

THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL COMMITTEE WEEKLY UPDATE

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE DNC COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

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HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

Happening This Week

Senate Votes to Debate Health Insurance Reform Legislation. The Senate voted 60 to 39 on Saturday night to proceed to full floor debate of health insurance reform. By passing the motion to proceed, the Senate cleared the bill's first procedural hurdle, ensuring senators will have the opportunity to debate the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act on the Senate floor. Not surprisingly, no Republicans voted in favor of the motion to proceed. The Senate will resume debate on November 30. Majority Leader Harry Reid has said his goal is to pass the bill out of the Senate before Christmas. Here's an excerpt from DNC Chairman Tim Kaine's statement after the motion passed:

"Defenders of the status quo have been working to derail reform for months -- unfortunately, their obstructionist, just-say-no tactics represent more of the same. No matter. We know that there are some members of the Republican Party who understand the urgent need for health insurance reform and we remain hopeful that we can continue to work with those members to find common ground on this historic effort to pass health insurance reform that provides greater security and stability to Americans who have insurance and more quality affordable options to those who don't. The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act would bring down the skyrocketing costs of care for American families, businesses and our government, and reduce the national deficit \$130 billion by 2019..."

First State Visit to the White House. The President and First Lady welcomed Prime Minister Singh of India and his wife, Gursharan Kaur, to the White House on Tuesday morning. President Obama and Prime Minister Singh held bi-lateral [meetings](#) where climate change, economy and Pakistan were expected to be the prime topics of discussion. On Tuesday evening, the White House will host its first State Dinner. Here's an excerpt from President Obama's remarks upon PM Singh's arrival:



"Mr. Prime Minister, yours is the first official state visit of my presidency, and it is fitting that you and India be so recognized. This visit reflects the high esteem in which I and the American people hold your wise leadership. It reflects the abiding bonds of respect and friendship between our people, including our friends in the Indian American community who join us here today..."

"As leading economies, the United States and India can strengthen the global economic recovery, promote trade that creates jobs for both our people, and pursue growth that is balanced and sustained.

"As nuclear powers, we can be full partners in preventing the spread of the world's most deadly weapons, securing loose nuclear materials from terrorists, and pursuing our shared vision of a world without nuclear weapons.

"As people who've known the pain and anguish of terrorism, we can stand together -- cooperating to prevent future attacks, and promote the development and prosperity that undermines violent extremism..."

"And as the world's largest democracies, we can keep faith with our common values -- speaking out and standing up for the rights and dignity to which all human beings are entitled; and showing that nations that respect the rights and aspirations of their people are ultimately more stable, more secure and more successful..."

President Obama Launches "Educate to Innovate" Campaign. President Obama launched the "Educate to Innovate" campaign on Monday, a new initiative that seeks to harness the resources of public-private partnerships to improve the participation and performance of America's students in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). "Educate to Innovate" will help students learn how to think deeply and critically about STEM, move American students from the middle of the pack to top in the next decade and expand STEM educational and career opportunities to underrepresented groups, including women and girls. Here's an excerpt from President Obama's remarks at the launch:



"...Today, we are launching the "Educate to Innovate" campaign, a nationwide effort to help reach the goal this administration has set: moving to the top in science and math education in the next decade. We've got leaders from private companies and universities, foundations and non-profits, and organizations representing millions of scientists, engineers, and teachers from across America. The initial commitment of the private sector to this campaign is more than \$260 million -- and we only expect the campaign to grow.

"Business leaders from Intel, Xerox, Kodak, and Time Warner Cable are teaming up with Sally Ride, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, as well as the Carnegie Corporation, to find and replicate successful science, math, and technology programs all across America. Sesame Street has begun a two-year initiative to teach young kids about math and science. And Discovery Communications is going to deliver interactive science content to 60,000 schools reaching 35 million students...

"The administration is participating as well. We've already had a number of science-focused events with young people at the White House, including Astronomy Night a few weeks ago. The National Science Foundation and the Department of Energy, under the leadership of a terrific scientist, Steven Chu, have launched an innovative -- an initiative to inspire tens of thousands of students to pursue careers in clean energy.

"And today, I'm announcing that we're going to have an annual science fair at the White House with the winners of national competitions in science and technology. If you win the NCAA championship, you come to the White House. Well, if you're a young person and you've produced the best experiment or design, the best hardware or software, you ought to be recognized for that achievement, too. Scientists and engineers ought to stand side by side with athletes and entertainers as role models, and here at the White House we're going to lead by example. We're going to show young people how cool science can be..."

ICYMI: New York Times Piece on the Recovery Act. In a must read from the *New York Times*, "[New Consensus Sees Stimulus Package As a Worthy Step](#)," reporters found that the Recovery Act "is helping an economy in free fall a year ago to grow again and shed fewer jobs than it otherwise would." In interviews with several leading economists, the *Times* found that the Recovery Act helped to arrest the economic free fall inherited by the Obama Administration and avert a more severe recession, or even a depression. One key quote from Mark Zandi, chief economist at Moody's Economy.com: "...the stimulus is doing what it was supposed to do — it is contributing to ending the recession. In my view, without the stimulus, G.D.P. would still be negative and unemployment would be firmly over 11 percent. And there are a little over 1.1 million more jobs out there as of October than would have been out there without the stimulus."

President Obama to Announce Afghanistan Strategy next Tuesday. After a thorough debate and nine meetings with his War Council, President Obama is expected to announce his strategy for Afghanistan next Tuesday in a prime time address to the country. During a press conference Tuesday afternoon, President Obama said, "After eight years, some of those years in which we did not have, I think, either the resources or the strategy to get the job done, it is my intention to finish the job." The President said he would lay out a comprehensive strategy for the American people: "I feel very confident that when the American people hear a clear rationale for what we're doing there and how we intend to achieve our goals, they will be supportive." We will provide more information as it becomes available.

[Organizing for America](#)



National Training Weekend. During the weekend of December 5th-6th OFA will hold hundreds of [trainings](#) for volunteer leaders in 48 states across the country. Each training event has a specific "volunteer leader" audience in mind: regular volunteers, community organizers or neighborhood team leaders. Participants will learn how to make the biggest impact in their communities and learn specific skills, including how to talk with their neighbors about health insurance reform and use OFA's innovative technology to organize effectively.

OFA Store. The mere thought of battling the holiday shopping crowds got you down? No problem. We just launched our online [store](#) – and there are a bunch of cool new products to choose from. Find t-shirts, buttons, stickers, a fleece, hats and a water bottle. All products are union-printed, American-made and feature OFA's logo. Free standard shipping is included on all orders. Check [it](#) out!

[Holding the GOP Accountable](#)

40 Fact Checks and Counting. The DNC's Rapid Response team was in overdrive last weekend, sending out 40 "fact checks" between Friday morning and Sunday afternoon. Every time a Republican Senator lied about health insurance reform, we hit back hard...and fast. The press took notice: "AIR COVER for Dem senators, and putting Rs on notice: The DNC rapid response team released 40 different fact checks of Republican Senators on the floor of the Senate or in TV interviews since debate began Friday through last night's vote. And flacked each in local press as well." [Politico, [11/22/09](#)]. And check out Steven Benenson's article, "[Lies and the Lying Liars Who Tell Them](#)," at Washington Monthly. Here's a [link](#) to the 40 fact checks we've released so far. If Republicans keep this up (which we fully expect them to) there will be dozens more in the weeks ahead as the Senate continues to debate health insurance reform.

Republicans: Wrong on Recovery. The DNC released a new web video Tuesday – [Republicans: Wrong on Recovery](#) - calling out the GOP for continuing to attack the Recovery Act despite the fact that several leading economists have argued that the Recovery Act prevented a total economic collapse, is helping our economy grow and is on track to save or create 3.5 million jobs by the end of 2010. Congressional Democrats showed real leadership and took a courageous vote by supporting the Recovery Act, but Republicans stood in near opposition to the package – and continue to be on the wrong side of history by rooting for its failure. Watch the video [here](#).

[Just for Fun](#)

First White House State Dinner. Between 350 and 400 people will attend the White House's first State Dinner on Tuesday evening in a tent on the South Lawn. The evening's entertainment will include performances by the National Symphony Orchestra, Academy Award winner (and native Chicagoan) Jennifer Hudson, and A.R. Rahman, the Indian composer who wrote the score to the movie "Slumdog Millionaire." Marcus Samuelsson, of New York City's Aquavit, is the guest chef. As of Tuesday morning, the menu was not yet public – though it is rumored to include curry.



White House Christmas Tree Arriving on Friday. Mrs. Obama will be presented with the official White House Christmas tree on Friday afternoon. The tree, an 18 ½ foot Douglas-fir, hails from Shepherdstown, W.Va. It will be on display in the Blue Room of the White House throughout the holiday season.

[Key Issues in the News & Background](#)

Talking Points: Senate Vote and Growing Momentum Behind Reform

- The historic vote in the Senate last Saturday to begin debate on health insurance reform legislation is another crucial step on the road to ending insurance company abuses, reining in skyrocketing health care costs, providing stability and security to those with health insurance, and extending quality, affordable coverage to those who don't.
- Today, we are closer to enacting health insurance reform than ever before. Momentum continues to build with each milestone.
- The legislation already passed by the House and currently under consideration in the Senate would crack down on insurance companies' worst practices and offer Americans with insurance unprecedented security and stability:
 - Both bills would stop insurance companies from denying coverage based on pre-existing conditions, prohibit insurance companies from dropping your coverage when you get sick and need it most and end discrimination based on gender.
 - Both versions of legislation would stop insurers from placing arbitrary lifetime caps on how much coverage someone can receive.
 - And both bills would make preventive care free.
- The House and Senate bills would also make sure that Americans without insurance have access to quality, affordable insurance and lower premiums for small businesses.
 - Both bills create a health insurance exchange, where individuals and small businesses can leverage the power of a larger group to get a better deal, and purchase the plan that is right for them.
 - Both bills include a public health insurance option that would increase choice and competition, while keeping private insurers honest.
 - And both bills include credits to help make insurance more affordable for individuals and small businesses.
- The House and Senate versions of legislation include several measures to help control costs for American families, businesses, and our government including: investing in preventive care, providing incentives to compensate medical professionals for the quality of care they provide, not just the quantity of procedures they complete, and encouraging better coordinated care.
- Finally, both bills are not only deficit-neutral, they actually reduce the federal deficit.
- The progress we've made and the growing momentum for reform are undeniable – but we're not there yet.
- Democrats remain absolutely confident that we will finally be able to deliver health insurance reform to the American people.

Talking Points: *New York Times* Finds Consensus Among Leading Economists that the Recovery At is Working

- The weekend, an analysis by the *New York Times* found that the Recovery Act "is helping an economy in free fall a year ago to grow again and shed fewer jobs than it otherwise would."
- As the *Times* noted, the Recovery Act has helped to arrest the economic free fall inherited by the Obama Administration and avert a more severe recession, or even depression.

- “It was worth doing — it’s made a difference,” said Nigel Gault, chief economist at IHS Global Insight, a financial forecasting and analysis group based in Lexington, Mass. Mr. Gault added: “I don’t think it’s right to look at it by saying, ‘Well, the economy is still doing extremely badly, therefore the stimulus didn’t work.’ I’m afraid the answer is, yes, we did badly but we would have done even worse without the stimulus.”
- Mark Zandi, Chief Economist at Moody’s Economy.com: “the stimulus is doing what it was supposed to do — it is contributing to ending the recession,” he added, citing the economy’s third-quarter expansion by a 3.5 percent seasonally adjusted annual rate. “In my view, without the stimulus, G.D.P. would still be negative and unemployment would be firmly over 11 percent. And there are a little over 1.1 million more jobs out there as of October than would have been out there without the stimulus.”
- Economists interviewed by the *Times* agreed that President Obama’s promise that the Recovery Act would “save or create” 3.5 million jobs by the end of 2010.
- An array of economists also agreed that President Obama and Congress were correct to structure the Recovery Act as a blend of tax cuts and spending.
- Government spending has a significant multiplier effect.
 - According to Moody’s every dollar of infrastructure spending means \$1.57 in economic activity, while every dollar of general aid generates \$1.41 in activity.
 - A one dollar increase in food stamps results in \$1.74 additional economic activity, while every dollar of unemployment benefits results in \$1.61.
- President Obama and his team took quick, bold action to cushion the blow of the greatest economic crisis since the Great Depression.
- Congressional Democrats showed real leadership and took a courageous vote by supporting the Recovery Act.
- Republicans in Congress were in near-unanimous opposition to the Recovery Act – they refused to offer an alternative and have subsequently cheered for failure. The *Times* analysis shows Republicans are once again on the wrong side of history.
- President Obama and his team have known from the moment they took office that recovering from the worst recession since the Great Depression was going to be a long, hard process.
- We are moving in the right direction, but there is still a long road ahead and much progress to be made. Democrats won’t rest until every American who wants a job can find one.
- The Obama Administration is committed to carrying out the program they have proposed: building a highly educated, well-trained workforce, a health care system that doesn’t drag down businesses and families, and clean energy jobs and industries. That’s where our future is. And that’s where the jobs are.