

THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL COMMITTEE WEEKLY UPDATE

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Last week, despite united Republican opposition, President Obama and Democrats in Congress moved forward with tough Wall Street reforms that will end big banks' risky practices and ensure taxpayers don't end up holding the bag for Wall Street's mistakes. In addition, President Obama continued his White House to Main Street tour with stops in Iowa, Missouri, and Illinois, and made a trip to Louisiana to inspect the response to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. Also last week, President Obama made a strong statement on the need for comprehensive federal immigration reform and Congressional Democrats unveiled bi-partisan legislation to address the campaign-finance issues raised by the Supreme Court's *Citizens United* decision.

What's Happening?

VOTE 2010: Last week, DNC Chairman Tim Kaine announced an unprecedented commitment to supporting Democratic candidates in the midterm elections. That commitment will involve historic efforts on the part of the DNC, Organizing for America, and State Democratic Parties to help President Obama by ensuring that he has as many Democratic allies in Congress as possible. Specifically, the DNC will be working hard to bring first-time 2008 voters – including young people, women, and Americans of color – back to the polls, and will be registering even more new Democratic voters.



Emphasizing the importance of such efforts, President Obama even recorded a special message to his supporters, calling on them to help him continue to succeed. In his message, the President said:

"When I took office, our economy was in crisis. Our standing in the world was diminished. Our health care system wasn't working for far too many American families. Many people wondered why it seemed like bad behavior on Wall Street was being rewarded, while hard work on Main Street wasn't. Because of you, we are making the change that our nation so desperately needs. We have passed historic health reform legislation. We have put our nation back on the path to prosperity with the Recovery Act. And we are moving America forward, one step at a time..."

"In 2010, it will be up to each of you...to keep our nation moving forward; to keep working to fix Washington; to keep growing our economy – and to keep building a fairer, stronger, and more just America.

"If you help us do that – if you help us make sure that first-time voters in 2008 make their voices heard again in November – then together we will deliver on the promise of change, and hope, and prosperity for generations to come."

Wall Street Reform: Last week, President Obama and Democrats in Congress achieved a major victory in the fight for Wall Street reforms that will hold big banks accountable and provide strong consumer financial protections for American families. On Wednesday, after repeated votes in which the Republicans went on record opposing these common-sense reforms, Democrats in the Senate were able to move forward with the Wall Street Reform bill – bringing America one step closer to ending Wall Street's risky behavior.

Prior to the successful vote, President Obama once again underscored the importance of passing reform legislation – sooner rather than later. The President said:

"A lack of consumer protections and a lack of accountability on Wall Street nearly brought our economy to its knees, and helped cause the pain that has left millions of Americans without jobs and without homes. The reform that both parties have been working on for a year would prevent a crisis like this from happening again."

DNC Chairman Tim Kaine echoed the President's statement, calling on Senate Republicans to join Democrats in doing everything necessary to write reform into law. Said Chairman Kaine:

"Democrats in Congress will continue to fight for Wall Street reforms that will hold big banks accountable, create strong new consumer financial protections, and end the risky financial practices that continue to put the American economy at risk. I hope that in the coming days, Republicans will overcome their loyalty to special interests and vote with Democrats for a final bill that will protect the well-being of all Americans."

Fiscal Responsibility: On Tuesday, President Obama held the first meeting of the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility. Co-chaired by Erskine Bowles, former Chief of Staff to President Clinton, and Alan Simpson, a former Republican Senate leader, the Commission was established by Executive Order in February to consider new solutions to reduce the deficit and strengthen American's fiscal future. Prior to the meeting, President Obama addressed the commission, saying:



"In theory, there are few issues on which there is more vigorous bipartisan agreement than fiscal responsibility. But in practice, this responsibility for the future is often overwhelmed by the politics of the moment. It falls prey to special interest pressures, to the pull of local concerns, and to the reality

familiar to every single American -- it's a lot easier to spend a dollar than to save one. That's what, at root, led to these exploding deficits. And that is what will lead to a day of reckoning. But I believe, with the help of these gentlemen and this commission, we can begin to meet this challenge in a serious and thoughtful way. And I believe we must, for the future of our country."

White House to Main Street: Last week, President Obama made three more stops on his White House to Main Street tour, meeting with Americans in Iowa, Missouri, and Illinois. In Fort Madison, Iowa, the President toured the Siemens Wind Turbine Blade Manufacturing plant, and talked with workers about creating green jobs for American workers. In Macon, Missouri, the President underscored his commitment to green development once again with a visit to POET Biorefining. And in Quincy, Illinois, the President held a town hall with local citizens at the Oakley Lindsay Civic Center. At the town hall, the President said:



"It's folks like all of you and towns like Quincy that give America its heartbeat, that's why it's so important for me to be able to visit. It's towns like this where working men and women built the American Dream with their bare hands...That dream is shared by every Illinoisan and every American -- the chance to make a good living, to raise a healthy and secure family, and most of all, to give our kids opportunities that we didn't have ourselves.

"Now, the truth is, is that sometimes it feels like that dream is slipping away. Times are tough in Quincy. Times are tough all across America. We've gone through the worst economy since the Great Depression. Even though our economy is growing again, even though our markets are climbing again and our businesses are finally beginning to create jobs again, there are a lot of folks who still aren't feeling that recovery in their own lives...

"But, keep in mind, I didn't run for President just to get back to where we were when we started. I want us to do better than we were doing. I want folks to have more opportunity. I want people to have more and better jobs. And I want our young people to be getting better educations and more access to college. It's time to rebuild our economy on a new foundation so that we've got real and sustained growth."

Immigration: Last week, following the passage of an extreme new immigration law in Arizona, President Obama reaffirmed his commitment to achieving comprehensive federal immigration reform. The Arizona immigration law, passed by Republicans in the Arizona state legislature, signed the Arizona's Republican governor, and backed by Arizona's Republican Senator John McCain, indisputably takes Arizona in the wrong direction on immigration reform. President Obama addressed the need for a federal solution in Rose Garden remarks:

"Over the years, many have attempted to confront this challenge, but passions are great and disagreements run deep. Yet surely we can all agree that when 11 million people in our country are living here illegally, outside the system, that's unacceptable. The American people demand and deserve a solution. And they deserve common-sense, comprehensive immigration reform grounded in the principles of responsibility and accountability."

DISCLOSE Act: On Thursday, Democratic Members of Congress announced details of the DISCLOSE Act, new bipartisan legislation that will address many of the campaign-finance problems raised by the Supreme Court's *Citizens United* decision. The DISCLOSE Act will require corporations and organizations to disclose their role in political ads, as well as the donors whose contributions helped to make those ads possible. President Obama celebrated the new legislation, saying:

"Powerful special interests and their lobbyists should not be able to drown out the voices of the American people. Yet they work ceaselessly toward that goal: they claim the protection of the Constitution in extending this power, and they exploit every loophole in the law to escape limits on their activities...I have long believed that sunlight is the best disinfectant, and this legislation will shine an unprecedented light on corporate spending in political campaigns. This bill will also prohibit foreign entities from manipulating the outcomes of American elections and help close other special interest loopholes. I hope that Congress will give this legislation the swift consideration it deserves, which is especially urgent now in the aftermath of the Supreme Court's *Citizens United* decision. Passing the legislation is a critical step in restoring our government to its rightful owners: the American people."

Fast-Acting Response: On Sunday, President Obama traveled to Louisiana to inspect the federal response to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. The Secretaries of the Interior and Homeland Security also traveled to Louisiana last week, as did the Administrator of the EPA, the NOAA Administrator, and the President's Assistant for Energy and Climate Change Policy. Together, these officials are working to ensure that the federal government is doing everything possible to respond to the oil leak.

In Louisiana, the President said:

"I think the American people are now aware, certainly the folks down in the Gulf are aware, that we're dealing with a massive and potentially unprecedented environmental disaster. The oil that is still leaking from the well could seriously damage the economy and the environment of our Gulf states and it could extend for a long time. It could jeopardize the livelihoods of thousands of Americans who call this place home. And that's why the federal government has launched and coordinated an all-hands-on-deck, relentless response to this crisis from day one."

Organizing for America



Camp OFA: Last week, Organizing for America held more than 150 volunteer trainings all across the United States – from California, to Illinois, to Virginia, and beyond. At the Camp OFA trainings, community organizers and OFA staff prepared grassroots volunteers to help President Obama succeed by advocating for his agenda and electing and re-electing Democrats this fall. So far, OFA volunteers have pledged more than 10 million hours to support President Obama's allies in their midterm campaigns.

Vote 2010 on the Web: Also last week, Organizing for America launched a new website, where volunteers and supporters can check out the latest news on the VOTE 2010 effort, and sign up to help elect Democrats this fall both by bringing first-time voters from 2008 back to the polls and registering even more Democratic supporters to vote. You can check out the VOTE 2010 website at <http://2010.barackobama.com>.

Holding Republicans Accountable

Turning Up the Heat on Wall Street Reform: Last week, the DNC launched a new television ad and two new web videos that put Republicans' feet to the fire on Wall Street reform, helping to achieve the momentum necessary to move the reform bill forward in the Senate.

The television ad, entitled "Risky Business," calls out Republicans for prioritizing Wall Street donations over Wall Street reforms – repeatedly blocking the progress of tough Wall Street reforms in the Senate. You can check the ad out for yourself at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KHtW0E2I-Tc>.

The first web video, "It's Black and White," sounds the same themes as "Risky Business" - while President Obama and Democrats in Congress fought to enact tough reforms that will hold big banks accountable and enact strong new consumer protections, Republicans continued to obstruct changes that would prevent Wall Street banks from engaging in reckless betting and risky financial practices. The second video, "Wall Street's Best Friend," singles out Mitt Romney for defending Wall Street greed. Romney has been stumping for big banks and championing Wall Street practices, speaking out against reforms that would protect American taxpayers from ever again holding the bag when Wall Street's bets go bad. You can watch the two web ads, at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YnY2Omye7Ho> and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u4vJk1re0hE>, respectively.

While the Senate Wall Street reform bill has now moved to floor debate, we'll be keeping the pressure on Republicans to make sure it doesn't stop there – and to guarantee that these much needed reforms are enacted as soon as possible.

Key Issues in the News and Background

Talking Points: National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility

- President Obama created the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility to be a forum in which diverse individuals from both political parties could put their heads together to figure out how America can tackle one of our most pressing problems – the national deficit and our fiscal future.
 - Two very strong individuals are leading the charge on this effort – Erskine Bowles, former Chief of Staff to President Clinton, and Alan Simpson, a former Republican Senate leader.
- The President knows that we have to change how Washington works in order to tackle our long-deferred fiscal challenges. So he is putting aside partisanship and bringing the best minds of both parties together to address the issue.
- President Obama inherited a record \$1.3 trillion deficit when he took office – the result of a decade in which leaders in Washington avoided making the tough choices that were necessary.
 - The fiscal recklessness of that decade included new tax cuts for the highest earning Americans and a new entitlement program, which was not paid for when it was passed. The historic deficits that resulted grew even larger once the financial crisis struck.
- Though it was necessary to pass recovery programs that added to our deficit in the short-term in order to prevent America from falling into another Great Depression, President Obama has tried to create a new culture of fiscal responsibility in Washington.
- To that end, President Obama has recommended a 2011 Budget that includes more than \$1 trillion for deficit reduction, not including war savings – more than any President has offered for deficit reduction in more than 10 years.
- The President's deficit reduction plan includes a three-year freeze on non-security discretionary spending, a new fee to be leveraged on the largest financial institutions that will net \$90 billion and ensure that Americans see every dime spent on TARP recouped, and an end to international tax loopholes that will save American tax payers \$120 billion.
- In addition, President Obama enacted PAYGO legislation that requires Congress to pay for everything it proposes.
- And President Obama ordered his staff to eliminate duplicative or outdated budgetary items from his budgetary proposal – an order that has resulted in 120 terminations or reductions, and savings of more than \$20 billion.

- At the same time, President Obama ordered a comprehensive review of defense procurement with the aim of eliminating waste, fraud, and abuse. And he is working to reform all government contracting by eliminating no-bid contracts and other unjustified practices beginning in 2011, saving American taxpayers \$40 billion a year.
- And President Obama this year took on America's biggest fiscal challenge – the rising cost of health care, and reducing the rate of cost growth. In fact, the health reform law will create \$1 trillion in health care savings over two decades.

Talking Points: Immigration Reform

- As the President has said, America is an inspiration to people around the globe – people who seek hope, opportunity, and their own version of the American dream. President Obama is working hard to reform our immigration system so that it best reflects those most inspirational aspects of our country.
- Right now, our immigration system is broken. The American people have sought, and they deserve, comprehensive reform that is grounded in the principles of responsibility and accountability.
- President Obama's commitment to such reform is unshakeable.
- At the President's direction, the Department of Homeland Security has begun to lay the groundwork for immigration reform, including by strengthening security at our borders, ports, and airports. And we're going to get tough on employers that purposefully hire undocumented workers.
- At the same time, the President and Congressional Democrats have also begun to craft a framework for immigration reform in Congress.
- Going forward, they will continue to work to build bipartisan support for comprehensive immigration reform and deliver the kind of strong solution the American people want and need
- This Administration is working to reform the current system in a way that recognizes the contributions that immigrants make to America, while requiring all immigrants to play by the rules and obey the law.
- We are a nation of immigrants, but we are also a country of laws. This Administration is working to define a path to citizenship for undocumented workers to ensure the system works, but these workers should play by the rules, obey the law, and go to the back of the line.
- President Obama and Democrats in Congress are reaching across party lines to try and shape a comprehensive federal solution to America's immigration challenges.
- But unfortunately, many Republicans are pushing extreme fixes.
- The Arizona immigration bill exemplifies the worst of such extremism.
- Passed by Republicans in the Arizona state legislature, and backed by Republican Senator John McCain, this bill takes Arizona in the wrong direction on immigration reform.
- That bill is counterproductive in several ways. It places an unnecessary wedge between communities and the police who are supposed to keep them safe. And it undermines Americans' basic notions of fairness.
- The law creates the possibility that Hispanic-Americans – individuals who have been here for many generations – will face harassment.
- As the President has said, we must put aside such short-sighted measures and work to find a way forward on immigration reform that keeps faith with our history and our heritage.
- Whatever immigration reforms America enacts, those reforms must reflect a nation that still welcomes those "yearning to breathe free."