

# THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL COMMITTEE WEEKLY UPDATE

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**April 27, 2012**

This week, President Obama traveled to three universities across the country calling on Congress to take action to prevent student loan interest rates from doubling in July. Vice President Biden traveled to Miami-Dade County, Florida to talk about the President's commitment to preserving the Everglades as it not only serves as the water source for many Floridians, it also serves as a significant source of revenue for the state as a tourist hot-spot. On Thursday, Vice President Biden spoke at New York University regarding President Obama's successful leadership abroad and provided a stark comparison to Mitt Romney's fundamentally flawed approach to the president's role as Commander-in-Chief. On Friday, President Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama traveled to Fort Stewart, Georgia and spoke to service members and their families about his Executive Order to protect and preserve the educational system for our veterans.

On Monday, Romney spoke to a crowd in Pennsylvania, distorting his and President Obama's economic and energy policy records. In response, the Pennsylvania Democratic Party released a statement on Romney's energy positions being out of touch for Western Pennsylvania. In addition, the DNC held a press conference call on Tuesday with Congressman Chris Van Hollen, ranking member on the House Budget Committee, and Rep. Keith Ellison to call out Mitt Romney's shameless lip service with respect to his stance on student loans. On Tuesday night, Mitt Romney claimed primary victories in five states and gave a speech in which he promised a better America, and DNC Chair Debbie Wasserman Schultz released a statement pushing back on Romney's speech, stating that Romney would take us back to the failed economic policies of the past. Also this week, Rudy Giuliani endorsed Mitt Romney, and the DNC released a video "Mitt Romney & Rudy Giuliani: Match Made in Heaven," reminding voters that Romney was far from Giuliani's first choice of nominees.

## **President Obama Traveled to Colleges in North Carolina, Colorado, and Iowa This Week to Speak About College Affordability And Congress Needing to Act to Keep Student Loan Interest Rates Low**

This week President Obama went on a tri-city college tour, speaking to students at the University of North Carolina, University of Colorado-Boulder, and University of Iowa, and asked them to tell their members of Congress not stand idly by while student loan interest rates double. Four years ago, Congress passed legislation to set the student loan interest rates at a low 3.4 percent; however, new subsidized student loan rates are set to double starting July 1 if Congress does nothing.



Unless Congress acts, at least 7 million students will be hit with an average of more than \$1,000 in additional costs over the life of their loan. As the President explained, "That's basically a tax hike for more than 7 million students across America."

At the University of Iowa, the President said: "This country has always made a commitment to put a good education within the reach of everybody who's willing to work for it. That's part of what made us special. That's what kept us at the forefront of business and science and technology and medicine. That's a commitment that we need to reaffirm today."

During a call with college reporters, the President [explained why the battle over college affordability is one he is willing to fight](#):

"I've always believed that we should be doing everything we can to help put higher education within reach for every single American student -- because the unemployment rate for Americans with at least a college degree is about half the national average. And it's never been more important. Unfortunately, it's also never been more expensive. And most of you guys I'm sure have reported about this and know this -- students who take out loans to pay for college graduate owing an average of \$25,000 a year. And I know what this is like, because when Michelle and I graduated from college and law school we had enormous debts, and it took us a lot of years to pay off. So that's probably why I feel this thing so personally."

Higher education is not a privilege; it's the best investment young people can make right now. With the unemployment rate for those with a college degree or more half that of the national average, it is absolutely imperative that higher education is within reach for all Americans. Our economy depends on it.

Read the President's remarks at the [University of North Carolina](#); [University of Colorado, Boulder](#); and [University of Iowa](#).

### **Vice President Biden Travels to Florida to Speak about the Administration's Efforts to Protect the Everglades**

On Monday, the Vice President traveled to the Everglades in Miami-Dade County, Florida. Following his tour of the Everglades National Park, the Vice President delivered remarks on the Administration's efforts to restore the Everglades.



Over the past three years, restoration of the Florida Everglades has been at the top of its environmental priority as it is a vital part of the state of Florida, particularly because it is the primary source of more than 7 million Floridians' drinking water. Furthermore, the Everglades National Park provides a great source of revenue for the state of Florida as a prime tourist attraction and thus is in the state and country's best interest to maintain its natural beauty.

## **Vice President Biden Traveled To New York To Speak About President Obama's Foreign Policy**

Vice President Biden spoke at New York University in New York City on Thursday about President Obama's foreign policy accomplishments, and his commitment to keeping Americans safe and our nation secure. The Vice President's speech was the fifth in a series of remarks across the country on issues that will be at the core of the general election, the visions of the future for this country, and the choice America will make in November.

The Vice President highlighted President Obama's foreign policy leadership, the President's success in confronting our enemies and strengthening our alliances abroad. Vice President Biden outlined a stark contrast between President Obama's proven foreign policy record with Mitt Romney's lack of foreign policy experience and his constant failure to present a clear specific strategy in how he would do things differently.

## **President Obama Signs Executive Order Supporting Veterans, Military Spouses, and Their Families**

On Friday, President Obama signed an Executive Order as part of his We Can't Wait initiative to help service members, veterans, military spouses, and their families to make informed educational decisions and provide protections against deceptive targeting by education institutions. The Executive Order is a big step forward in improving educational options for military and veteran students.

Specifically, the Executive Order will provide that military and veteran students receive the [Know Before You Owe](#) financial aid form, which helps ensure military and veteran students have the information they need prior to applying for financial assistance and enrolling in educational programs. The Executive Order will also crack down on improper online recruiting practices and institutions that inappropriately and aggressively target military students. Moreover, the Executive Order will provide a complaint system for veterans, improve support services for service members and veterans, and strengthen the enforcement of student protections.

President Obama and the First Lady traveled to Fort Stewart, Georgia Friday to speak to 10,000 troops about the details of the Executive Order and to underscore the need for preserving the educational system for our service members.

Read the President and First Lady's remarks [here](#).

## **Holding Republicans Accountable**

On Monday, Romney spoke to a crowd in Pennsylvania, distorting his and President Obama's economic and energy policy records. In response, the Pennsylvania Democratic Party released statement on Romney's energy positions being out of touch for Western Pennsylvania:

"Mitt Romney visited Allegheny County where he offered more of his empty rhetoric and continued his misleading attacks on the President's record on energy. President Obama has enacted an all of the above energy strategy that has spurred domestic oil production to an 8 year high while reducing our dependence on foreign oil. It's not surprising that Mitt Romney is launching misleading attacks to hide his horrid record on energy. As Governor, Romney raised a gas tax by 400 percent, and was an outspoken critic of coal-fired power plants, saying that they 'kill' people. Now Romney opposes money saving fuel efficiency standards that save American's money at the pump, which supporting tax breaks that put money in the pockets of big oil companies. Middle class Pennsylvanians cannot afford Mitt Romney's dishonest campaigning and out of touch energy plans."

Following Mitt Romney's remarks on Monday in which he stated he was in favor of keeping student interest rates low, the DNC held a press conference call on Tuesday with Congressman Chris Van Hollen, ranking member on the House Budget Committee, and Congressman Keith Ellison to call out Mitt Romney's shameless lip service with respect to his stance on student loans.

On the call Rep. Van Hollen said:

"What we're seeing from Mitt Romney is an effort to try and have it both ways. It's a huge contradiction. It was just a few weeks ago that he fully embraced the House Republican budget, the Romney-Ryan budget, and what that budget does is very clear. It calls for the doubling of student interest rates beginning July 1<sup>st</sup>."

"Young Americans and students should be very suspicious of Romney's efforts to have it both ways on this issue.

"In his budget you have big taxpayer subsidies for big oil companies, you have special tax awards for companies that ship American jobs overseas, and a doubling of student interest rates making college less affordable not more affordable."

On the call Rep. Ellison said:

"It does strike me as somewhat interesting that at one point, just a few weeks ago the Ryan plan had been adopted by Mitt Romney, he's embraced it, which would allow student interest rates to double from 3.4 to 6.8. Then he turns around and says no no I don't take that position. If I was a student I would wonder when he's going to flip back."

"The President has said as Americans we need to out innovate and out educate the rest of the world, and he has been consistent in that theme."

"It's not so much a conversion as a contradiction, and a lack of clarity which is a consistent theme of Mitt Romney's policy positions. You can name ten things where he took one position one day and the opposite position some time else."

In light of the fact that Mitt Romney has declared his support for the Ryan budget, which would lock in the doubling of student loan interests rates, and cuts Pell grants and other education programs to make college more affordable all to pay for more tax breaks for the wealthy and corporations, Romney's statement this week that he favors lower interest rates for student loans is more of his pattern of contradiction and of making promises he can't keep.

If Romney were committed to keeping interest rates low for students, he would show true leadership in his party and urge Republicans in Congress like Speaker John Boehner and Representative Paul Ryan to take decisive action to maintain current student loan interest rates and keep them from doubling. But in reality he would rather push for lowering taxes for millionaires and billionaires by \$5 trillion paid for with cuts in funding in education.

On Tuesday night, Mitt Romney claimed primary victories in five states and gave a speech in which he promised a better America, but simply rehashed failed policies of the past. DNC Chair Debbie Wasserman Schultz released the statement after the primary results were in:

"Tonight, Mitt Romney spoke about building a 'better America,' but in fact, under Mitt Romney America would go back to the failed policies of the past . . . He wants to allow Wall Street and insurance companies to write their own rules again. He wants to cut critical programs for middle class families and those struggling to reach the middle class, and cut investments in our economy to pay for even more tax breaks for millionaires and billionaires. And let's be clear about what would be stupid: it would be stupid to reverse the progress we have made and return to the same failed policies that got us into this which is precisely what Mitt Romney is pledging to do.

"But it's not just the failed policies that Romney would return to that should give Americans pause – it's also his failed record as Governor . . . . Under Mitt Romney, Massachusetts was 47th out of 50 in job creation, lost manufacturing jobs at twice the national average, and saw its debt increase by 16 percent. Advocating for the failed policies of the past and a failed record in office—that's not better, that's not leadership, and it's not what the American people want."

To follow-up on Romney's roll out of his tried and failed economic policy: more budget-busting tax cuts for the wealthy; fewer rules for Wall Street—the same formula that benefitted a few, but crashed our economy and punished the middle class—the DNC held a press conference call on Wednesday with Representative Carolyn Maloney and Representative Rush Holt to discuss why Mitt Romney's policies would leave America worse off by returning to the failed policies of the past.

On the call Rep. Maloney said:

"Romney believes that showering the wealthiest Americans with special giveaways will make the middle class thrive. These failed policies didn't unleash growth, they didn't spur job creation and they didn't boost the middle class. To the contrary those policies put the economic security of middle class Americans at risk."

"Nowhere in Mitt Romney's remarks last night did the American people hear how he plans to invest in the middleclass. That's because the extreme Romney-Ryan budget guts programs vital to the economic security of the middleclass likes Medicare, Social Security and investments in higher education – all to give tax breaks to millionaires and billionaires."

On the call Rep. Holt said:

"This election will be a choice between two candidates, two records, and two visions for the country. The President brought the economy back from the brink of another Depression, bet on American workers to spur the comeback of the American auto industry and American manufacturing and has fought every day to build an economy where hard work pays off and responsibility is rewarded."

"The positions that Mitt Romney have taken just don't square with where most Americans think our country should go but so far that's all that Mitt Romney has been offering."

Americans aren't buying Mitt Romney's "Better America" and his previous out of touch positions regarding women, seniors and the middle class will continue to haunt his campaign as he seeks to etch a sketch his way through the General Election.

Also this week, Rudy Giuliani endorsed Mitt Romney. The DNC released a video "[Mitt Romney & Rudy Giuliani: Match Made in Heaven](#)," in which Giuliani states "He has changed his position on virtually everything . . . . I've never seen a guy change his positions on so many things so fast on a dime." Giuliani provides a comprehensive rundown of the issues on which Romney has changed his position, which cover a range of issues.

### **Key Issues in the News and Background**

#### **Romney Speech in NH Rehashed His Same, Failed Economic Policies of the Past**

**Key Point:** Mitt Romney's speech in New Hampshire Tuesday rehashed the same failed policies that created the economic crisis in the first place.

- Mitt Romney spoke in New Hampshire Tuesday, and like his frequent speeches billed as major, game-changing events, Tuesday's speech was heavy on hype and light on anything resembling substance.

- Romney tried to shake his Etch-A-Sketch and win over voters. But for months, voters have been left wondering what the specifics of Romney's foreign or domestic policy agendas would actually entail.
- Romney would let Wall Street write its own rules again, end Medicare as we know it in an attempt to pay for tax cuts for millionaires and billionaires, and explode the deficit by \$5 trillion in the next ten years.
- We lost more than 800,000 jobs the month President Obama took office. The President took immediate action to stop the bleeding and reverse the trend, and we've since had 25 straight months of private-sector jobs growth adding a total of 4.1 million jobs.
- While putting Americans back to work is job one, we have to do more. That's why President Obama is fighting 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.

### **President Obama Is Fighting to Prevent Student Loan Interest Rates from Doubling**

**Key Point:** President Obama believes keeping interest rates on student loans low is key to growing the economy, so more Americans get a fair shot at an affordable college education and the skills they need to find a good job.

- President Obama spoke at the University of Iowa about how interest rates for new subsidized student loans are set to double from 3.4 to 6.8 percent on July 1 unless Congress acts. The clock is ticking.
- The rates were set by Congress in 2007, and Americans already owe more on student loans than credit cards.
  - If Congress fails to act, more than 7 million students would pay on average almost \$1,000 in costs over the life of that loan. That's simply unacceptable.
  - This is a very personal issue for President Obama. Both he and the First Lady went to college on loans and worked hard to finally pay them off in January 2004.
- Keeping college affordable is a critical part of the President's blueprint for an economy that's built to last – one that prepares Americans for the jobs of the future, restores middle-class security, and rewards hard work and responsibility.
- President Obama has a strong record of helping America's students pay for college.
  - He expanded Pell Grants, helping nearly 4 million more students afford college.
  - He fought for a college tax credit worth up to \$10,000 over four years of college.
  - He capped federal student loan payments at 10 percent of monthly income. That will help 1.6 million students manage their monthly payments and pursue the career of their dreams as soon as this year.

### **Romney Gives Lip Service on Student Loans, Has No Credibility With Young Americans**

**Key Point:** Young Americans should be wary of Mitt Romney's lip service on student loans, especially given his support for the Ryan budget which would make it significantly harder for young people to get into and afford college.

- Young Americans should be wary of Mitt Romney's lip service on student loans, especially given his support for the Ryan budget, which would make it significantly harder for young people to get into and afford college.
  - Please see [this new campaign video](#) titled "Mitt Romney Versus Reality: Student Loans Edition."

- The Romney-Ryan budget locks in the doubling of student loan interest rates, and cuts Pell Grants and other education programs that make it easier for millions of young Americans to afford college.
- If Romney truly believes Congress should prevent student loan interest rates from going up, he should show leadership and call on Congressional leaders like Speaker Boehner and Rep. Paul Ryan to support the President's proposal. The only thing standing in the way of young people being able to afford college is the Republican Congress.
- Romney continues to contradict himself by making promises he can't keep, from giving \$5 trillion in tax breaks weighted to the wealthiest Americans to raising defense spending to an arbitrarily high level to balancing the federal budget. Romney should finally come clean about what cuts he'd make to offset all of these costs.

### **Mitt Romney Campaigns in Ohio Friday with Anti-Worker Governor Kasich**

**Key Point:** While President Obama has always had the back of America's workers, Mitt Romney has consistently failed to be on their side.

- Mitt Romney is campaigning in Ohio Friday with Governor John Kasich, who was behind the state's failed anti-union ballot initiative that would've severely curtailed public employees' collective bargaining rights. While President Obama has always had the back of America's workers, Mitt Romney has consistently failed to be on their side.
- Ohio voters rightly voted down Kasich's initiative, and neither Kasich nor Romney has Ohio workers' best interests at heart. Romney said he was "110 percent behind Governor Kasich in support of" the initiative, and he's consistently failed to be on the side of America's workers.
  - Romney has suggested abolishing the National Labor Relations Board to "turn back to courts or to an agency that has much shorter reins on decisions relating to labor law."
  - Romney's running on a record of broken promises. While running for governor, he pledged to raise the minimum wage, but once in office he vetoed a minimum wage increase.
  - And when the auto industry was on the brink, Romney wanted to let it go bankrupt.
- Romney's economic scheme is familiar and troubling, and it won't help Ohio's workers: more budget-busting tax cuts for the wealthy; fewer rules for Wall Street – the same formula that benefitted a few, but crashed our economy and punished the middle class.
- President Obama started his career helping jobless workers in the shadow of a closed-down steel mill, and he's been fighting for hardworking Americans ever since. The President believes hard work should pay off, responsibility should be rewarded and everyone should play by the same rules in an economy that's built to last.
- That's why the President rescued the auto industry and helped save more than a million jobs up and down the supply chain. He's invested in America's workers, helped the private sector create more than 4 million jobs, brought jobs back to our shores and revived manufacturing in the Midwest. President Obama supports collective bargaining rights, fair labor laws, healthy and safe workplaces, better access to health care and education, and the right to organize.

### **The Economy Continues to Grow; We Can't Afford Romney's Familiar, Troubling Scheme**

**Key Point:** Under President Obama, the economy continues to grow, and while there's much more to be done, we can't afford to go back to the future with Mitt Romney's troubling and familiar economic scheme.

- The GDP grew by 2.2 percent in the first quarter of this year, the 11<sup>th</sup> straight quarter of positive GDP growth after a recession in which the economy was shrinking by more than 8 percent in the months before President Obama took office. Under the President's leadership, the economy continues to grow, and while

there's much more to be done, we can't afford to go back to the future with Mitt Romney's troubling and familiar economic scheme.

- The auto industry's recovery is helping fuel the national growth of our economy. That's thanks to President Obama's bold decision to rescue the auto industry when it was on the brink, saving more than a million jobs up and down the supply chain. That wouldn't have happened if Mitt Romney had his way; he wanted to let the auto industry go bankrupt.
- The most important part of our recovery is putting Americans back to work. We lost more than 800,000 jobs the month President Obama took office, and we've now had 25 straight months of private-sector job growth with businesses creating more than 4 million jobs in that time.
- The President has also proposed more steps to create jobs and strengthen the economy, from investing in infrastructure to keeping teachers in classrooms. Congress should act now to help put more Americans back to work.
- President Obama is committed to strengthening that job growth now while ensuring America has an economy built to last – where hard work pays off, responsibility is rewarded, and everyone does their fair share and plays by the same rules so we all have a fair shot at the American Dream.
- Americans can't afford to let Mitt Romney take us back to the future. Romney's economic scheme is familiar and troubling: more budget-busting tax cuts for the wealthy; fewer rules for Wall Street – the same formula that benefitted a few, but crashed our economy and punished the middle class.