

THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL COMMITTEE
WEEKLY UPDATE

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE DNC COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

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This week, President Obama talked about how the government can help small businesses to grow and thrive while meeting with small business owners in Edison, New Jersey, and he described the Administration's ongoing efforts to promote educational excellence in a speech to the National Urban League. Also this week, the President met with bipartisan Congressional leaders to talk about advancing important legislation, celebrated the 20th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and underscored the importance of enacting the DISCLOSE Act. In addition, the Administration continued its ongoing response to the BP oil spill.

What's Happening?

45th Anniversary of Medicare: This Friday marks the 45th anniversary of the creation of Medicare, which President Lyndon Johnson signed into law on July 30, 1965. The Medicare law takes care of American seniors by providing them with the quality care they need at a price they can afford. This year, with the Affordable Care Act, President Obama and Democrats in Congress extended the promise of Medicare – ensuring that American seniors can count on their Medicare benefits for many years to come and empowering Americans of all ages with new programs and protections that will help to keep our country healthier.

In recognition of the occasion, President Obama reflected on the benefits of Medicare and highlighted the Administration's efforts to strengthen this critical program. He said:

"The signing of Medicare forged a promise with older Americans -- that those who have contributed a lifetime to our national life and economy can enjoy their golden years with peace of mind and the security of reliable medical insurance...

"Medicare is not simply an entitlement program that starts at age 65 -- it is earned over a lifetime. The health care reforms in the landmark Affordable Care Act (ACA) renew and strengthen our pledge to America's seniors and families, ensuring Medicare and Medicaid will be there when they need it. Guaranteed Medicare benefits will not change, and participants will see greater savings, improved quality, and increased accountability in their health care coverage... As President, I will protect the promise of Medicare and Medicaid, and make sure they continue to be strong and solvent for our children and grandchildren."

In an op-ed marking the occasion, DNC Chairman Tim Kaine also embraced Democrats' long tradition of advocacy for better health care for the American people. He said:

"President Barack Obama and Democrats in Congress built on Medicare's promise of affordable, accessible medical care. With the Affordable Care Act, they extended to Americans of all ages the ability to receive needed care. This legislative victory was more than 60 years in the making...

"In large part, the difficulty of passing reform can be traced to Republicans, who consistently acted on behalf of insurance companies and other special interests to derail substantive change. As time passed, Republicans' opposition to reform became even more entrenched. Though many Republicans had joined with Democrats to pass the Medicare and Medicaid Bill of 1965, not a single Republican voted for the Affordable Care Act. And Republican leaders have pledged to repeal health insurance reform if given the opportunity...

"[So] we're going to lay out a clear choice for voters this fall – between Democrats, who undertook the challenge of repairing America's health care system, and Republicans, who want to roll back reform."

You can view a new video from the DNC, entitled "45 Years Ago Today," which marks this historic occasion, by visiting <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c09tez3ZDTA>.

Highlighting Small Businesses in Edison: On Wednesday, President Obama traveled to Edison, New Jersey, where he sat down with small business owners at the Tastee Sub Shop and enjoyed one of the shop's signature sandwiches. The President talked with those in attendance about the challenges small businesses face in the current economic climate and what government can do to help small business owners overcome those challenges.



Following his discussion with local business owners, the President called on Congress to pass legislation to help small businesses grow and thrive. The President said:

"Small businesses create two out of every three jobs in this country. So our recovery depends on them. And if we want to keep America moving forward, we need to keep investing in our small businesses..."

"The recession has meant that folks are spending less. It means that small businesses have had a tougher time getting credit and getting loans. And that's why when I took office, we put in place an economic plan specifically to help small businesses. And we were guided by a simple idea: Government can't guarantee success, but it can knock down barriers that keep entrepreneurs from opening or expanding..."

"When you listen to the struggles that small business owners are still facing, it's clear that we need to do more. And that's why I'm urging the Senate to approve a jobs bill that will do two big things for small businesses: cut taxes and make more loans available."

Talking About Education: On Thursday, President Obama addressed the National Urban League Centennial Conference, where he talked about the importance of ensuring that every American student is able to receive the best possible education. To that end, this Administration has worked hard to increase quality educational opportunities for students of all ages. In his remarks, President Obama discussed just a few of the initiatives that are now supporting educational advancement across the country. He said:

"For years, we've recognized that education is a prerequisite for prosperity. And yet, we've tolerated a status quo where America lags behind other nations. Just last week, we learned that in a single generation, America went from number one to 12th in college completion rates for young adults..."

"We've talked about it, we know about it, but we haven't done enough about it. And this status quo is morally inexcusable, it's economically indefensible, and all of us are going to have to roll up our sleeves to change it."

"And that's why -- that is why, from day one of this administration, we've made excellence in American education -- excellence for all our students -- a top priority..."

"Because a higher education has never been more important -- or more expensive -- it's absolutely essential that we put a college degree within reach for anyone who wants it. And that's why we're making higher education more affordable, so we can meet the goals I've set of producing a higher share of college graduates than any other nation by 2020..."

"But I think the single most important thing we've done is to launch an initiative called Race to the Top. We said to states, if you are committed to outstanding teaching, to successful schools, to higher standards, to better assessments -- if you're committed to excellence for all children -- you will be eligible for a grant to help you attain that goal."

Bipartisan Meeting With Congressional Members: On Tuesday, President Obama met with Congressional leaders of both parties to talk about some of the most pressing issues on the legislative agenda, including passing job creating aid for small businesses, enacting energy reform, and filling empty judicial benches by approving many of the President's well-qualified and long-delayed judicial nominees.

Following the meeting, the President pointed to the importance of bipartisanship such as that exhibited in the meeting and called on Republicans to join Democrats in moving forward on these critical issues:



"This was one of a series of regular meetings that I called for in the State of the Union because I think it's important for us to come together and speak frankly about the challenges we face and to work through areas where we don't agree; hopefully find some areas where we do..."

"We don't have many days left before Congress is out for the year. And everyone understands that we're less than 100 days from an election. It's during this time that the noise and the chatter about who's up in the polls and which party is ahead threatens to drown out just about everything else.

"But the folks we serve -- who sent us here to serve, they sent us here for a reason. They sent us here to listen to their voices. They sent us here to represent their interests -- not our own. They sent us here to lead. And I hope that in the coming months, we'll do everything in our power to live up to that responsibility."

Celebrating the ADA: This Monday, President Obama commemorated the 20th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act with a celebration at the White House. At that celebration, the President signed an executive order increasing federal employment opportunities for Americans with disabilities, announced new rules from the Department of Justice that prohibit disability-based discrimination by state and local governments and millions of private businesses, and highlighted the progress made by individuals with disabilities over the last two decades. Said the President:



"[The ADA] was about the young girl in Washington State who just wanted to see a movie at her hometown theater, but was turned away because she had cerebral palsy; or the young man in Indiana who showed up at a worksite, able to do the work, excited for the opportunity, but was turned away and called a cripple because of a minor disability he had already trained himself to work with; or the student in California who was eager and able to attend the college of his dreams, and refused to let the iron grip of polio keep him from the classroom -- each of whom became integral to this cause.

"And it was about all of you. You understand these stories because you or someone you loved lived them. And that sparked a movement. It began when Americans no longer saw their own disabilities as a barrier to their success, and set out to tear down the physical and social barriers that were. It grew when you realized you weren't alone. It became a massive wave of bottom-up change that swept across the country as you refused to accept the world as it was. And when you were told, no, don't try, you can't -- you responded with that age-old American creed: Yes, we can...That's how you changed America.

"Equal access -- to the classroom, the workplace, and the transportation required to get there. Equal opportunity -- to live full and independent lives the way we choose. Not dependence -- but independence. That's what the ADA was all about."

Republican Obstruction of the DISCLOSE ACT: On Tuesday, Democrats in the Senate moved to advance the DISCLOSE Act, only to be blocked by Republican obstructionists. The DISCLOSE Act, which has already been passed in the House despite near-unanimous Republican opposition, addresses many of the campaign finance problems raised by the Supreme Court's *Citizens United* decision by requiring corporations, organizations, and donors, who can now often remain anonymous, to disclose their role in political ads. Noting the importance of this legislation, the President said:

"Because of the Supreme Court's decision earlier this year in the *Citizens United* case, big corporations -- even foreign-controlled ones -- are now allowed to spend unlimited amounts of money on American elections. They can buy millions of dollars worth of TV ads -- and worst of all, they don't even have to reveal who's actually paying for the ads. Instead, a group can hide behind a name like 'Citizens for a Better Future,' even if a more accurate name would be 'Companies for Weaker Oversight.' These shadow groups are already forming and building war chests of tens of millions of dollars to influence the fall elections.

"Now, imagine the power this will give special interests over politicians. Corporate lobbyists will be able to tell members of Congress if they don't vote the right way, they will face an onslaught of negative ads in their next campaign. And all too often, no one will actually know who's really behind those ads."

Following Republican obstruction of the DISCLOSE Act, DNC Chairman Tim Kaine condemned their partisan actions and called for forward movement:

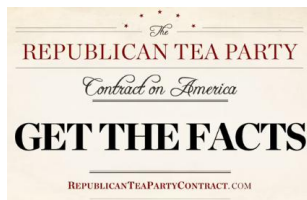
“After a year of defending big banks, big insurance, big oil, and other special interests, Republicans might want to drown out the voices of Americans who don’t have the financial resources of big corporations but want to have their say in this year’s elections. But this bill isn’t just about any one election. A free and fair electoral process is the foundation of our democracy, and we must do everything possible to preserve the integrity of that process. I urge Republicans to abandon their obstruction of this critical bill and to stand behind fair elections rather than standing with the corporate interests and their lobbyists.”

Ongoing Response to the Oil Spill: This week, the Administration continued to direct efforts to contain and clean up the BP oil spill, help the people of the Gulf Coast, and guarantee that all those affected by the spill are compensated for their losses. The placement of a new containment cap has for the time being halted the oil spill.

Nearly 30,000 personnel continue to work to protect the shoreline and the Gulf Coast environment. In addition, approximately 4,400 vessels and dozens of aircraft are assisting in containment and cleanup efforts. Approximately 3.5 million feet of containment boom and 7.8 million feet of sorbent boom have been deployed to contain the spill, and more than 34 million gallons of an oil-water mix have been recovered.

[Holding Republicans Accountable](#)

The Republican Tea Party Contract on America: On Wednesday, DNC Chairman Tim Kaine, DNC Vice Chairs Debbie Wasserman Schultz and Mike Honda, and other Democratic Members of Congress held a press conference announcing the release of the Republican Tea Party Contract on America, a compilation of ten extreme conservative Tea Party ideas that Republicans have adopted as part of their own platform. The Contract includes, among other things, repealing the Affordable Care Act and Wall Street reform, ending Social Security and Medicare as we know them, and extending the Bush tax cuts for the wealthy while growing the federal deficit. If they have the opportunity, Republicans have said publicly that they would pursue these and other failed policies and turn back the clock on the progress enacted by Democrats over the past two years.



The DNC plans to make that agenda clear to voters in advance of the fall elections. As DNC Chairman Tim Kaine said at the press conference:

“We’re here to offer a helpful suggestion. Republicans and their Tea Party supporters can take a break from the town halls and relax because we have distilled their agenda for the American people into a handy ten point blue print for how they would govern that we are calling the Republican Tea Party Contract on America. This wasn’t hard to come up with so we’re a little bit at a loss as to why this has been difficult for Republican leaders. We literally have just listened to what their leaders and candidates have been saying – people who have been increasingly influenced by the Tea Party.

“President Obama and Congressional Democrats have America moving forward – job growth, health reform, putting Main Street first for a change - and Republicans want to take us back to the same policies that ran this county into the ditch over the past decade. This election will be a choice – and these positions – this contract – is what the American people have to look forward to if they put Republicans back in charge.”

You can read the Republican Tea Party Contract on America for yourself at www.republicanteapartycontract.com/America.com.

‘One and the Same’: In conjunction with the press conference and the release of the Republican Tea Party Contract on America, the DNC released a new web ad entitled “One and the Same,” which shows how the platforms of the Tea Party and the Republican Party have merged into one.

You can check the ad out for yourself at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f4IQ_kj9eDM.

[Organizing for America](#)

Birthday Wishes: This week, First Lady Michelle Obama sent Organizing for America supporters a special message. With President Obama's 49th birthday just around the corner, she took a quick look back at the past year and a look ahead at the next. And she asked OFA activists to sign a birthday card for the President to show their support for him in the coming year. She said:



"This has been a big -- and hectic -- year for [Barack]. After signing the Affordable Care Act and Wall Street reform into law -- and completing his first year as president -- I think it's safe to say we will remember it for a long time.

"And I know full well how much he credits this movement, and the work of supporters like you, for the change that we've accomplished.

"So I'm putting together a birthday card that I would like you to sign. Together with other Organizing for America supporters -- and me, Malia, Sasha, and Bo -- we'll wish him a happy birthday and let him know that we're ready to take on the year ahead alongside him... while we can't know what the coming year will bring, all of us, working together, will continue pushing forward for change."

You can sign the President's card and show him your support at [http://my.barackobama.com/page/content/barackbirthday?source=20100726_MO_ST1&keycode=.](http://my.barackobama.com/page/content/barackbirthday?source=20100726_MO_ST1&keycode=)

Key Issues in the News and Background

Talking Points: President Obama's Meeting with Bipartisan Congressional Leaders

- In his State of the Union Address, President Obama announced his intention to hold regular meetings with House and Senate leaders from both parties to discuss important issues. In keeping with that plan, the President this week held a bipartisan meeting focused on what Congress can do to help create jobs for the Americans who need them.
- President Obama believes that the best way to jump-start job creation is to support small businesses, which create two-thirds of all new American jobs. Legislation that is currently moving through the Senate would offer small businesses the help they need not only to stay afloat, but also to grow and hire new workers. Specifically, that legislation would eliminate capital gains taxes for investments, making it possible for small lenders to support more small businesses, and would expand successful SBA programs that would help small businesses get access to the capital they need to grow and thrive.
- In the past, leaders from both parties have supported just this kind of relief for small businesses. It's time for leaders of both parties to come together once again to pass this legislation, because small businesses should not be held hostage to partisan politicking during these difficult economic times.
- In addition, the President and Congressional leaders discussed the necessity of moving forward with energy reform. Right now, the Senate is on the brink of advancing legislation responding to the BP oil spill and facilitating the creation of new green collar jobs; Senators could move forward with that legislation before the August recess. At the same time, President Obama plans to continue to advocate broader reforms, because he believes that inaction on this front could imperil our economy, our national security, and our environment.
- The oil spill in the Gulf is a clear reminder that our current energy policy is simply unsustainable – we can't pin our future on the energy resources of the past. And we can't afford to sit on the sidelines while countries like China build the clean energy industries and create the jobs of the future. We have got to develop those industries to support high-paying, high-skill jobs here in the United States. And that's exactly what comprehensive energy and climate reform would do.
- Also at the meeting, President Obama pushed House leaders to join with the Senate to approve funding to give American soldiers the equipment they need to succeed in Afghanistan and Pakistan.
- And the President urged Senator McConnell and other Senate leaders to work with him to fill long-standing vacancies in the judiciary. The Administration's current judicial nominees have been waiting as long as

eight months for a Senate vote to confirm them as judges – and many of those nominees were voted out of committee with the support of every single committee member, or close to full committee support. But a small minority of Senators has prevented the Senate from voting to confirm those nominees.

- In order for our judicial system to function properly, we have to have judges on the bench. To that end, the President is hopeful that the White House and Senate can work together to guarantee a more timely process for nominees.
- As election season approaches, political pundits are beginning to discuss which party is up and which is down. But it's important to remember that Americans sent their leaders to Washington to listen to them and represent their interests – that's leadership. The President hopes that in the coming months Republicans as well as Democrats will be able to live up to Americans' expectations in that regard.

Talking Points: Aid for Small Businesses

- Small businesses have historically created two-thirds of all new American jobs, and they are a vital part of the American economy and our economic recovery. That's why the President has called for a number of measures that will make it easier for small enterprises to get off the ground, grow, and hire new workers.
- The President's proposals are built on the idea that although government can't guarantee an entrepreneur's success, it can help to remove some of the barriers to business creation and expansion, like the lack of affordable credit. And although government isn't able to replace the millions of jobs that disappeared in the recession, it can support the conditions that enable small businesses to hire additional workers, through tax breaks and other measures.
- This Administration has cut taxes for small businesses no less than eight times. They passed an economic plan that has already supported more than 70,000 loans for small businesses. And they waived fees on new SBA loans to help business owners save money. Those loans and additional savings helped small business owners to get the capital they needed to invest in and build their businesses.
- Under the jobs bill enacted by the President last March, businesses that hire unemployed workers are eligible for tax cuts, and businesses that invest in new equipment are able to write those investments off. And as a result of health insurance reform, 4 million small business owners have received a postcard informing them that they may be eligible for a health care tax credit that could be worth tens of thousands of dollars this year.
- But there's still more that government can do to help small businesses. So President Obama is pressing Congress to quickly approve additional tax breaks and lending incentives for small businesses – measures that will boost growth and job creation.
- If the legislation the President is supporting is passed, small businesses will see new benefits immediately. The legislation Congress is considering does away with capital gains taxes for critical investments in small enterprises, increases the deductions that small businesses can claim for investments and expenses, and increases the availability of credit.
- Despite Republicans' history of partisanship and obstructionism, they should be able to join with Democrats to provide this critical relief for American small businesses. Those businesses are the backbone of our nation's economy and they are at the forefront of the economic recovery – it is simply imperative that this legislation pass.
- The small business measures the President is advocating will aid small businesses by:
 - Extending new capital to small banks that lend to Main Street businesses and incentivizing such lending, making it possible for businesses to renew their lines of credit, buy new equipment, or expand.
 - Supporting loan guarantee programs and other state programs that lower the barriers to creditworthy small businesses that aim to borrow from private lenders.

- Establishing tax incentives for small businesses that make investments that will help them to grow – for example, by enabling a small business to more quickly receive a tax deduction after purchasing new equipment.
- Getting rid of capital gains taxes on critical investments in small businesses, thereby encouraging investment in small enterprises.
- Supporting the continued success of Recovery Act provisions that have increased the availability of SBA loans and the size of SBA loans and reduced the fees small businesses must pay when receiving those loans.

Talking Points: President Obama's Speech on Education

- Whether or not America offers our children the best possible education will determine whether our nation succeeds in the 21st century. Education is simply an economic issue – and quite possibly the most important economic issue of our time. If other countries are able to out-educate America today, they will out-compete America in the future. So for our country to compete globally – and win – we need the best and most highly-educated workforce in the world.
- We have long acknowledged education to be a prerequisite to prosperity. But unfortunately, we have allowed America to fall behind other countries in terms of education achievement. The current educational status quo is morally intolerable and it is economically unjustifiable. So we need to change it. That's why this Administration has made excellence in education for all students one of its top priorities.
- President Obama has set a goal to recapture America's global leadership by educating the highest proportion of college graduates by 2020. In order to do so, he's made higher education more affordable and accessible by reforming student lending and stabilizing funding for Pell Grants, making it easier for college students to repay their loans, and investing more in Historically Black Colleges and Universities and community colleges.
- At the same time, the President is aware that college is still just a dream for many students. That's why this Administration launched the Race to the Top program, which is intended to create systemic reform and spur teachers and schools to embrace innovative approaches to education. If schools and states are committed to achieving excellence for all students, they'll be eligible for a grant that will help them achieve their goals. So far, the Administration has granted \$4 billion to states that are moving quickly to reform their schools, and that money is already yielding results.
- The goal of Race to the Top is to promote accountability, because America's students only get one chance to earn an education, and we have to make sure that education is the best it can be. To that end, it is important to create the best possible learning environment and to ensure that teachers have the support they need to be as effective as possible.
- In order to guarantee our national success, we have to create successful schools. So this Administration is challenging states to fix their 5,000 worst schools – and the Administration has invested more than \$4 billion toward that goal. Already, as a result of Race to the Top, 14 states have changed their laws to support interventions in their lowest-performing schools.
- This Administration is doing everything possible to guarantee that students have access to high-quality education opportunities, and the President recognizes that there are many paths to success. In order to allow states and school districts to pursue new opportunities for success, Race to the Top also supports high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools.
- Race to the Top is quite simply the most ambitious, meaningful education reform effort in generations. And President Obama will continue to fight to ensure its success. Because Race to the Top can help to educate children and ensure that when they graduate, they're ready for college, ready for a job, and ready to be the best they can be – in short, it is essential to our nation's future.