

THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL COMMITTEE WEEKLY UPDATE

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE DNC COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

November 18, 2011

This week, President Obama held a weeklong Asia-Pacific trip that focused on strengthening our international alliances and promoting security in the region, as well as giving U.S. exports a boost in the global marketplace. The Democratic National Committee released two new web videos setting the record straight on false attacks against the President by Mitt Romney and Rick Perry and highlighting Romney's ill-timed Veterans Day proposal to privatize the Veterans Health Administration and provide veterans with vouchers for their medical care. Additionally, the DNC and state parties kept up their efforts to hold Republicans accountable in Congress and on the campaign trail for the failed agenda and lack of vision – with a range of events, activities and statements in the District of Columbia, Ohio, New Mexico, Colorado, New Hampshire, Arizona and South Carolina.

President Obama Focuses on Boosting U.S. Exports, Global Partnerships in Weeklong Asia-Pacific Trip

President Obama spent this week on an Asia-Pacific trip, which included participating in the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation conference in Hawaii, visiting Australia for meetings with Prime Minister Julia Gillard and an address to Parliament, and traveling to Indonesia for the East Asia Summit. Throughout the week-long trip, the President focused on strengthening our international relationships – with an emphasis on boosting U.S. exports – and promoting security in the Pacific. While in Australia, he also gave an address to U.S. and Australian service members, in which he said:



So we're deepening our alliance -- and this is the perfect place to do it. I know the training conditions around here are tough -- at least that's what I've heard. Big, open spaces. Harsh weather. Mozzies. (Laughter.) Snakes. Crocs. (Laughter.) In fact, I was just presented with the most unique gift I've ever received as President -- crocodile insurance. (Laughter.) My wife, Michelle, will be relieved. (Laughter.) I have to admit that when we reformed health care in America, crocodile insurance is one thing we left out. (Laughter.)

But there's another reason we're deepening our alliance here. This region has some of the busiest sea lanes in the world, which are critical to all our economies. And in times of crisis -- from the Bali bombings to East Timor to relief after a tsunami -- Darwin has been a hub, moving out aid, caring for victims, making sure that we do right by the people of this region. And that's what we're going to keep doing, together.

Going forward, our purpose is the same as it was 60 years ago -- "the preservation of peace and security."

Watch video highlighting the President's travels [here](#).

DNC Releases Two New Web Videos on GOP Candidates' Failed Policies, Attacks on the President

This week, the Democratic National Committee came out with two new web videos. The first, "MITT ROMNEY: Our Veterans Deserve Better," was released on Wednesday and highlights Mitt Romney's ill-timed Veterans Day proposal to privatize the Veterans Health Administration and provide veterans with vouchers for their medical care. You can view it [here](#).

On Thursday, following misleading attacks by Mitt Romney and Rick Perry that distorted the President's words – falsely accusing him of calling the American people "lazy" – the DNC released a web video setting the record straight. The video, titled "Oops," can be viewed [here](#).

Holding Republicans Accountable

The DNC and Democratic state parties across the country kept up their push to hold Republicans in Congress and on the campaign trail accountable for their misguided policies that do nothing to help the middle class. Democratic and labor leaders in Ohio hosted a press conference call on Mitt Romney's appalling proposal that rather than help the U.S. auto industry recover, we should "Let Detroit Go Bankrupt." The New Mexico and Colorado Democratic Parties also released statements on Mitt Romney's misguided proposal to provide veterans with vouchers for their medical care.

On the heels of last Saturday night's foreign policy debate held by the Republican presidential candidates, during which Rick Perry and Mitt Romney pledged to zero out the foreign aid budget – including the critical support the U.S. has provided to Israel for its security – the DNC and former Congressman Robert Wexler (D-FL) held a conference call addressing this new reckless and risky position.

In New Hampshire, the state party released a memo outlining the negative consequences of Mitt Romney's economic policies, including cuts to Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. New Hampshire Democrats also hosted a press conference call with small business leaders in the state focusing on Romney's failed economic policies. Additionally, the New Hampshire College Democrats released a statement hitting Romney for his lack of vision in tackling student loan debt; earlier in the week, the group held a press call with local Democrats on the same topic, pointing out that New Hampshire graduates have the highest student loan debt in the country. And on Friday, the state party released a web video titled, "Romney's Economic Policies are Bad for Americans, Worse for Granite Staters." View it [here](#).

Following Mitt Romney's accusations this week on the President's commitment to openness and transparency, the DNC fought back – sending out a research document on Romney's numerous attempts to dodge the media.

The DNC also filed a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request asking for records of communications between Romney and his staff about their decision to wipe their electronic records clean before leaving the Massachusetts governor's office. In a press release announcing the FOIA request, the DNC emphasized that Americans deserve to know whether the Romney administration deliberately sought to delete public records in anticipation of requests regarding Governor Romney's record on a range of issues – from abortion to healthcare – and how he reached policy decisions when in office. You can view the DNC's full request [here](#).

Finally, Republicans in Congress tried to take the drastic step of passing a Balanced Budget Amendment – which failed in the House this week and would have balanced the budget on the backs of the middle class, destroyed jobs, drastically cut Medicare and Social Security, and would have given unelected federal judges the power to raise taxes and make spending decisions. In response, DNC Chair Debbie Wasserman Schultz and New Jersey Congressman Bill Pascrell held a press conference call discussing the dangerous implications of the Balanced Budget Amendment. During the call, Chair Wasserman Schultz said:

"As bad as this Balanced Budget Amendment is, the version proposed by one of the leading GOP presidential candidates, Mitt Romney, is even worse. If you can believe it, Romney's Balanced Budget Amendment is more extreme and more harmful for hard working middle-class families than even the Tea Party-inspired version on the floor tomorrow."

Additionally, state parties and local officials in South Carolina, New Mexico, Colorado and Arizona put out statements slamming the misguided effort to pass this amendment.

Key Issues in the News and Background

Talking Points: We Can't Wait - Health Care Innovation Challenge

- The Obama Administration today unveiled another executive action aimed at putting Americans back on the job and growing the economy.
- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services will provide as much as \$1 billion in funding for innovative projects nationwide that explore and assess outside-the-box methods for producing top-notch medical care and reducing costs.
- This program, called the *Health Care Innovation Challenge*, will give an edge to those projects that quickly employ, train, and deploy workers in the health care field.
- The Health Care Innovation Challenge, which will be funded through the Affordable Care Act, will provide grant awards in March to projects that carry out the most convincing new ideas for delivering improved health, better care and more savings to Americans enrolled in Medicare, Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program – with an emphasis on individuals with the greatest needs in terms of health care.
- This program supports projects that can get started within six months, and those that prioritize rapid workforce deployment will have an advantage in the awarding of grants.
- The reality is that Congress grows more dysfunctional by the day, and Americans can't keep waiting for them to do their job. Therefore, President Obama will keep taking action where they refuse to do so.
- These measures don't replace the strong congressional action that is needed to put Americans back to work and strengthen the economy, but they will have an impact.
- Republicans in the Senate last week joined Democrats in doing the right thing and voting to pass tax credits that provide incentives to businesses that employ U.S. veterans.
- Veterans who have put their lives on the line for our country should not be expected to fight for work upon their return to civilian life. That's why President Obama has urged the House to follow suit and pass these tax credits so that they can be signed into law.
- Congressional Republicans ought to prioritize the needs of the American people over partisan politics and pass the additional components of the President's jobs plan that aid the millions of other Americans still looking for a job.

Executive actions taken:

- In October while in Las Vegas, President Obama outlined a series of steps that will make it easier for responsible homeowners who have little or no equity in their homes to capitalize on current low mortgage rates.
- The Administration issued a challenge to Community Health Centers to put 8,000 veterans to work – roughly one veteran for every health center site – over the course of the next three years. The Administration is

also working to increase opportunities for veterans who have medical training to obtain jobs as physician assistants.

- President Obama announced an executive action that improves college affordability and makes it easier for students to pay back their federal student loans.
- The Administration directed agencies to start taking steps to expedite the process of transferring federal research and development from laboratories to the marketplace. Additionally, the Administration called for the creation of BusinessUSA, a one-stop, central online service that allows businesses that are interested in either beginning to export or increasing exports to gain access to information about federal programs that are available – so that they won't have to waste their time trying to sort through all the federal bureaucracy.
- President Obama signed an executive order directing the FDA to take action and further reduce and prevent drug shortages to protect consumers and prevent price gouging.
- He has unveiled three executive actions that will get America's veterans back on the job.
- The President also signed an executive order that reduces federal government waste and encourages more efficient government spending across the board.
- These actions build upon existing efforts to act in the interest of the middle class. One such effort was our decision to quit waiting for Congress to make the necessary changes to No Child Left Behind, and to provide states with the flexibility needed to ensure that our children are meeting higher standards.
- The Administration took action to significantly decrease the amount of time it takes for small businesses to receive payment when they are in a contract with the federal government.
- The Administration also did away with regulations that are out of date, which will save billions of dollars for hospitals and patients. The Administration will keep doing its job – it's time for Congressional Republicans to do theirs. It's time for Congress to put the needs of the American people first, not partisan politics, and do the right thing for our country.

Additional points:

- We need to regain economic security for middle-class families by returning to the core values that made America great. America works best when we work together – when we ensure that Wall Street and Main Street are playing by the same set of rules – where honest, hard work and responsibility are rewarded.
- Our nation can't simply cut and slash our way to economic security for the middle class. We need to out-innovate, out-educate and out-build the rest of the world in order to move forward.
- We need to rebuild the economy for the long haul, producing the jobs of the future and making American-made products that will sell in the global economy – rather than outsourcing jobs, allowing for costly loopholes, and making reckless fiscal deals at the expense of America's middle class.

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Talking Points: We Can't Wait – Historic Fuel Economy Standards to Reduce Dependence on Oil, Save Consumers Money at the Pump

- The White House today laid out another executive action to grow the economy and get America back on track, because we can't wait for Republicans in Congress to take action.
- As part of the President's broader historic program, the Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Transportation to put higher standards for fuel economy and greenhouse gas pollution in place for Model Year 2017-2025 passenger cars and light trucks.
- In tandem with the other groundbreaking steps the Obama Administration has taken to improve energy efficiency, today's proposal will lead to over \$1.7 trillion in savings at the pump for the American people – amounting to over \$8,000 in savings for every vehicle by 2025.
- Together, these measures will lead to a reduction of roughly 12 billion barrels in America's dependence on oil – and the consumption of oil will be reduced by 2.2 million barrels per day by 2025. This reduction is enough to offset nearly one-fourth of our current level of foreign oil imports. Over the full course of these programs, they will also cut 6 billion metric tons in greenhouse gas emissions.
- The new standards proposed today will, on their own, lead to a 4 billion barrel reduction in oil consumption and will slash 2 billion metric tons of greenhouse gas pollution over the life span of the vehicles sold during those years. Currently, 60% of America's transportation-related petroleum use and greenhouse gas pollution comes from cars, SUVs, minivans and pickup trucks.
- We will need innovative technology and manufacturing in order to carry out the goals of today's proposal – and this means producing top-quality American jobs in cutting edge industries across the country.
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- Just yesterday, the Office of Management and Budget made the announcement that the Administration reduced inefficient, improper payments by almost \$18 billion this year through the Campaign to Cut Waste. These savings were secured through a reduction of payment errors in Medicare, Medicaid, Pell Grants and food stamps. Additionally, HHS is going to move forward with four more pilot programs to decrease errors and reduce fraud and inefficiency in Medicare and Medicaid.
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