

THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL COMMITTEE WEEKLY UPDATE

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE DNC COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

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This week, the President addressed enthusiastic Democratic caucus-goers across the state during Iowa's caucuses on Tuesday night. He was also in Ohio to speak about the economy, where he announced his appointment of former Ohio Attorney General Richard Cordray as head of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau – noting that America's working families can no longer wait for Republicans in the Senate who have stood in the way of consumer protection by holding up Cordray's nomination. On Thursday, President Obama delivered remarks at the Pentagon on the Defense Strategic Review, which followed a comprehensive review of our defense strategy and budget priorities by the President, America's civilian and uniformed military leadership, and the Administration's national security team. On Friday, the Bureau of Labor Statistics released its monthly jobs numbers, saying that the economy added 212,000 private sector jobs in December and that the unemployment rate fell to 8.5 percent.

And with the Republican candidates for president competing for the nomination in Iowa, New Hampshire, South Carolina and beyond, the Democratic National Committee and local, state and national Democratic leaders across the country worked to hold Mitt Romney and the rest of the GOP field accountable for their failed policies and lack of vision – including Romney's recent out-of-touch statement that he would veto the DREAM Act if he were president and Congress had passed the bill.

Economy Adds Private Sector Jobs in December

On Friday, the Bureau of Labor Statistics released jobs numbers for December, showing that the private sector added 212,000 private sector jobs in December and that the unemployment rate fell to 8.5 percent. This is now the 22nd consecutive month of private sector job growth and a sign that the economy is headed in the right direction, though the President believes we need faster economic growth.

Democrats Show Enthusiastic Turnout as the President Addresses Participants on Iowa Caucus Night

As Iowa voters headed to the caucuses on Tuesday night, President Obama spoke via video teleconference to Democratic caucus-goers across the state, letting them know that he will keep fighting for Iowa's working families and all Americans. The results showed enthusiastic support for the President's re-election, with 25,000 Iowans turning out for the Democratic caucuses and 7,500 pledging to volunteer and work for the campaign. During the President's address to caucus-goers, he said:

“Although we've passed health care reform, we've passed Wall Street reform, there are a lot of forces that want to push back against us and want to undo some of those changes. And we're battling millions of dollars of negative advertising and lobbyists and special interests who don't want to see the change that you worked so hard to fully take root. And that's why this time out is going to be in some ways more important than the first time out. Mitch is right. Change is never easy. The



problems that we've been dealing with over the last three years, they didn't happen overnight and we're not going to fix them overnight. But we've been making steady progress as long as we can sustain it. And that's what this is going to be all about.

"So the only way we're going to be able to do that is if all of you maintain the same determination, the same energy, the same drive, the same hopefulness, the same optimism about this wonderful country of ours as was on display four years ago. And I want you to know that because of you, because of all the memories I have of being in your living rooms or meeting you in a diner or seeing you over at a campaign office, I have never lost that same source of inspiration that drove me to embark on this journey in the first place. You guys inspire me every single day."

Read the full transcript of the President's remarks [here](#).

President Obama Appoints Richard Cordray to Lead Consumer Financial Protection Bureau



Refusing to let Senate Republicans continue to stand in the way of protecting American consumers and holding Wall Street accountable, the President on Wednesday used his constitutional authority to recess-appoint former Ohio Attorney General Richard Cordray as head of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau – America's first-ever consumer watchdog

established through the President's Wall Street reform. Cordray will have the critical job of looking out for the best interests of consumers, helping protect families from Wall Street's abuses, and ensuring that all Americans have the information they need to make important financial decisions. Appearing with Cordray in Shaker Heights, Ohio, President Obama delivered remarks announcing the appointment, saying:

"Now, every day that Richard waited to be confirmed -- and we were pretty patient. I mean, we kept on saying to Mitch McConnell and the other folks, let's go ahead and confirm him. Why isn't he being called up? Let's go. Every day that we waited was another day when millions of Americans were left unprotected. Because without a director in place, the consumer watchdog agency that we've set up doesn't have all the tools it needs to protect consumers against dishonest mortgage brokers or payday lenders and debt collectors who are taking advantage of consumers. And that's inexcusable. It's wrong. And I refuse to take no for an answer. (Applause.)"

Watch President Obama's speech [here](#).

The President Discusses Defense Strategic Review at the Pentagon

On Thursday, the President delivered remarks at the Pentagon on the Defense Strategic Review, which will guide our budget priorities and decisions going forward. He was joined by Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Martin Dempsey. The President's remarks followed a comprehensive review of our defense strategy by the President, America's civilian and uniformed military leadership, and the Administration's national security team. During President Obama's remarks, he said:

"That's why I called for this comprehensive defense review -- to clarify our strategic interests in a fast-changing world, and to guide our defense priorities and spending over the coming decade -- because the size and the structure of our military and defense budgets have to be driven by a strategy, not the other way around.

Moreover, we have to remember the lessons of history. We can't afford to repeat the mistakes that have been made in the past -- after World War II, after Vietnam -- when our military was left ill prepared for the future. As Commander in Chief, I will not let that happen again. Not on my watch.



"We need a start -- we need a smart,

strategic set of priorities. The new guidance that the Defense Department is releasing today does just that. I want to thank Secretary Panetta and General Dempsey for their extraordinary leadership during this process. I want to thank the service secretaries and chiefs, the combatant commanders and so many defense leaders -- military and civilian, active, Guard and reserve -- for their contributions. Many of us met repeatedly -- asking tough questions, challenging our own assumptions and making hard choices. And we've come together today around an approach that will keep our nation safe and our military the finest that the world have ever known."

You can watch the President's remarks [here](#).

[Holding Republicans Accountable](#)

To preview and respond to the Republican caucuses in Iowa and ensure that Iowa voters knew the truth about the failed policies and troubling record of Mitt Romney and the entire GOP field, the Democratic National Committee held a War Room in Des Moines for national and Iowa press. Between DNC officials, Iowa Democrats and other Democratic leaders -- including DNC Chair Debbie Wasserman Schultz, DNC Communications Director Brad Woodhouse, Congressman Bruce Braley, Iowa Democratic Party Chair Sue Dvorsky, State Treasurer Michael Fitzgerald, Iowa Attorney General Tom Miller, DNC Vice Chair R.T. Rybak, and Randy Johnson, a former Indiana plant worker who lost his job as a result of Mitt Romney's business practices as the head of Bain Capital -- numerous press conferences, media availabilities and calls were held in media markets across the state. They also gave dozens of interviews to reporters in Iowa.

With Romney limping across the finish line in the Iowa caucuses -- beating Rick Santorum by only a handful of votes after seven years of trying to win Iowa -- many of the Republican candidates packed up their campaign offices and headed to New Hampshire, where the GOP primary will be held next week. To hold Republicans accountable there, DNC Vice Chair Rybak held a pen and pad with reporters in New Hampshire. Additionally, Randy Johnson held press conferences on Mitt Romney's decades-long record of putting profits before people -- one in New Hampshire and another in Massachusetts with State Democratic Party Chairman John Walsh. Chairman Walsh also was on-site at a Romney town hall meeting in New Hampshire on Thursday to discuss Romney's failed leadership as Massachusetts Governor. He also released a statement, in which he said:

"As Mitt Romney campaigns today in New Hampshire and attempts to paint a rosy picture of his economic record, it's important that voters in the Granite State know the truth about Romney's failed leadership during his time as the governor of neighboring Massachusetts. While Romney repeatedly has claimed that he was a budget-slasher, the reality is that he actually balanced the state budget on the backs of middle-class folks by raising fees on Massachusetts residents more than 100 times. And do New Hampshire voters know that with Governor Romney at the helm, Massachusetts was ranked 47th out of 50 in job creation? And Romney talks all the time about his so-called job creation experience in the private sector – but you'll notice he doesn't mention the fact that state government employment in Massachusetts increased at six times the rate of private sector jobs while he was governor."

Additionally, Democratic officials at the state and national level joined Hispanic community leaders across the country in pushing back this week on Mitt Romney's claim that he would veto the DREAM Act if he were president and the bill were passed by Congress. This included press conferences and calls, media availabilities and statements in Colorado, Nevada and Florida – as well as a conference call held by Congressmen Becerra and Gonzalez and Benita Veliz, a student whose life would be impacted by the DREAM Act. Finally, DNC Senior Advisor for Hispanic Affairs Juan Sepúlveda released a statement, which said:

"In an effort to win over the far-right wing of the Tea Party, Mitt Romney has made it clear that on immigration, he would become the most extreme presidential nominee of our time. Mitt Romney has said he would veto the DREAM Act, shutting the door to the American Dream for hard-working, patriotic young people who are leaders in their communities today and who are looking for an opportunity to attend college or serve the only country they know as home. Romney has gone to such extremes that his own advisors disagree with him. The addition of Charlie Black to Romney's staff makes seven the number of Romney advisors who have abandoned their principles to support the most extreme presidential candidate in modern history on the subject of immigration."

With South Carolina's Republican primary on the horizon and Romney paying a visit to the state, Florence Mayor Stephen J. Wukela issued a statement hitting Romney and his recent endorsement by John McCain, noting McCain's quote during the 2008 GOP primary that, "Romney is 'totally consistent, because he's had two positions at least on every issue.'" Meanwhile, the DNC released a new web video highlighting the fact that Romney and McCain were the bitterest of rivals in 2008. The video, "McCain on Romney: Which Mitt is He Endorsing?" can be viewed [here](#).

Key Issues in the News and Background

Enthusiastic Democratic Turnout in Iowa Reflects Strength of Grassroots Organization

- The Iowa caucus was an opportunity to test our organization and expand our volunteer base as we move toward November, and Tuesday's results showed an incredible amount of enthusiasm for the President's reelection, and to preserve the change that we've delivered together.
 - 25,000 Iowans turned out to talk about the President's record and vision to restore security to the middle class.
 - 7,500 Iowans pledged to volunteer and work for the campaign.
 - Compare that to the fraction of that number that turned out for President Bush in 2004 in a similar uncontested caucus.
- That didn't happen overnight, and the Republicans shouldn't expect to build something like this overnight.
 - We didn't enter this campaign stringing together a database – the President kept supporters engaged through Organizing for America.
 - Many of the same supporters who elected him in 2008 were essential in achieving the administration's legislative accomplishments.

- We've been building and mobilizing our tested and trained neighborhood teams, led by thousands of core volunteers in every state. They're talking to voters over the phone, at doorsteps and in living rooms, coffee shops and community centers across the country:
 - Reaching more than 511,000 voters in Nevada.
 - Organizing 2,633 events in Florida.

###

Data from Iowa Caucus: Republicans Unenthusiastic, Romney Underperforms

- Turnout was low and Republicans are not excited about their candidates.
 - No increase over 2008 Republican turnout: 2012 caucus turnout barely exceeded 2008 Republican total turnout (122,000 vs. 119,000), but *did not* increase as a share of all registered voters.
 - Republicans less enthusiastic than 2008: Self-identified Republicans were not excited about this election, and 10,000 fewer of them turned out to caucus in 2012 than 2008 (according to Entrance Polls).
- In an election he should have won, Romney performed well below expectations.
 - Romney turnout and vote share lower than 2008: Romney actually got six fewer votes than he did in 2008, and more importantly received nearly two points less of the vote share.
 - Lowest winning percentage ever: The lowest historical winning percentage for a Republican Iowa caucus winner had been 26 percent by Bob Dole in 1996. Dole, another candidate Republicans were not too enthusiastic about, lost to Bill Clinton by over 200 Electoral Votes (379 to 159).
 - Romney outspent everyone else, especially chief competitor Rick Santorum: Romney spent \$4.5 million on media, compared to \$642,000 for Santorum. This translates to \$149 in spending for each Romney caucus vote, compared to \$21 per vote for Santorum.
- Romney performed poorly with several key groups.
 - Between 2008 and 2012, Romney lost support among the middle class: In 2008 Romney won 20 percent of middle-class voters making less than \$50,000, but in 2012 Romney won just 16 percent of these voters. He finished a distant third in this category in 2012.
 - Little Romney Independent Support: Ron Paul received over twice the support of Romney among Independents (43 percent to 19 percent). Despite the field being far more conservative in 2012 than 2008, Romney got the same percent of Independents in 2012 as he did in 2008 (19 percent).
 - Decreased support among youth: Romney's support among those aged 17-29 fell from 22 percent in 2008 to 13 percent in 2012.
- Republican voters reluctantly voted for Romney:
 - Moral Character: Romney finished 4th among those voters who thought the most important candidate quality was "Strong Moral Character".
 - Doubts? Romney did win one category of voters – those who said they have "reservations" about their candidates gave Romney a plurality of their votes.
 - Late Breakers abandoned Romney: Santorum beat Romney by eleven points among late deciders (decided in "last few days" – entrance poll).

###

Romney Falters Against Weak Republican Field, Departs Iowa Beholden to Tea Party

- A day after predicting victory and after six years of trying to win Iowa, Mitt Romney fell short of the vote total he received in 2008, even though this Republican field is significantly weaker.

- It was a poor performance from a candidate who did everything possible to win – even sacrificing principles to become the self-professed Tea Party candidate and to get to the right of Rick Perry, Rick Santorum, and Newt Gingrich.
- Romney’s attempt to win Iowa came at a high cost. He’s leaving Iowa with significant primary baggage that will weigh him down if he gets to the general election, including:
 - Promising to veto the DREAM Act and denying a chance at citizenship to young immigrants here through no fault of their own and who want to serve America.
 - Belittling the President’s \$1,000 dollar middle-class tax cut as a “little Band-Aid,” even though his own plan offers typical middle-class families only \$54.
 - Doubling down on his idea to “let Detroit go bankrupt,” even though the President’s rescue of the auto industry saved more than 1.4 million American jobs.
 - Saying that he’d let the foreclosure process “hit the bottom” so investors can come in and make a quick buck.
 - Backing Republican budgets that would end Medicare as we know it, gut Social Security and slash funding for higher education.
 - Criticizing the President for ending the war in Iraq and saying he’d leave 30,000 troops on the ground with no plan for withdrawal.
- But with three-quarters of Iowa Republicans doubting him, Rick Santorum at his flank and South Carolina in his sights, we’ll see if Romney tacks even further to the right. We already know Romney and Santorum agree that we should go back to the days of letting Wall Street write its own rules, on ending Medicare as we know it, and that the middle class is to blame for its struggles.
- Just this morning, Romney signaled that he’d launch new attacks on Santorum – just like he did Newt Gingrich.
- While Mitt Romney and Rick Santorum battle it out in a state that Mitt Romney should handily win, the President is continuing to fight to restore middle-class security. He’s making sure the first-ever Wall Street watchdog can inform consumers and protect them from mortgage brokers, payday and student loan lenders and debt collectors.

###

Talking Points: Richard Cordray to Lead America’s Consumer Watchdog

- The President used his Constitutional authority today to recess-appoint former Ohio Attorney General Richard Cordray as head of the Consumer Financial Product Bureau – America’s first-ever consumer watchdog created by the President’s Wall Street reform.
- This is the latest in a series of “We Can’t Wait” executive actions the President has taken to move the country forward in the face of Congressional inaction and to strengthen the economy.
- As America’s consumer watchdog, Richard Cordray will have one job – looking out for the best interests of consumers. His job will be to protect families from the abuses of the financial industry, and make sure you’ve got all the information you need to make important financial decisions.
- Right away, he’ll start working to make sure millions of Americans are treated fairly by mortgage brokers, payday lenders and debt collectors.

- Just this week, the CFPB is launching a simple phone number – 1 (855) 411-CFPB – you can call to make sure you're getting a fair deal on your mortgage, and hold banks and brokers accountable if you're not.
- If you're a veteran, the Bureau will help make sure you aren't taken advantage of when you come home from serving our country. If you're a senior, they'll keep you from losing your home or your retirement because someone saw you as an easy target.
- The President is taking this executive action because Republicans have refused to confirm Richard Cordray, who the President nominated last summer. By refusing to confirm Richard Cordray, Congressional Republicans – with Mitt Romney, Rick Santorum and other Republican presidential candidates right behind them – stopped the consumer watchdog bureau from doing its job. Until a director is in place, the consumer watchdog cannot stand up to payday lenders, debt collectors, credit-reporting agencies and private student lenders.
- Despite having strong bipartisan support across the country and a record of protecting consumers from dishonest lending practices and recovering billions of dollars in things like pension funds on behalf of retirees, Republicans in the Senate won't give him an up or down vote. It's not because they don't support Cordray – it's because they don't believe America needs a consumer watchdog at all.
- The President disagrees. He believes that everyone should play by the same rules so that hard work pays off and responsibility – not recklessness – is rewarded. Today's announcement means the end to the era of two rulebooks: one for big banks on Wall Street and another for businesses on Main Street.
- Wall Street's recklessness affected nearly every American – those of us with credit cards, student loans, mortgages and home-equity lines, as well as those of us saving for emergencies, a down payment, college and retirement. For too long, there was no place where families or small business could turn when fine print changed the terms of their loans, or when they were hit with hidden charges, new fees, or penalties on their credit cards or debit cards.
- The American people work hard and are fighting to reclaim the security they lost in the financial collapse. They simply demand that Wall Street and the big financial institutions follow the rules, live up to their agreements, and are held accountable. That's what Richard Cordray will do every day as America's consumer watchdog.

###

Talking Points: Romney's Jobs Claims Debunked

- Mitt Romney isn't getting away with his false claim that he created more jobs than President Obama. [Washington Monthly](#) today joined those [disputing](#) Romney's effort to doctor his own record.
- Romney talks up the jobs he created as governor of Massachusetts, but those were mostly government jobs. His state ranked 47th out of 50 in job creation, with manufacturing jobs falling by more than double the national average.
- Romney takes credit for jobs created – including those after he left Bain Capital – but he refuses to take responsibility for the thousands of workers Bain laid off under his leadership, not to mention the American jobs he outsourced.
 - Using this same logic, the President would have created 129 million jobs.

Below please find a blog post explaining these arguments, with a [chart at the bottom](#) showing the jobs created under President Obama.

[Context: Mitt Romney's Job Creation Claims](#)

By Kara Carscaden, Deputy National Press Secretary on January 4, 2012

Mitt Romney claims that he has a better job-creation record than President Obama. But what are the facts? This morning, the Washington Post [Fact Checker](#) took a look at Mitt Romney's jobs creation claims and his attacks on President Obama's jobs record. The Fact Checker noted "that context is everything" and wrote that Romney "compares his four-year record with Obama's three-year tally and ignores the fact that hundreds of thousands of jobs were lost before Obama's policies had an impact."

On this, we couldn't agree more. As we've posted about [before](#), under President Obama the private sector job loss that started before he took office has reversed. Now, we've seen over 21 months of consecutive private sector job growth adding 2.9 million jobs to the economy, including the largest increase in manufacturing jobs since 1997.

That record stands in pretty clear contrast with Romney's time as governor, when Massachusetts ranked 47th out of 50th in job [creation](#) and manufacturing jobs declined by more than twice the national [average](#), giving the state the third worst record in the nation. To be fair, state government employment did increase—in fact it increased at six times the rate of private sector jobs while he was governor. [BLS Statistics]

But the Fact Checker also looked at Romney's job creation claims at Bain Capital and wrote that his "tally obviously does not include job losses from other companies with which Bain Capital was involved—and are based on current employment figures, not the period when Romney worked at Bain."

And this is where the context becomes important. While Romney once claimed that his previous job creation figure simply measured "what happened to employment at companies in which Bain invested" [Boston Globe, 10/6/94] and he didn't take direct credit for creating those jobs [Boston Globe, 8/8/94], Romney and his campaign have shifted course. Now, he is taking personal credit for jobs created.

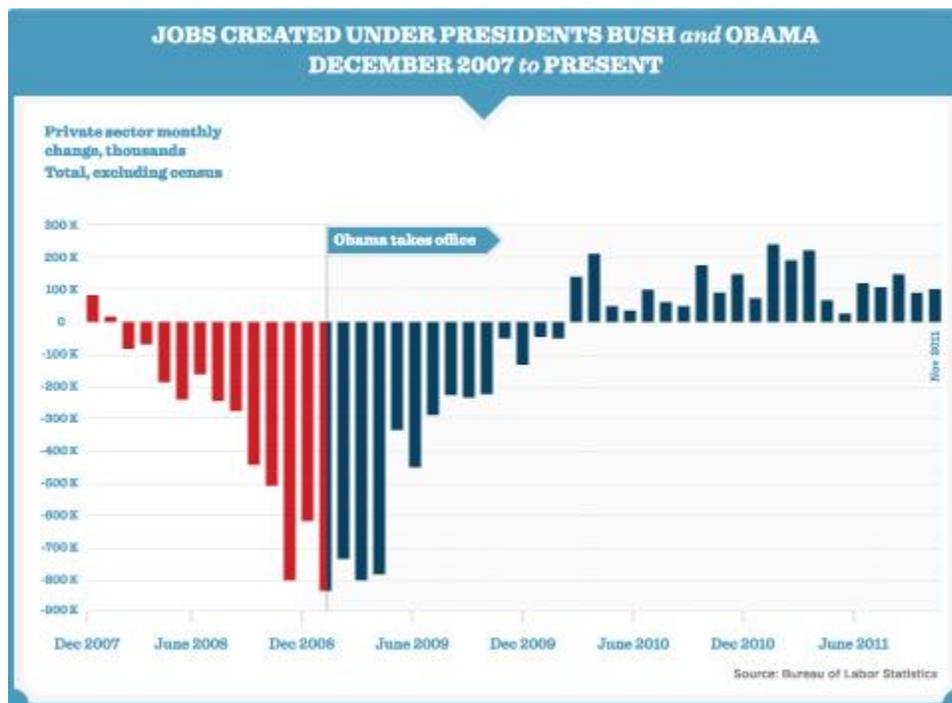
At the same time, he is ignoring the jobs that were destroyed by his company. If we took a similar view of the economy as a whole—counting new jobs while ignoring lost jobs—we claim that the president created 129 million new jobs over the past three years.

Clearly, Romney is providing a pretty incomplete picture of his time at Bain.

Let's take a bigger look at the context of Romney's job creation claim. Under Romney, Bain Capital closed factories and stores across the country, causing layoffs and pocketing "huge fees shortly before the [companies collapsed](#)." As [Bloomberg](#) found after interviews and "a review of Bain's activities described in public documents and news accounts" what emerged was "a picture of an operation that wasn't focused on expanding employment." Instead, Romney's mission at Bain "was to generate gains for investors." The Fact Checker itself has [reported](#) that "from past news reports that Bain businesses, including Ampad, Dade International and LIVE Entertainment, laid off a combined 2,351 workers under Romney's leadership."

And a former colleague of Romney's [said](#), he never "thought of what I do for a living as job creation...The primary goal of private equity is to create wealth for your investors." And that's exactly what Romney did. No wonder Romney's economic plan is geared to cutting taxes for corporations and wealthy investors, not creating jobs now. While the President is working every day to restore economic security for the middle class, Romney's proposals are the same policies that led us into this economic crisis.

While Romney will use the President's—and his own—job creation record out of context during this campaign, we'll continue to make sure Americans know the complete story.



Setting the standards for the jobs debate

Washington Monthly // Steve Benen

Published at 12:40 PM

It has quickly become a standard talking point for Mitt Romney: during his tenure at Bain Capital, he created "over 100,000 new jobs." Campaign officials have been reluctant to back up the claim, and fact-checkers haven't been able to substantiate the claim in any way.

But that changed this week, when Romney spokesman Eric Fehrstrom presented his argument to the Washington Post's Glenn Kesler.

Fehrstrom says the 100,000 figure stems from the growth in jobs from three companies that Romney helped to start or grow while at Bain Capital: Staples (a gain of 89,000 jobs), The Sports Authority (15,000 jobs), and Domino's (7,900 jobs).

This tally obviously does not include job losses from other companies with which Bain Capital was involved — and are based on current employment figures, not the period when Romney worked at Bain.

This is just fascinating. The Romney campaign is not only taking credit for jobs created at these companies after Romney left his firm, the campaign is also choosing to ignore all layoffs when coming up with the figure. Romney and his team are only counting hits, not misses.

This is a bit like a coach saying his team is undefeated, just so long as you overlook the team's losses. Or as Paul Krugman put it, "By that standard, everyone who's spent a lot of time with slot machines is a big winner, since only the pluses count."

But wait, it gets better. Greg Sargent noted that the Romney campaign is also using one standard for counting jobs when it comes to Bain and a completely different standard when it comes to the Obama presidency.

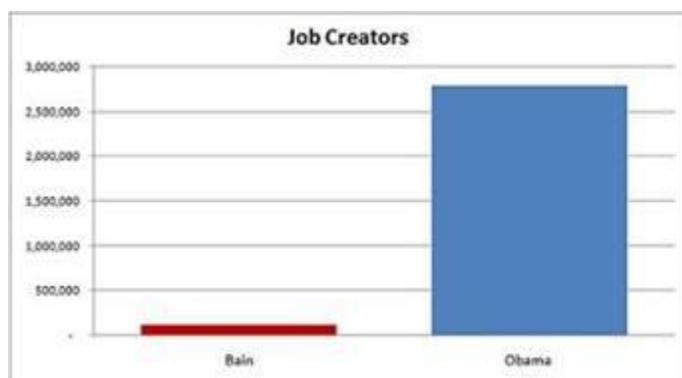
Romney is only counting jobs gained at companies restructured at Bain during and after his years there — and is not factoring in jobs lost — in claiming he created over 100,000 jobs.

Meanwhile, as the Romney camp concedes to Kessler, in making the claim Obama is a job destroyer, Romney is factoring in the jobs that were lost during Obama's presidency — before Obama's policies went into effect. In other words, Romney is calculating a "net" number for Obama, and isn't calculating a net number for himself. Just wow.

It's remarkable, to be sure, but let's take this one step further. Let's agree to play by Romney's rules, let's only count his hits, and let's even allow him to take credit for jobs created at Bain-owned enterprises after Romney had left the firm. And then let's allow President Obama to do the same thing when examining his jobs record.

According to the Romney campaign, the Republican created 111,900 jobs at Bain, only counting his successes. And if we look back over the last three years, and only count the months in which the economy added jobs, President Obama created 2.79 million jobs overall (the figure is higher if we only look at the private sector).

Here it is in chart form:



Remember, this isn't playing by my rules, or even Obama's rules. This is how the comparison would shape up applying Romney's own standards to both.

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Talking Points: New Hampshire Primary Opportunity to Expand Robust Organization

- The New Hampshire primary Tuesday is an opportunity to build on the enthusiasm we saw in Iowa for the President's reelection and preserving the change we've delivered together.
- Since the launch of the re-election campaign in April, OFA New Hampshire staff and volunteers have been organizing neighborhood by neighborhood, and block by block. They're talking to friends, family and co-workers, holding trainings, planning sessions, house parties and phone banks.
- To build the campaign for November, OFA New Hampshire staff and volunteers have:
 - Reached out to tens of thousands of New Hampshire residents.
 - Held over 500 events across the state.
 - Had over 3,200 one-on-one conversations with local New Hampshire residents.

- Opened three campaign offices across the state, with four more opening by Tuesday.
- 2012 is about expanding the unrivaled organization we've built over the past year.
 - President Bush received 18.6 percent of the total votes cast in 2004, and 78 percent of the votes in the Republican primary. We anticipate receiving a share of the vote in that range.
- No matter what happens on Tuesday, one thing is for sure – the next morning we will have the strongest grassroots organization and campaign infrastructure in place of any candidate going forward.
- While Mitt Romney and Rick Santorum fight for Republican votes by running to the right of the Tea Party, our supporters are talking about President Obama's vision for a job-creating economy that's built to last – one where hard work pays, responsibility is rewarded, and everyone does their fair share and plays by the same rules.

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Talking Points: Keeping Families Together Through Fair Immigration Policy

- The Obama administration today proposed changes to the immigration system that will keep American families together by cutting bureaucratic wait times and relieving an undue hardship on U.S. citizens who are unfairly separated from their loved ones.
- The current law, known as the 3-and-10 Year Bar, makes undocumented spouses and children of U.S. citizens leave the country in order to complete the legal immigration process, and bars many from returning for three years (if they have been in the country illegally for six months to a year) or 10 years (if they have been in the country illegally for more than a year). The existing system allows them to apply for a waiver from this re-entry restriction if it would mean their U.S.-citizen relatives would suffer extreme hardship – but they must still leave the country before they can apply for a waiver.
- The administration's proposal for a smarter immigration policy keeps families together by allowing undocumented spouses and children of U.S. citizens to complete the legal immigration process without leaving the country. It does not, however, change any legal standards for who gets residency.
- The President is fighting for a legal immigration system that meets our diverse needs because he believes we prosper when we recognize that we are all in it together. He believes that as a nation of immigrants, we should stand united without dividing people. And he knows we must grow our economy, create jobs that reward hard work and responsibility, and give every American the opportunity to be a part of the middle class.
- Today's proposal is consistent with other efforts the President has made to fix our broken immigration system, including streamlining the process for naturalizing members of the military, fighting to pass the DREAM Act to create a path to citizenship for young immigrants who earn it and are in America through no fault of their own, prioritizing the removal of undocumented immigrants who have been convicted of crimes over those who pose little threat to our communities, and creating a Start-Up Visa to allow foreign entrepreneurs to establish businesses in America and create American jobs.
- Republicans including President George W. Bush and Sen. John McCain – whose endorsement Mitt Romney is now touting – have called for reforming the counterproductive 3-and-10 Year Bar. But Romney, who would have the most extreme immigration position of any nominee in modern history, would separate these families.

- He advocates kicking immigrants out of America – even families who’ve lived here for a generation, raised children and grandchildren here, paid their taxes, obeyed the law, are members of their churches and communities, and even serve in the military.
- Romney also vowed to veto the DREAM Act, calling it a “handout,” and derides as “magnets” other commonsense and comprehensive immigration reform proposals that require immigrants to earn the opportunity to merely apply for citizenship – and says he would prefer to send them home.

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