

THE
DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL COMMITTEE

WEEKLY UPDATE

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE DNC COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

April 13, 2012

This week, the President and Vice President traveled to Florida and New Hampshire to make the case for the Buffett Rule. They highlighted the Administration's efforts to close loopholes and end special tax breaks that let some of the wealthiest pay a lower tax rate than many middle-class families. They believe we should build an economy where everyone does their fair share and everyone plays by the same set of rules. On Friday, the President and Vice President released their 2011 tax returns on the White House website, yet Mitt Romney continues to conceal years of his.

President Obama Makes the Case for the Buffett Rule

On Tuesday, the President traveled to Florida and made the case for the Buffett Rule. He explained that instead of giving tax breaks to the wealthiest Americans, we need to be investing in things like education and research. The President believes we should build an economy where everyone does their fair share and everyone plays by the same set of rules, and he will continue to take steps to build an economy based on core American values because America prospers most when we are all in it together. The President said:



"America has always been a place where anybody who's willing to work and play by the rules can make it. A place where prosperity doesn't trickle down from the top, it grows from the bottom; it grows outward from the heart of a vibrant middle class."

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

Vice President Biden Talks about Tax Fairness in New Hampshire

Vice President Biden spoke in New Hampshire on Thursday about tax fairness and the Buffett Rule. It was the fourth in a series of campaign speeches about issues that will be at the core of the general election and the choice America will make in November. The Vice President highlighted President Obama's efforts to close loopholes and end special tax breaks that let some of the wealthiest pay a lower tax rate than many middle-class families. The Buffett Rule is part of the President's commitment to reduce the deficit, while asking everyone to pay their fair share and continuing investments in programs that create jobs, grow our economy and strengthen the middle class.



President Obama and Vice President Biden Release Tax Returns, Yet Romney Continues to Conceal Years of His

On Friday, the President and Vice President released their 2011 federal income and gift tax returns. Yet as the President and Vice President released their 2011 returns, Romney continues to conceal years of his. It's time for Romney to come clean with voters by releasing additional years of his tax returns.

After the release of the returns, Obama Campaign Manager Jim Messina said:

"Following decades of precedent for presidential candidates of both parties, the President and the Vice President released their tax returns today so that Americans can review their personal finances, understand how they earn their income and ensure there are no conflicts with the interests of the nation. But on the eve of April 17th, Governor Romney has yet to provide tax returns from the period in which he made hundreds of millions as a corporate buyout specialist, or as governor of Massachusetts, the experience he says qualifies him to be president."

"Mitt Romney's defiance of decades of precedent set by presidential candidates on both sides of the aisle, including his own father, begs the question -- what does he have to hide? Did he exploit loopholes in the tax code by keeping his investments offshore and is that why he's protecting those loopholes now? Why did he open a Swiss bank account instead of an American bank account and establish a corporation in Bermuda instead of on our shores? Did he pay a lower income tax rate than the 13.9 percent he paid in 2010 and is that why he opposes the Buffett Rule to ensure millionaires don't pay less taxes than middle-class families?"

"Governor Romney may try once again to play by his own set of rules, but Americans will hold him accountable for trying to hide his record."

The Obama campaign also released a new digital calculator that individuals can use to see how their tax rate stacks up against Mitt Romney's – and then see what the Buffett Rule would do to make the tax code fairer so that we can help reduce the deficit and grow the economy.

See [this new tax calculator](#) that helps explain the Buffett Rule.

First Lady Michelle Obama and Dr. Jill Biden Mark One-Year Anniversary of Joining Forces Program

On Wednesday, First Lady Michelle Obama and Dr. Jill Biden marked the one-year anniversary of the launch of their Joining Forces program with a ceremony for military families and organization leaders on the White House south lawn. The program is a national initiative to provide our troops, veterans and military families with opportunities and support. The First Lady renewed her call to action and challenged Americans to continue to show their support for these service members and their families. She said:



"[In the past year] Not a single person that we've talked to, that we have approached, has told us that they could not help -- not a single person. We've asked; they said yes."

"And the good thing is, is that once people get started, they just keep coming up with new ideas on their own. We'll present something, and they double it. They want to do even more. They just keep raising their goals even higher. They just keep figuring out how to get more and more people involved."

The First Lady told military families that "you do live in a grateful nation."

Holding Republicans Accountable

On Monday, the Democratic National Committee continued to defend women's rights and access to health care against Republican attacks. Simone Ward, DNC's national deputy constituency director and national director of women's outreach, wrote an op-ed for *U.S. News & World Report* on the subject, which said:

"From pushing for equal pay for equal work to staunchly defending women's health, President Obama has proudly stood up for women across the country. If the Republican Party continues to push for policies that are dangerous for women, the GOP will only have itself to blame for losing support. Just ask Alaska Republican Sen. Lisa Murkowski or Maine GOP Sen. Olympia Snowe, who have both criticized their party's stance on these issues. It has nothing to do with our language and everything to do with their policies."

Mitt Romney was in Delaware on Tuesday, and the DNC made sure we had Democrats on the ground ready to counter Romney's distortion of President Obama's record on the economy. Delaware Democratic Party Executive Director Joe Aronson was joined by union officials and workers to discuss the economic concerns of hardworking Americans and how Mitt Romney isn't fighting for policies that help the middle class.

On Wednesday, Mitt Romney's campaign was asked if Romney supports the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act. Their response: "we'll get back to you that." DNC Chair Debbie Wasserman Schultz issued a strong response to the Romney campaign's lack of concern for this basic issue of economic fairness:

"Today's radio silence by Mitt Romney's campaign aides when asked if their boss supports equal pay for equal work for women in this country is utterly shocking. The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, which goes to the heart of the equal pay issue by giving women the power to challenge discrimination where they work, was the very first bill that President Obama signed into law. And that was no coincidence – for the President, equal pay for equal work has always been a no-brainer. But this isn't just about women. President Obama knows that equal pay for equal work is at the heart of economic security for millions of working families. It's about growing the economy by growing the middle class, and giving all Americans a fair shot and a fair opportunity to succeed."

The DNC Chair also put out a blog post titled "Women are fired up and ready to go organize" on getting women engaged in this election. It said:

"Last month, I helped launch the [**DNC Women's Institute**](#) as a place for Democratic women to get involved in this year's elections. In the weeks that followed, Mitt Romney and the Republicans have launched attack after attack on women's health. From Romney's threat to 'get rid of' Planned Parenthood to his support of Marco Rubio's attempt to let a woman's employer determine her access to preventive medicine, it's become clear to women across America just how much is at stake this November—and how important our voices and votes will be."

On Thursday, the Massachusetts Democratic Party marked the six-year anniversary of Mitt Romney signing health reform into law in Massachusetts, which helped lay the groundwork for President Obama's Affordable Care Act. Romney even included the individual mandate as part of the health reform legislation he signed into law. But in the height of hypocrisy, Romney opposes these landmark health reforms now that he's running for president. What a difference six years has made. Mitt Romney has sold out his principles in order to pander to far right Republican voters in the race for the GOP nomination. Romney's hypocrisy on any number of key issues, including health care reform, goes to the heart of the fundamental flaw of his candidacy: more and more voters are seeing that Romney has no core, and they don't trust him to lead the country.

On Friday, DNC Executive Director Patrick Gaspard joined United Steel Workers President Leo Gerard for a press conference in Pittsburgh to highlight local private sector job growth under President Obama's leadership. They also echoed the President's call for millionaires and billionaires to pay their fair share in taxes – the simple principle behind the Buffett Rule. Mitt Romney was in Missouri to speak to the National Rifle Association, and our labor allies were out in full force to make sure voters know about Romney's true record of hypocrisy and lack of credibility on Second Amendment issues.

Key Issues in the News and Background

President Obama Releases 2011 Tax Returns; Romney Should Release His Tax Returns (4/13/12)

Key Point: Mitt Romney should level with voters and release all of his tax returns.

- President Obama and Vice President Biden released their tax returns today and are calling on Mitt Romney to do the same. The President is making the last 12 years of his tax returns publicly available, while Romney has only released one year.
 - Please see [this New York Times article](#) on the subject.
 - Please see [the President's and the Vice President's tax returns](#).

- Each week, new questions are raised about whether Romney took unusual steps to avoid paying his fair share in taxes. Now we're learning more about the loopholes Romney may be exploiting to hide his assets and investments from public view. Romney should level with voters and release all of his tax returns.
- We can't answer the many questions raised by Romney's tax returns because he didn't release enough of them. Romney gave John McCain's campaign 23 years of tax returns when he was vetted for vice president, but now Romney believes the American people are only entitled to one full year's worth of returns. The Romney campaign won't say when Romney will release this year's taxes, only that "in previous years, Mitt Romney has sought an extension."
- Romney's limited and insufficient tax releases defy precedent set by presidential candidates. His father released 12 years of tax returns, President Bush released returns back to 1991, and President Obama released eight years of tax returns during the 2008 campaign. They also further weaken the central premise of his candidacy.
- Romney has asked Americans to elect him based on his time as a corporate-buyout specialist, but he refuses to share his tax returns from that period. They could help answer questions like whether Romney exploited loopholes in the tax code by keeping his investments off-shore, or why he opened a Swiss bank account and established a corporation in Bermuda.
- The more the American people learn about Mitt Romney's finances, the less they trust him to lead the country.

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Vice President Biden Spoke in New Hampshire on Tax Fairness and the Buffett Rule (4/13/12)

Key Point: President Obama has proposed the Buffett Rule to close loopholes and end special tax breaks that let some of the wealthiest pay a lower tax rate than many middle-class families so we can help reduce the deficit and invest in our economy. Mitt Romney defends a system that rewards people like him at the expense of the middle class and the economy as a whole by allowing him to pay a lower tax rate than the average middle-class American.

- Vice President Biden spoke in New Hampshire yesterday on tax fairness and the Buffett Rule. It's the fourth of a series of campaign speeches about issues that will be at the core of the general election and the choice America will make in November about the future we want for this country.
- The Vice President highlighted President Obama's efforts to close loopholes and end special tax breaks that let some of the wealthiest pay a lower tax rate than many middle-class families. The Buffett Rule is part of the President's commitment to reduce the deficit, while asking everyone to pay their fair share and continuing investments in programs that create jobs, grow our economy and strengthen the middle-class.
- The Buffett Rule says that millionaires and billionaires should pay at least the same percentage of their income in taxes as middle-class families do. Meanwhile, the Romney Rule says the very wealthy should keep their tax cuts and loopholes they have, and get another new tax cut every year that's worth more than what the average middle-class family makes in an entire year.
- Mitt Romney opposes the Buffett Rule. He defends a system that rewards people like him at the expense of the middle class and the economy as a whole by allowing him to pay a lower tax rate than the average middle-class American.
- Romney's tax plan doesn't ask millionaires and billionaires to pay their fair share so we can responsibly invest in our future. In fact, it does the opposite.
 - It gives the average millionaire a \$250,000 tax cut.
 - To pay for his tax plan, Romney would either need to increase the deficit or make even deeper cuts to middle class investments like Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid than he has already proposed.

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Romney No Straight Shooter on Gun Control; Etch-A-Sketches in Speech to NRA (4/13/12)

Key Point: Mitt Romney is trying to Etch-A-Sketch away his gun control record of raising fees on gun owners.

- Mitt Romney is speaking to the National Rifle Association today in St. Louis and trying to Etch-A-Sketch away his mixed record on the Second Amendment, which ranges from raising fees on gun owners to lying about being a lifelong hunter.
 - Please see [this op-ed](#) on the subject by former Ohio governor Ted Strickland.
- As he's done throughout his political career, Romney is pandering to his audience and hypocritically saying anything to get elected. When Romney ran for the Senate in 1994, he said "I don't line up with the NRA," and today he'll likely say the opposite.
- Romney's Second Amendment hypocrisy has no limits:
 - When Romney ran for governor of Massachusetts, he promised to veto any attempts to weaken the state's gun laws, and later lied about being endorsed by the NRA. Once elected, he quadrupled fees on Massachusetts gun owners.
 - Romney decided to join the NRA when he started running for president six years ago. In 2007 he said "I've been a hunter pretty much all my life," and awkwardly claimed he hunts "small varmints." The truth? Romney had only hunted twice.

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Romney Waffles on Equal Pay, Isn't Willing to Stand Up For Women and Their Families (4/13/12)

Key Point: It's no surprise women don't trust Mitt Romney to stand up for them and their families; he isn't willing to do it.

- Mitt Romney spent the Republican primary joining Republican attacks on women, and now he's losing among women by 19 points. Romney is trying and failing to Etch-A-Sketch away his record on women by hypocritically misleading voters and attacking President Obama's record on women and jobs. It's no surprise women don't trust Romney to stand up for them – he isn't willing to do it.
- This week, when asked whether Romney supports the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act that helps women fight for equal pay, his campaign tersely replied "we'll get back to you on that." Romney isn't willing to stand up for working women across America who on average earn just 77 cents on the dollar. Romney now says he's not going to change current pay equity laws, suggesting he opposes the Paycheck Fairness Act.
 - Please see [this campaign video](#) on Romney and the Lilly Ledbetter Act.
- Women should have the ability to take their bosses to court to get the same pay as their male coworkers. Anyone who wants to be president shouldn't have to think about whether they support pursuing every possible avenue to ensuring women get the same pay for the same work as men. America's economic security depends on it.
- Romney's extreme comments have left him underwater with women. Romney himself has said the Supreme Court should overturn Roe v. Wade, that he would "get rid of" Planned Parenthood, and that he supports the Blunt Amendment that would give women's health decisions to their bosses.
- Romney's attacks are both hypocritical and wrong. Romney has no plan to keep teachers on the job and no plan to accelerate job creation now to strengthen the recovery. In fact, Romney's plans include tax increases that disproportionately hurt women, raising taxes on 18 million working families.
- Under President Obama's leadership, women are actually gaining jobs during the recovery, and the President has a plan to get women – and all Americans – back to work now. His budget would help support 320,000 teacher jobs, more than two-thirds of which would likely go to women.

- Over the past 25 months, women have gained nearly 1.2 million private-sector jobs. That starkly contrasts the situation President Obama inherited. Almost 300,000 women lost their jobs in the month President Obama took office, making it the worst month on record for women's jobs losses.
 - President Obama's measures have helped keep 400,000 teachers in classrooms, kept nurses and health care professionals on the job and helped put women back to work.
 - He's put payroll tax cuts into the pockets of nearly 75 million working women while passing 18 tax cuts for women-owned small businesses.

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Today is the Sixth Anniversary of the Massachusetts Health Care Law, or Romneycare (4/12/12)

Key Point: Though Mitt Romney is trying to shake off his record on health insurance reform, he's really the godfather of the new health care law.

- Today marks the sixth anniversary of the Massachusetts health care law, or Romneycare, which served as the model for President Obama's health insurance reforms. Though Mitt Romney is trying to shake off his record on health insurance reform, he's really the godfather of the new health care law.
 - Please see [this new campaign video](#) about Romney's role in Romneycare.*
- Romney was an early supporter of the individual mandate, and as governor he put one in place to ensure all Massachusetts residents were taking responsibility for their own health care and everyone could get covered at a lower cost. He called his health reform plan a national model.
- But now that Romney is running for president, he's trying to etch over his past beliefs. He advocates letting insurance companies go back to dropping Americans' coverage when they get sick, discriminating against those with preexisting conditions, and making women pay more for their health care.
- Since we passed health reform two years ago, millions of Americans have been saving money and living healthier lives. But repealing it would mean:
 - 180 million Americans would lose their protection against the worst insurance abuses, like denying health care to the sick, unjustified excessive premium increases, lifetime caps on the amount of care a patient can receive, and the future protection against gender discrimination.
 - 86 million Americans would lose their access to free preventive care. That would mean no more life-saving cancer screenings like mammograms and colonoscopies without a co-pay or deductible, and women wouldn't have their contraception covered.
 - An additional 2.5 million young adults wouldn't have insurance. President Obama's health reform made sure they could stay on their parents' plans as they enter the workforce, until they turn 26, but repealing it could take their coverage away.
 - 47 million Americans would lose out on a stronger Medicare program. Repeal would undo the eight-year extension of Medicare's solvency, and the prescription drug discounts that saved 3.6 million people with Medicare in the doughnut hole an average of \$604.

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President Obama's Buffett Rule Asks Millionaires, Billionaires to Pay Their Fair Share (4/10/12)

Key Point: The President believes that millionaires and billionaires shouldn't pay lower tax rates than firefighters and teachers. That's why he proposed the Buffett Rule – to close tax loopholes to ensure that millionaires and billionaires pay their fair share and don't pay less in taxes than middle-class families.

- President Obama is speaking in Florida today about the Buffett Rule, which closes loopholes and special tax breaks that let the wealthiest pay a lower tax rate than many middle-class families. Vice President Biden will continue this discussion on Thursday in New Hampshire, where he'll contrast his and the President's record on tax fairness with the Republicans'.

- America prospers when everyone does their fair share, plays by the same rules, and has the same shot at success. We can no longer ask everything from the middle class and seniors while asking nothing from those at the top. The Buffett Rule asks millionaires and billionaires to pay their fair share.
 - Please see [this tax calculator](#) that helps explain the Buffett Rule.
- We have a deficit that needs to be paid down. And we need to invest in an economy built to last – that creates jobs of the future and makes things the rest of the world buys – not one built on outsourcing, loopholes and risky financial deals that jeopardize our entire economy and threaten the security of the middle class.
- That means we have to make choices. When it comes to paying down the deficit and investing in our future, should we ask middle-class Americans to pay even more at a time when their budgets are already stretched? Or should we ask some of the wealthiest Americans, who aren't today paying their fair share, to do so? That's the choice.
- Over the last decade, we've spent hundreds of billions of dollars on what was supposed to be a temporary tax break for the wealthiest 2 percent of Americans. Now we're on track to spend almost a trillion more.
- If we don't ask the wealthiest Americans to pay their fair share, then one of two things will happen. Either we won't get our deficit under control, or we can't invest in what we need to grow our economy. For instance:
 - Students would have less help paying for college in the face of rising tuition costs.
 - Manufacturers would have a harder time competing with the rest of the world.
 - We would have less to invest in innovation so Americans have good-paying jobs of the future.
- The first step is asking everyone to do their fair share. President Obama and many Democrats, Republicans, and independents agree – even Warren Buffett agrees. Buffett wrote in a *New York Times* op-ed, "My friends and I have been coddled long enough by a billionaire-friendly Congress. It's time for our government to get serious about shared sacrifice." This isn't class warfare; it's math. It's common sense.
- We can't return to the same Republicans' failed policies of "you're on your own" economics if we're serious about rebuilding the middle class. Trickle-down economics invests too little in our people and in our future – it's an excuse to leave the middle class behind while letting just a few at the top prosper.
- Mitt Romney opposes the Buffett Rule, because it would mean people like himself would have to pay more. Romney thinks millionaires and billionaires should keep paying lower tax rates than middle-class families. In fact, Romney's not paying his fair share – in 2010, Romney paid a tax rate of only 13.9 percent, well below the rate paid by many middle-class Americans.
- Romney would protect special tax rates for Wall Street investors and he opposes the Buffett Rule. He looks out for people just like him – millionaires who pay a lower tax rate than many police, firefighters, teachers and small business owners.
- Romney's tax plan doesn't ask millionaires and billionaires to pay their fair share. In fact, it does the opposite.
 - It gives the average millionaire a \$250,000 tax cut.
 - To pay for his tax plan, Romney would increase the deficit and make deep cuts in Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid.