

THE
DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL COMMITTEE

WEEKLY UPDATE

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President Obama Thanks Troops and Military Families at Camp Pendleton

On Wednesday, President Obama traveled to Camp Pendleton to visit with troops and their families and thank them for their service to the United States.



President Obama said:

"I'm here because, for more than a decade, you — and all our men and women in uniform — have borne the burden in this time of war."

President Obama discussed Afghanistan and thanked all those who have served saying:

"Instead of leading the fight, our troops now have a different mission, which is to train and advise and assist Afghan forces," he said. Only 34,000 troops will be left in Afghanistan by this winter, and by the end of next year, the transition will be complete.

"None of this progress would have been possible had it not been for you. We thank all who have served there, especially our Camp Pendleton Marines. After our nation was attacked, you were some of the very first conventional forces in Afghanistan — racing in, hundreds of miles by helicopter, toppling that regime and driving al Qaeda from its camps. Then when the fight shifted to Iraq, you were there — racing toward Baghdad and deposing a dictator. And through years of combat — in Tikrit, Fallujah and Ramadi — your courage added to the glories of the Marines' long and illustrious history."

President Obama also said:

"Our military -- part of what makes us best is we've got extraordinary recruits. But if we want the best-qualified recruits, we shouldn't be cutting investments in education. We should be increasing our investments in education," President Obama said. "Our wounded warriors, our veterans, depend on new technologies for their recovery and their health care, so we shouldn't be slashing investments in science and medical research. We should continue to be the world leader in science and research."

You can read President Obama's full remarks [here](#).

President Obama in Arizona: A Better Bargain for the Middle Class

On Tuesday, President Obama visited Phoenix, Arizona where he continued to lay out his vision for a better bargain for the middle class. The trip was the latest stop on the President's economic tour.

President Obama reflected on a trip to Arizona less than a month after he took office and pointed to the progress we've seen since then as the housing market has begun to bounce back.

President Obama said:

"It's taken longer than any of us would like. But during that time, we helped millions of Americans save an average of \$3,000 each year by refinancing at lower rates. We helped millions of responsible homeowners stay in their homes, which was good for their neighbors because you don't want a bunch of foreclosure signs in your neighborhood.



"Where Congress wouldn't act, we went ahead and acted, so over the past few years, we had the Department of Justice stand up for buyers who had been discriminated against or conned by predatory lending. And we won a settlement that gave more money to victims of discrimination in one year than in the previous 23 years combined. We worked with states to force big banks to repay more than \$50 billion to more than 1.5 million families -- largest lending settlement in history. We extended the time that folks who had lost their jobs could delay their payment on their mortgages while they kept looking for work. We cracked down on the bad practices that led to the crisis in the first place...

"So because of all these actions we've been taking, our housing market is beginning to heal. Home prices are rising at the fastest pace in seven years. Sales are up nearly 50 percent. Construction is up nearly 75 percent. New foreclosures are down by nearly two-thirds. Millions of families have been able to come up for air -- they're no longer underwater on their mortgages."

We've made progress but, President Obama said we still have much left to do and called on Congress to enact his proposals to make the dream of homeownership a reality for more Americans while rebuilding our economy.

President Obama said:

"What we want to do is put forward ideas that will help millions of responsible, middle-class homeowners who still need relief. And we want to help hardworking Americans who dream of owning their own home fair and square, have a down payment, are willing to make those payments, understand that owning a home requires responsibility."

"So we've made progress, and that's helped to move the economy forward. But we've got to build on this progress. We're not where we need to be yet. We've got to give more hardworking Americans the chance to buy their first home. We have to help more responsible homeowners refinance their mortgages, because a lot of them still have a spread between the rates they're paying right now on their mortgage and what they could be getting if they were able to refinance.

"And we've got to turn the page on this kind of bubble-and-bust mentality that helped to create this mess in the first place. We got to build a housing system that is durable and fair and rewards responsibility for generations to come. That's what we've got to do."

Click [here](#) to read about President Obama's proposed steps to promote responsible homeownership.

[DNC Launches New Website on 48th Anniversary of the Voting Rights Act](#)

To mark the 48th anniversary of the signing of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, Democrats have launched www.votingrightsmatter.com. This new microsite tells the story of the fight for voting rights, connecting the historic struggle to what's happening today. The timeline begins with the Civil War, Reconstruction, and the 15th amendment, then continues to women's suffrage, the civil rights movement all the way up to the Supreme Court's recent decision.

While the Voting Rights Act was a major step forward in protecting and expanding access to the ballot, the Supreme Court's decision to rule parts of the law unconstitutional opened the door for Republican state legislatures to pass harmful obstructive legislation. After only one month, eleven Republican-controlled states are taking steps to make it harder to cast a vote.

President Obama, Democratic lawmakers and Democratic governors are working to combat these actions and fight these restrictive laws. From creating the new Commission on Electoral Administration to drafting and signing legislation into law that expands access to the polls and protects the right to vote, Democrats are working to live up to the potential laid out in the Voting Rights Act. The timeline on the new website finishes with an opportunity to sign up to join the fight to protect voting rights—we need your help!



[Donna Brazile: Voting Rights Act Needs Help](#)

DNC Vice Chair Donna Brazile marked the 48th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act in the following op-ed on USAToday.com:

[Voting Rights Act Needs Help](#)

By Donna Brazile

On August 6, 1965, [President Lyndon Johnson signed](#) the Voting Rights Act and said, "There is no room for injustice anywhere in the American mansion."

In the 48 years since its enactment, the Voting Rights Act has helped secure the right to vote for millions of men and women in our country – dismantling the injustice of preventing eligible citizens from casting their vote — and our democracy has been made stronger for it. But now the promise and purpose of the Voting Rights Act is in jeopardy.

I'm not naïve enough to believe the Voting Rights Act rooted out all injustice — after all, I saw firsthand what my sister had to go through voting in Florida in 2000 — but we know from experience the Voting Rights Act has provided a critical step forward for millions of African American and other voters.

Too many voters in our American family overcame many obstacles, and in some cases gave their lives, to obtain the right to vote — a sacred right that cannot and should not be put at risk.

The Voting Rights Act put in place sweeping new protections for minority voters in the American South who had been disenfranchised for generations by Jim Crow laws -- protections that are in serious jeopardy after the [Supreme Court struck down](#) a key provision that allows the Justice Department to monitor elections and ensure that all those who are eligible to vote can cast their ballots.

Republicans emboldened by the Court's decision have already introduced legislation to limit access to the ballot. In 30 states more than 55 different measures have been introduced and considered over the last several weeks. Republicans are pushing restrictive voter ID legislation in states around the country that will make it more difficult for people to make their voices heard.

In North Carolina, [Gov. Pat McCrory signed an extreme law](#) that attempts to prohibit parents of college students from [claiming them as dependents](#) when they file their taxes if the students register to vote anywhere other than the parents' homes. Under the new law, those same students would be required to provide a government-issued photo identification card at the polls. Student ID cards would not count.

[In North Carolina](#), there are 319,000 voters without a government-issued photo ID. Of those individuals, one-third are black and nearly all are living below the poverty line. Yet they would bear the expense of obtaining an ID. It isn't right and it isn't fair.

By contrast, the Democratic Party is continuing its fight to expand and defend access to the ballot for all eligible Americans. And make no mistake – nationwide, in red states and blue states, in large states and small ones, we will continue to oppose legislative and political efforts that erode that most precious right.

But this isn't simply about political parties. At the end of the day this comes down to values. As Americans, we believe that freedom and justice are more than just words. We must expand access to the voting booth so the diverse voices of our country can be heard and our leaders must listen.

I've dedicated my life to making sure that all Americans can have their voices heard — no matter who they are, what family they were born into, or what they learned in school — they are Americans — and their voice matters. Our country has never been worse off because more people decided to make their voices heard and their votes count. In 2012, we saw voters around the country stand in line for hours in some precincts so that their vote would be counted. They cast their ballots and sent a simple but powerful message: "We're here. Our voice matters."

When President Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act, he plainly stated, "It is difficult to fight for freedom."

Today, on the 48th anniversary of the signing of the Voting Rights Act into law, let's rededicate ourselves to that fight for freedom.

Let's stand with those voters who waited hours to cast their ballots.

President Obama has called on Congress to pass legislation ensuring every American has equal access to the polls and every eligible voter is able to cast a ballot without limitation and restriction.

It's up to us to ensure voting isn't downgraded from a right to a privilege.

It's just not what our country is about.

DNC Chair on Governor Scott's Flawed Efforts

On Friday, DNC Chair Debbie Wasserman Schultz took to the DNC blog to respond to Florida Governor Rick Scott's latest assault on voting rights.

Really? Governor Scott's Renewed Efforts to Purge Florida Voters Not Necessary **By Chair Debbie Wasserman Schultz**

Governor Scott is back at it. In the wake of the Supreme Court's decision to strike down key provisions of the Voting Rights Act, Governor Scott announced he is taking another shot at purging Florida's voter rolls of 'noncitizens.' Just to be clear, we're talking about Republican purging efforts botched so badly that Governor Scott himself had to vote by provisional ballot in 2006 because the purge had determined he was dead.

Seriously.

You'd think that would have been a wake-up call that this sort of purging is deeply flawed and unnecessary.

Governor Scott and his Republican Administration claim this is simply an effort to suppress voter fraud, but Floridians know better. This shameful attempt to shrink the electorate was highly controversial in the months leading up to the 2012 presidential election, when the Department of Justice sued the state of Florida for attempting to disqualify thousands of voters less than 90 days before an election.

The ability to cast a vote and have one's vote counted is central to the functioning of our democracy. But too often, Republicans have systematically turned how ballots are cast into a manufactured issue in swing states across the country. Too often, these Republican-led so-called anti-voter fraud efforts are nothing more than thinly veiled attempts to disqualify voters that reek of politics.

Such is the case in Florida. Of the 180,000 potential noncitizens identified for purging in 2012, less than 0.02% were actually ineligible. Nearly 60 percent of those included in the initial list were Hispanic – meanwhile, Hispanic voters make up only 13 percent of Florida's electorate.

Unfortunately for Governor Scott and national Republicans, Florida's voters won't be fooled again. Attempts like what is now happening in Florida, and what is happening in many states across the country, go against the spirit of our democracy and are exactly why Congress must answer President Obama's call to restore the Voting Rights Act to its full authority.

Happy 52nd Birthday, President Obama

On Sunday, President Obama celebrated his 52nd birthday. The White House compiled a [slideshow](#) of 52 of their favorite pictures of President Obama from this past year.



A visiting group at the White House also had the opportunity to sing "Happy Birthday" to the President. Watch them sing to him [here](#).

Happy Birthday, Mr. President!