



WEEKLY UPDATE

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE DNC COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

January 23, 2015

President Obama's 2015 State of the Union Address

On Tuesday night, President Obama addressed the nation in his yearly State of the Union speech. Covering a vast majority of topics from healthcare to foreign policy, the President centered his address on the importance of middle-class economics to strengthen the growing economy.

The President used the speech as a platform to lay out his plans to provide more opportunities for success in America, noting "middle-class economics means helping working families feel more secure in a world of constant change. That means helping folks afford childcare, college, health care, a home, retirement. And my budget will address each of these issues, lowering the taxes of working families and putting thousands of dollars back into their pockets each year."



Watch the President's full address [here](#).

President Obama also highlighted specific policy proposals he will put forward, including expanded availability of paid sick leave and paid maternity leave and providing America's students with two years of free community college so that more people can receive higher education without the fear of financial instability. He also emphasized the need to continue creating manufacturing and tech jobs in order to make America "the most competitive economy anywhere, the place where businesses want to locate and hire."

In discussing the importance of expanding opportunity and providing all Americans with a fair shot, the President touched on his recent immigration action, emphasizing that keeping families together and giving young children a chance for success are things that all Americans can agree are both important and necessary.

On foreign policy, the President spoke on the importance of standing with allies in fighting off terrorism. President Obama stated that the United States leads "...with the example of our values. That's what makes us exceptional. That's what keeps us strong. That's why we have to keep striving to hold ourselves to the highest of standards -- our own."

Much of President Obama's address was also dedicated to the idea of acting now so that America's future can be successful. He acknowledged climate change as the greatest threat to future generations, stating that the country must continue to combat climate change domestically as well as lead the global effort.

In the State of the Union, President Obama conveyed a message of opportunity for all in America. Ending his speech, the President said "I want future generations to know that we are a people who see our differences as a great gift, that we're a people who value the dignity and worth of every citizen -- man and woman, young and old, black and white, Latino, Asian, immigrant, Native American, gay, straight, Americans with mental illness or physical disability. Everybody matters. I want them to grow up in a country that shows the world what we still know to be true: that we are still more than a collection of red states and blue states; that we are the United States of America."

The State of the Economy vs GOP Rhetoric

As the President prepared to deliver the State of the Union – Republicans faced a dilemma: should they pull a Mitch McConnell and try to claim credit for the economic recovery that President Obama has presided over, or should they bemoan the progress we've made and push trickle down economic policies that benefit the most fortunate and big corporations while leaving everyone else with the bill.

No matter which door they choose in the coming weeks, here's what we know – time and again, Republican economic doom and gloom has never come to fruition – in fact, just the opposite:

Mitt Romney in 2012: "You're going to see chronic high unemployment continue four years or longer." And that if elected President "we'd get the unemployment rate down to 6 percent" in four years — which President Obama did in two.

Unemployment rate: 5.6%, lowest in 6 years

"There's no if about this. And it's gonna be ugly... The country's economy is going to collapse if Obama is re-elected."
–*Rush Limbaugh*

Economic Growth: Fastest economic growth in more than a decade

Michele Bachmann on President Obama's policies: "this is really the final leap to socialism."

Stocks: Fourth-longest bull market since World War II

Mike Lee (R-UT): Predicted the U.S. would see gas priced at \$6.60/gallon.

Gas Prices: Average price today \$2.14/gallon

Paul Ryan in 2014: Five years into "Obamanomics, the economy is even worse"

Job growth: 11.2 million over 58 straight months; 2014 was the best year for job growth since 1999

These are the facts — Republican doomsday predictions couldn't have been more off. And while it's likely the GOP will continue trying to obstruct progress, President Obama and Democrats will keep fighting every day to build on this progress and continue growing the economy for all Americans – tonight, and for the years to come.

DNC MEMO: The State of Chris Christie

MEMO

From: DNC Communications Director Mo Elleithee

To: Interested Parties

Date: January 23, 2015

Re: [The State of Chris Christie](#)

This weekend, Chris Christie will head to Iowa for Steve King's gathering of potential 2016 Republican presidential candidates. This is Christie's second trip to Iowa in as many weeks, and it comes after he's spent much of the past few weeks in Washington, DC, Virginia, Maryland, South Carolina, Massachusetts, Florida and of course Dallas and Green Bay for Cowboys games. **Eight states (and DC) in twenty days** – it's really something. He's building chits with the GOP governors he helped elect and courting activists and donors in key presidential states.

But is it making a difference?

Yes, it is – but it's certainly not the difference Christie has been hoping for...

1. **His numbers are tanking.**
2. **Voters (even Republicans!) don't want him to run for president.**
3. **And he's notoriously ignoring the problems on his doorstep back home in New Jersey.**

So ahead of another Iowa visit, it's a good time to take a deeper look at Chris Christie's falling presidential fortunes.

The Bottom's Falling Out

The numbers don't lie:

- Chris Christie's approval rating at home, from those who know him best, is at [a four-year low](#), and *half the state* says Christie is not trustworthy or honest. Yikes.
- [Only 1 in 5 New Jersey residents](#) believe that Christie's leadership has been good for the average citizen. More than half "believe taxes and spending have grown more burdensome," and three-fourths believe Christie "can point to only minor or no real accomplishments" as governor.
- By a wide margin – 21 percent! – voters say [Christie is more concerned](#) with running for president (53%) than doing his job as governor (32%). And a *whopping 72 percent* say his decisions are influenced by his presidential ambition most or some of the time.
- Maybe that's why [most New Jersey voters](#) don't think that Christie would make a good president and more than half have an unfavorable opinion of him.
- And nationwide, [even Republicans](#) don't really want him to run for president either. More Republicans say they'd even prefer to see *Sarah Palin* run than Christie.
- But when Christie does launch his seemingly inevitable campaign, he won't just be confronted by poor numbers at home – he'll also face low numbers in key states. In Iowa, where he'll head this weekend, [Christie is in a tie for eighth](#) at 5 percent – that's *second-to-last*. In Pennsylvania, [the story is even worse](#). Less than a year ago, he led the GOP field there with 23 percent – but today he's fallen to a tie for fourth with Ted Cruz and Mike Huckabee at 9 percent.

So needless to say, the numbers from the past few weeks are a problem for Christie. He's gone from the GOP's star – as recently for some in the media as November – to unpopular and disliked by voters.

So how could Christie try to rebound and charge back to the forefront? Well, you'd think by doubling down on his agenda as governor, solving problems in his state and leading by example. But for Christie, that just isn't happening.

Read the full Factivists post [here](#).

DNC Chair Rep. Wasserman Schultz Statement on the Anniversary of Roe v. Wade

DNC Chair Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz released the following statement recognizing the 42nd anniversary of Roe v. Wade:

"Today is the 42nd anniversary of the Supreme Court's decision in Roe v. Wade, solidifying a woman's autonomy to make her own decisions regarding her health and family.

"It is with a perverse sense of cruelty that Republicans would choose today for an attempt to chip away at these protections with a bill that would undermine women's access to safe and affordable healthcare and shows what the GOP's true priorities are. Time and again, the American people have soundly rejected extreme Republican efforts to insert themselves into health care decisions best left to women, their family, and their doctors.

"Congressional Republicans continue to waste taxpayer time and money by focusing on their outdated, ideological agenda instead of economic policies that will help the middle class. So long as Republicans insist on refighting these battles, Democrats will continue to stand up for women and defend access to health care."

50 years later, MLK's work is not done **CNN // DNC Vice Chair Donna Brazile**

Today, as we celebrate the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., I know there are those who will ask, "How long will it take?" How long until the dream is fulfilled? How long until our destination is reached?

But, like Dr. King, we must continue to march on.

We march on toward the realization of the American Dream. We are not diverted by those who would deny opportunity based on what we look like or where we came from or who would deny equality based on who we love.

We march on poverty, until every child has the nourishment of body and mind needed to fuel their chance at success. We must find ways to bring those from the "outskirts of hope" closer to the circle of opportunity.

We march on ballot boxes, because the rights for which we fought are too important to give up now. And no one should silence us simply because they might disagree with our views.

We march on because all lives matter, not to be judged by the color of their skin.

How long? Not long, because the images and words and fights of half a century ago still have the power to rouse us to march.

How long? I don't really know. But as Dr. King once told us, "the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice."

This year, I know I am not the only one with the Oscar-nominated "Selma" on my mind. Across the country, people are lining up in theaters and watching a raw image of the sacrifice 600 voting rights marchers made: as they pursued the right to vote, they were brutally attacked by police using billy clubs and tear gas.

The lessons of the struggle depicted in this movie are important, important enough to be mindful of them every day. But we should be especially mindful as we celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Today is a day of national reflection, but it is also a day of action. Remembering those who sacrificed before us is important, but carrying on their legacy and continuing to march forward is essential.

Read the rest of the CNN article [here](#).

In the States

- This week, Michigan House Democratic Leader Tim Greimel and Senate Democratic Whip Curtis Hertel, Jr. called for Governor Rick Snyder to begin supporting the middle class and work with Democrats in order to change the state's course. In a press conference, Rep. Greimel and Sen. Hertel said Gov. Snyder's policies are failing, noting a report from the Bureau of Labor Statistics that showed Michigan falling behind the rest of the country on job creation, as well as the state's \$324 million budget shortfall. Rep. Greimel said, "Democrats stand ready to work with Gov. Snyder and Legislative Republicans when the focus is on building an economy that works for, not against, working families," said Rep. Tim Greimel. "But what we will not support is more of the same failed policies that rig the system and force workers and seniors to pay more just so those at the very top can get more breaks. It's time for Republican leaders to abandon these failed policies that have left Michigan with deficits and lagging behind the rest of the country in economic mobility." Read the full press release [here](#).
- On Tuesday, New Hampshire Democratic Party Chair Ray Buckley criticized New Hampshire Republicans and Mitt Romney in specific over minimum wage in the state. Republicans stand opposed to efforts made by Governor Hassan and Democrats in the legislature, as well as the people of New Hampshire itself, according to Buckley: "It is beyond belief that New Hampshire Republican leaders could be more out of touch on the minimum wage than even Mitt '47%' Romney... It is long past time for Republican leaders to listen to the voices of the people of New Hampshire and finally join with Governor Hassan and Democrats in the legislature to strengthen wages and move our economy forward." Read the full press release [here](#).
- On Thursday, Democratic Party of Wisconsin Chair Mike Tate condemned Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker for abusing his office and ignoring what Wisconsin needs most in favor of his own political agenda. Indeed, Walker is now planning two trips out of the country, and recently took trips out of his own state to further along his Presidential campaign: "It's no wonder with Scott Walker's weekly out of state presidential campaign fundraising travel and now his taxpayer-funded foreign photo-ops that Wisconsin continues to lag in job growth, wage growth, and revenue... With some of the worst job growth and income growth numbers of any state in the country during his time in office, the worst fiscal reserves of any state in the country, a \$2.2 billion deficit and new revenue numbers from December that show tax revenues lagging from last year, is this really the time Scott Walker should be ignoring Wisconsin?" Read the full press release [here](#).
- On Thursday, longtime Kentucky politician Wendell Ford passed away. Ford served as governor of Kentucky and represented the Commonwealth in the U.S. Senate for four terms. Kentucky Democratic Party Chair Daniel Logsdon released the following statement: "Today Kentucky lost a giant. Whether as Governor, United States Senator or just a private citizen with a servant's heart - Wendell Ford did more for Kentucky and our citizens than any person in our Commonwealth's history. He was a man of integrity and drive whose accomplishments are too numerous to list. I join every Kentuckian in mourning the loss of this incredible man and hope Sen. Ford's family is consoled by knowing that Kentucky will be eternally grateful for his life of service." Read the full press release [here](#).
- On Friday, Democratic Party of Arkansas Chair Vince Insalaco commended Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson for his support of the reauthorization of the Private Option in 2016. Governor Hutchinson addressed the state legislature directly, which Insalaco praised: "The Democratic Party of Arkansas would like to thank Gov. Hutchinson for asking the Legislature to reauthorize the Private Option for the next year. The Private Option, a bipartisan program that has saved local hospitals and provided health insurance to over 200,000 Arkansans who cannot otherwise afford it. It is also important to note that this program would not be possible without the Affordable Care Act, which has also helped tens of thousands of Arkansans who can now obtain insurance regardless of pre-existing conditions, keep their children on their family plans until age 26, and live without fear of exceeding their maximum benefits. We hope that all members of the Legislature will work to educate their constituents regarding the true benefits of the ACA and the Private Option and how it helps all Arkansans." Read the full press release [here](#).