans Day, today’s vote is a fitting tribute to the millions of American veterans who have offered their lives to protect our country, and who deserve our full support for all the sacrifices they have made. It builds on the efforts of President Obama to take action at the executive level to provide support to our veterans and help them make the transition back to civilian life. I encourage Republicans in Congress to continue working with the President to put Americans back to work and grow our economy by passing the rest of the American Jobs Act.”

In advance of the Senate vote this week, the DNC began running a television ad in North Carolina, New Mexico and Ohio that highlighted the importance of passing these pieces of the President’s jobs plan to put veterans back to work. This ad, titled, “Obama: Put Veterans To Work,” can be viewed [here](#).

Holding Republicans Accountable

This week, the DNC joined Democratic state parties and local Democratic leaders in continuing the push to hold Republicans accountable for their failed policies that hurt the middle class. In Minnesota, DNC Chair Debbie Wasserman Schultz held a joint press conference with Minneapolis Mayor RT Rybak – who was recently named a DNC Vice Chair – and Congressman Keith Ellison (D-MN), where they discussed the need to pass the American Jobs Act to create jobs now and keep America competitive in the global marketplace. They also admonished Republicans in Congress and on the campaign trail for opposing the President’s jobs plan.

As the Republican presidential candidates prepared to meet in Michigan on Wednesday for their ninth debate, Democrats made a big push to hold Mitt Romney accountable for his suggestion that we should have “let Detroit go bankrupt” when the U.S. auto industry was on the brink of collapse a few years ago – a course of action that would have put 1.4 million Americans’ jobs on the line. Two press conferences were held in Michigan to highlight Romney’s disastrous proposal, featuring members of the Michigan congressional delegation, DNC Chair Wasserman Schultz, the Michigan Democratic Party Chair and the President of the UAW.

Additionally, the DNC ran a full-page in the Detroit News and Detroit Free Press on Romney’s “Let Detroit Go Bankrupt” stance, in addition to unveiling a new web video titled, “Hit the Road, Mitt.” You can view it [here](#). Following the Republican debate on Wednesday, the DNC released another video, “No Mitt, You Didn’t Care At All,” setting the record straight on Mitt Romney’s false assertion during the debate that he cared about the auto industry. And DNC Chair Wasserman Schultz released a statement after the GOP debate, in which she commented on Romney’s stance:

“It’s an appalling proposal, but coming from someone who has been all over the map on President Obama’s payroll tax cut that would give back \$1,500 to the typical middle-class family, belittling it last month and tonight claiming to support it, should we really be surprised?”

Key Issues in the News and Background

Talking Points: We Can't Wait – New Initiatives to Get Veterans Back to Work

- President Obama is continuing to push Congress to pass the American Jobs Act, in a piece-by-piece fashion, to get Americans back on the job and boost our economy.
- Later this week, the Senate is expected to hold a vote on the Returning Heroes and Wounded Warrior Tax Credits – both included in the President's jobs plan – which would offer tax credits to businesses that are hiring America's veterans.
- A number of well-known veterans' service groups – including the American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America and Veterans of Foreign Wars – today declared that they support both of these tax credits. They also urged Congress to take action on these practical measures that will help get veterans back on the job.
- America's veterans should not have to wage an uphill battle to find employment upon their return to civilian life, and the President will keep applying pressure to Republicans in Congress to put the needs of the American people before partisan politics and pass the Returning Heroes and Wounded Warrior Tax Credits.
- We cannot keep waiting for Congress to take action. That's the reason why President Obama today rolled out three initiatives that will help get America's veterans back on the job. They are:
 - **Veteran Gold Card:** As of today, post-9/11 veterans will have the option of downloading the Veteran Gold Card, which gives them access to improved services such as six months' worth of personalized case management, assessments and counseling services – which are available at approximately 3,000 One-Stop Career Centers throughout the country. This could prove much-needed aid to the more than 200,000 post-9/11 veterans who are currently without work. During his speech at the Navy Yard on August 4, 2011, President Obama directed the Department of Labor to proceed with launching the Veteran Gold Card initiative.
 - **My Next Move for Veterans:** Additionally, the Department of Labor is going to launch My Next Move for Veterans. This is a new website that will enable veterans to enter their military occupation code and be matched with civilian jobs that are well-suited for their qualifications. This online tool will have information concerning salaries, apprenticeships and additional education and training programs.
 - **Creating a Veterans Job Bank:** The Obama Administration is also proceeding with the launch of the Veterans Jobs Bank – via the National Resource Directory – which is a user-friendly resource that assists veterans in identifying job listings from businesses seeking to employ them. It currently searches through more than 500,000 job listings, and it's continuing to grow. With just a few simple steps, businesses can ensure that the job listings on their own individual websites are included in this new Veterans Jobs Bank.
- You can access each of these services by going to www.whitehouse.gov/vets.
- Taken together, both these initiatives and the tax credits will help cut down on the number of unemployed veterans through a jump in hiring, offer better resources for veterans to translate their military skills for civilian jobs, and give veterans new mechanisms that will help them find available jobs.

###

Talking Points: We Can't Wait – Changes to Head Start Program

- Our nation needs a top-of-the-line education system not only for the sake of our children, but also for the future of America's economy. In the global marketplace that exists today, it is clear that countries who can out-educate us today will be able to out-compete us in the future.
- Sadly, Congressional Republicans simply will not act to make sure that every child in America can receive the best education possible.
 - They voted no on saving the jobs of 400,000 teachers.
 - They voted to drastically cut Pell grants to help students get a college education.
 - They've done nothing to address the flaws of No Child Left Behind.
 - Virtually all House Republicans voted in favor of a budget that would have cut hundreds of thousands of children from the Head Start Program.
- The President, on the other hand, understands that our nation's children only have one shot at a good education, and they can't keep waiting for Congress to take action to help them achieve that goal. So President Obama is acting where Congress refuses to do so.
 - The President has provided states adequate flexibility under No Child Left Behind, as long as they agree to carry out reforms that will improve education.
 - He has also moved forward with measures that help America's students better handle their college debt.
- The President also understands that the formative years prior to kindergarten are the most important in establishing a child's educational foundation and potential for success. He has moved forward in his advocacy of top-notch early education programs that lay the foundation for children's success in school – and he continued that advocacy in Pennsylvania today.
 - President Obama prevented Republicans from making damaging cuts to Head Start.
 - When members of Congress did not pass the Early Learning Challenge Fund proposed by President Obama, the Administration directed \$500 million through the Race to the Top to establish an early learning competition. In October, there were 35 states that applied for these funds – and next month, the Administration will announce the winners of that competition.
- President Obama today also laid out reforms requiring Head Start programs that are failing to meet high standards to compete within their communities for federal funds (as opposed to automatically receiving that funding). This change will advance accountability and lead to higher-quality Head Start programs, which is important because every child in Head Start should have the opportunity to be enrolled in a program that is excellent.
 - This action today is part of the Administration's larger effort to set forth higher standards, encourage accountability and take a results-driven approach to early learning programs.
 - The new Head Start rule follows through on a bipartisan measure passed in 2007 by Congress.
- As a result of this change to Head Start, programs will be routinely assessed using a set of standards that are high and clearly laid out.
 - A program that is able to meet these standards – and the Administration is confident that most of the programs will do so – will see its grant renewed.

- However, those programs that aren't giving kids the support needed to prepare them for school – or that have unsafe classrooms, fail to keep their finances in order, or clearly fail to teach children what they need to learn – will have to compete with other organizations for that grant.
 - Should another program or grantee demonstrate that it would do a better job meeting the needs of children in that community, they will have that opportunity.
- For the first time ever, Head Start programs are going to be truly held accountable for the quality of their classrooms. It may be true that it's not always easy to raise the bar, but it is right.
 - As a result of this rule, in addition to the other executive actions the Administration has carried out to improve our nation's education system, a greater number of children will get the opportunity to study diligently, perform well in the classroom, and get a college degree without taking on the heavy stress of debt. Our country will see more of its citizens growing up to be the scientists, innovators and business leaders of tomorrow. And more businesses will succeed in their efforts to find employees with adequate skills.

###

Talking Points: President Obama to Sign Executive Order to Cut Waste and Promote Efficient Spending

- From the beginning, the Obama Administration has said it would go line-by-line through the federal budget to identify wasteful spending and eliminate as much of it as possible.
- These days, Americans are making an effort to focus on what they actually need and cut back on what they don't – and our government should be following suit. It's important that we do not live beyond our means, so that we can invest in education, innovation and infrastructure – the things we need to grow as a nation.
- The reality is that we're going to have to make some difficult decisions in order to reduce the deficit. That means it's time to move forward with some difficult cuts to programs that are important to a number of people, and it means it's time to ask America's wealthiest few – the ones who have prospered more than anyone over the last decade – to pay their fair share.
- The American people recognize this reality, and it's their expectation that Congress will recognize it too. It's time for members of Congress to work together to lay out a balanced plan for getting our finances under control. But we can't keep waiting for members of Congress to do their job – so President Obama will continue to take action where they refuse to do so.
- Today, the President will sign an Executive Order that will reduce waste and encourage more efficient federal government spending across the board.
- President Obama has also directed government agencies to cut travel expenditures and place a cap on the amount of cell phones, smartphones and laptops that they issue to government workers.
- The President has also directed agencies to put a stop to the needless printing of materials that can be posted online, to downsize the federal government's executive fleet, and to cease the use of taxpayer money to pay for swag – non-essential plaques, clothing, and additional promotional materials bought by agencies.
- We will see a 20% overall spending reduction in the areas included under this Executive Order.

- The President's Executive Order will lay out goals that are bold but reachable, and which flow from the work carried out by the Campaign to Cut Waste that the President and Vice President launched earlier in the year.
- Vice President Biden convened the first meeting of the Campaign to Cut Waste at the Cabinet level back in September. During this meeting, he called on the Cabinet to identify inefficient, wasteful expenditures with regard to travel, executive fleet, publications, office equipment and more.
- The Obama Administration has moved forward with an unparalleled effort to reduce the real estate footprint of the federal government – it's on track to produce \$3.5 billion in savings on federal real estate expenses by the time Fiscal Year 2012 comes to an end.
- Additionally, the Obama Administration has carried out a crackdown on wasteful spending on contracts – making spending cuts to contracting for the first time in over 12 years and making a \$5 billion spending cut to “no bid contracts.”
- These steps are critical and will lead to the savings of billions of taxpayer dollars. The Administration will continue full speed ahead with these efforts, hunting down every federal dollar that is being misspent.
- The Administration has chosen to hold itself to a higher standard – and with respect to getting our nation's spending under control while still making the critical investments that will maintain America's position as the greatest country on the planet, Congress ought to follow suit.

###

Talking Points: Putting Veterans Back to Work

- Today, while speaking to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, First Lady Michelle Obama made the announcement that two major organizations are jointly committing to employing 100,000 veterans and military spouses by 2014 – which is so far the biggest coordinated commitment to do so from the private sector.
- The First Lady put it this way: “We have leaders from service organizations, technology companies and agencies from all across our government. We're all gathered here at the home of the world's largest business federation to send one simple message to our veterans and their families: America has your back.”
- Today's commitment is an answer to President Obama's call to private sector employers to employ or provide training to 100,000 veterans and military spouses by 2014.
- It builds on an announcement by the First Lady in October that the American Logistics Association was committing to hiring 25,000 veterans and military spouses.
- It took less than 100 days for the private sector to meet President Obama's challenge. Already, more than 16,000 veterans and spouses have been put back to work – and more than 1,500 businesses have made a collective commitment to employ more than 125,000 veterans and spouses in the years to come.
- The announcement today is three-pronged:
 - The International Franchise Association (IFA), representing 1,100 franchises across the country, has made a commitment to employ 80,000 veterans and military spouses. This commitment includes a robust entrepreneurial piece: the IFA will offer its advocacy and support to veterans who wish to own their own franchise.

- As part of this 80,000 figure, IFA has also made a commitment to hire 5,000 of America's Wounded Warriors – the first commitment from the private sector of its kind and on this scale.
- Additionally, the Military Spouse Employment Partnership – which was launched with the help of Dr. Jill Biden last summer at the Chamber of Commerce and which encompasses almost 100 businesses and organizations – has made a commitment to hiring 20,000 military spouses.
 - Included among these organizations are companies such as Microsoft, Home Depot and Citi and franchises such as UPS, Guidant Financial and Data Doctors.
- The First Lady's announcement today will be spread across America through a campaign launched by IFA, "Operation Enduring Opportunity." This campaign kicks off today in 9 cities across the nation at franchises owned by veterans. This kick-off will include an event held tomorrow in Boston at a veteran-owned small business, where the Administrator of the Small Business Administration will be joining the IFA's CEO to offer support for the expansion of veteran-owned small businesses.
- The announcement also builds on three initiatives laid out by the President earlier this week that will help put veterans back on the jobs. They include:

Veteran Gold Card: Post-9/11 veterans now have the option of downloading the Veteran Gold Card, which gives them access to improved services such as six months' worth of personalized case management, assessments and counseling services – which are available at approximately 3,000 One-Stop Career Centers throughout the country. This could prove much-needed aid to the more than 200,000 post-9/11 veterans who are currently without work. During his speech at the Navy Yard on August 4, 2011, President Obama directed the Department of Labor to proceed with launching the Veteran Gold Card initiative.

My Next Move for Veterans: The Department of Labor launched My Next Move for Veterans. This is a new website that enables veterans to enter their military occupation code and be matched with civilian jobs that are well-suited for their qualifications. This online tool will have information concerning salaries, apprenticeships and additional education and training programs.

Creating a Veterans Job Bank: The Obama Administration proceeded with the launch of the Veterans Jobs Bank – via the National Resource Directory – which is a user-friendly resource that assists veterans in identifying job listings from businesses seeking to employ them. It currently searches through more than 500,000 job listings, and it's continuing to grow. With just a few simple steps, businesses can ensure that the job listings on their own individual websites are included in this new Veterans Jobs Bank.

- You can access each of these services by going to www.whitehouse.gov/vets.
- The Senate today voted to pass the Returning Heroes and Wounded Warrior Tax Credits – both of which are part of the American Jobs Act. These initiatives provide tax credits to businesses that put veterans back to work, and their passage today by the Senate will help get our brave men and women back on the job and make our economy stronger.