

THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL COMMITTEE WEEKLY UPDATE

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This week, President Obama continued to devote his attention to the ongoing BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. On Monday and Tuesday, the President traveled to Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida to speak with Gulf Coast workers and businesses about the impact of the spill on their lives, and to assess the Administration's ongoing cleanup and containment efforts. Returning to Washington on Tuesday, the President delivered an Oval Office address on the Administration's battle plan to stop, contain, and clean up the spill, highlighting necessary actions going forward. And on Wednesday, the President met with BP executives to ensure that the company is doing everything possible to guarantee Gulf Coast residents and businesses impacted by the spill are compensated for their damages.

What's Happening?

Visiting the Gulf Coast: On Monday, President Obama made his fourth trip to the Gulf Coast since the BP oil spill began, visiting with local workers and business owners in Gulfport, Mississippi and touring the response staging facility in Theodore, Alabama. The Theodore Staging Facility is a home base for workers responding to the spill and a central hub for cleanup equipment and operations. After touring the facility, the President renewed his commitment and offered a few words of hope to Gulf Coast residents and workers. In his remarks, the President said:



"I can't promise folks here in Theodore or across the Gulf Coast that the oil will be cleaned up overnight. It will not be. It's going to take time for things to return to normal. There's going to be a harmful effect on many local businesses and it's going to be painful for a lot of folks. Folks are going to be frustrated and some folks are going to be angry. But I promise you this: that things are going to return to normal. This region that's known a lot of hardship will bounce back, just like it's bounced back before. We are going to do everything we can, 24/7, to make sure that communities get back on their feet. And in the end, I am confident that we're

going to be able to leave the Gulf Coast in better shape than it was before."

On Tuesday, the President continued his tour of the Gulf Coast cleanup efforts and met with local officials in Pensacola Beach, Florida.

Oval Office Address: President Obama maintained his focus on the BP oil spill after returning from the Gulf Coast. Tuesday evening, the President delivered his first Oval Office address, dedicating his remarks to the Administration's ongoing efforts to contain and clean up the spill, the Administration's work to ensure the people of the Gulf Coast are protected, and the steps necessary to prevent future catastrophes like this one. In his speech, the President said:

"Already, this oil spill is the worst environmental disaster America has ever faced. And unlike an earthquake or a hurricane, it's not a single event that does its damage in a matter of minutes or days. The millions of gallons of oil that have spilled into the Gulf of Mexico are more like an epidemic, one that we will be fighting for months and even years.

"But make no mistake: We will fight this spill with everything we've got for as long as it takes. We will make BP pay for the damage their company has caused. And we will do whatever's necessary to help the Gulf Coast and its people recover from this tragedy."



In addition, the President called on Congress to "to embark on a national mission to unleash America's innovation and seize control of our own destiny" by "jumpstart[ing] the clean energy industry." Specifically, the President made a forceful call for action on legislation that would reduce America's dependence on costly, and potentially environmentally hazardous, 20th century fuel sources and increase the availability of green energy. The President said:

"As we recover from this recession, the transition to clean energy has the potential to grow our economy and create millions of jobs — but only if we accelerate that transition. Only if we seize the moment. And only if we rally together and act as one nation — workers and entrepreneurs; scientists and citizens; the public and private sectors...

"We can't afford not to change how we produce and use energy — because the long-term costs to our economy, our national security, and our environment are far greater."

A Fund for Oil Spill Victims: On Wednesday, President Obama met with BP Chairman Carl-Henric Svanberg and other BP executives at the White House to discuss the creation of a fund to ensure Gulf Coast businesses and individuals impacted by the oil spill would receive compensation for all legitimate damage claims. In that meeting, the President secured an agreement from BP to establish a \$20 billion fund to be administered by a third party to ensure compensation is paid to victims of the spill as quickly and efficiently as possible. In addition, BP agreed to contribute to a \$100 million fund to support oil rig workers unemployed as a result of the spill and subsequent drilling moratorium, and to contribute to a \$500 million fund to monitor and protect the Gulf Coast environment. Following his meeting with BP, the President said:



"During a private conversation with Chairman Svanberg I emphasized to him that for the families that I met with down in the Gulf, for the small business owners, for the fishermen, for the shrimpers, this is not just a matter of dollars and cents; that a lot of these folks don't have a cushion. They were coming off Rita and Katrina; coming off the worst economy that this country has seen since the Great Depression, and this season was going to be the season where they were going to be bouncing back...

"And so I emphasized to the chairman that when he's talking to shareholders, when he is in meetings in his boardroom, to keep in mind those individuals...

"I think today was a good start, and it should provide some assurance to some of the small business owners and individuals down in the Gulf who I was visiting with that BP is going to meet its responsibilities. But I indicated to the chairman that, throughout this process, as we work to make sure that the Gulf is made whole once again, that the standard I'm going to be applying is whether or not those individuals I met with, their family members, those communities that are vulnerable, whether they are uppermost in the minds of all concerned. That's who we're doing this work for."

Raise Your Vote: This week, the DNC unveiled a groundbreaking new voter registration program that will help voters across the country to navigate registration rules and deadlines as simply as possible wherever they live. The Raise Your Vote website is a part of the DNC's unprecedented Vote 2010 effort to bring new 2008 voters and other voters back to the polls in support of Democratic candidates this fall.



In addition to traditional grassroots campaigning, the DNC will be making use of cutting-edge online tools like Raise Your Vote to help more Americans cast their ballots this fall in support of the President's agenda and the President's allies.

Check out www.raiseyourvote.com for yourself, share the link with all your friends, and look for additional opportunities to get involved in the DNC's 2010 efforts in the months to come.

Organizing for America

Senior to Senior Phone Banks: This week, as eligible seniors across the country continued to receive \$250 rebate checks from the federal government to help them afford the cost of medications that fall within the Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage gap known as the donut hole, Organizing for America hosted 'Senior to Senior' phone banks to highlight the benefits of the Affordable Care Act.

Phone banks were held in Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, and more. During the 'Senior to Senior' events, seniors took to the phones to explain the benefits of health insurance reform for others. Those benefits include

cheaper prescription medications, free preventative care, better coordinated care, and the extension of Medicare's solvency – guaranteeing that American seniors will be able to get the care they need well into the future.

Holding Republicans Accountable

Republicans Apologize to BP: On Thursday, Congressman Joe Barton, the highest ranking Republican on the House Energy and Commerce Committee, called the \$20 billion BP fund created by the President to pay damages to oil spill victims a "shakedown" and personally apologized to BP and BP CEO Tony Hayward. Joe Barton is the most blatant example of Republican apologists for the oil industry, but he is far from the only example. While President Obama and Democrats in Congress continue to stand up for the people of the Gulf Coast and demand accountability from BP in the wake of the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, Republicans from across the country continue to defend their oil industry donors and allies. You can check out the DNC's video highlighting some of the many examples of Republican apologists for BP at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sydlY3No7TY>.

Too Extreme: In primary after primary this spring, we're seeing the Republican Party select ultra-conservative candidates. While those candidates' far-right views may appeal to their Tea Party base, we think mainstream voters are going to find them too extreme for higher office. And we're going to make sure those voters know just how far out on a limb Republicans have gone.

This week, when the Republican Senate candidate in Nevada, Sharron Angle, called for an armed insurrection as a means to blocking the President's agenda, we spread the news (http://voices.washingtonpost.com/plum-line/2010/06/sharron_angle_floated_possibil.html). When it turned out that the Republican Senate candidate in Illinois, Mark Kirk, lied about yet another element of his military record – his violation of rules forbidding active service members from mixing duty with politics – we shared that too (http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/U/US_ILLINOIS_SENATE_KIRK?SITE=ORBEN&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT). And when the Republican Senate candidate in Kentucky, Rand Paul, violated his own ethics pledge regarding fundraising, we made sure people knew about it (<http://www.kentucky.com/2010/06/15/1307494/pauls-washington-fund-raiser-contradicts.html>).

And we're going to keep the pressure on Republican candidates across the country, to make sure that voters everywhere know just how extreme the Republican Party is before they cast their ballots this November.

Key Issues in the News and Background

Talking Points: The President's Address on the BP Oil Spill

Administration Response to the Oil Spill

- From the very beginning, President Obama has treated this situation with the seriousness it demands, has acted to contain and clean up the oil spilled in the Gulf, and has worked to ensure that the people living on the Gulf Coast have the full support of the federal government as they deal with the effects of the worst environmental disaster our country has ever faced.
- And the Administration will continue to take all necessary steps to deal with the damage resulting from the spill. They will ensure that BP pays for the damages caused by the disaster, and they will do whatever it takes to help the people, economy, and environment of the Gulf Coast to recover.
- The Administration's efforts to date constitute the largest-ever environmental cleanup in America. Right now, nearly 30,000 personnel are at work in four states, attempting to mitigate the damage caused by the oil. In addition, thousands of ships and other vessels are on call in the Gulf, and the President has authorized the deployment of over 17,000 National Guard members to assist in cleanup efforts.
- As a result of these response efforts, millions of gallons of oil have been burned, skimmed, or otherwise collected from the Gulf; and more than five and a half million feet of boom has been laid to block and absorb oil.
- The Administration has also approved the construction of new barrier islands in Louisiana in an effort to stop the oil before it reaches shore. And the Administration continues to work with affected states to protect their coasts and environmental resources through other such creative solutions.

Recovery and Restitution

- Wednesday, President Obama met with the Chairman of BP. In that meeting, the President informed the Chairman that he must set aside all necessary resources to compensate workers and business owners whose lives and livelihoods have been affected by the spill. The fund that BP creates to provide for damages to Gulf Coast individuals will not be controlled by BP, but rather will be run by an independent third party, guaranteeing that all legitimate claims are swiftly paid.
- The President is committed to fully restoring the Gulf Coast. To that end, the President has asked Secretary of the Navy and former Mississippi Governor Ray Mabus to work in cooperation with Gulf Coast states, individuals, businesses, and environmentalists to develop a long-term Gulf Coast Restoration Plan.

Preventing Future Oil Spills

- In addition, the Administration is working to ensure a catastrophe like the present spill does not happen ever again. To that end, the President established a National Commission to study the causes of the Deepwater Horizon explosion and subsequent oil spill and to offer suggestions as to safety and environmental standards which could be put in place to prevent similar disasters. The President expects that the Commission will undertake its work swiftly and will do a thorough job.
- While the Commission works, the President has called for a moratorium on deepwater drilling lasting six months. The President understands that the moratorium may cause difficulties for those who work on deepwater rigs, but believes this is for the sake of their safety, and the sake of the Gulf Coast.
- Already, the Administration is taking the necessary steps to ensure that the Minerals Management Services provides effective oversight and enforcement of the oil industry. In order to end the close relationship between the oil companies and the MMS, the President has asked Michael Bromwich, formerly a federal prosecutor and Inspector General, to lead the transformation of the MMS into a true watchdog agency.

America's Energy Future

- The current catastrophe in the Gulf highlights the critical necessity of embracing a clean energy future. For years, America has talked about the need to end our country's reliance on fossil fuels, but has taken few steps towards that goal. The consequences of that failure are on full display in the Gulf. And we must act now to meet the challenge of shaping a clean energy future.
- The Obama Administration has already taken action to boost the clean energy industry, making the largest-ever investment in basic research, offering financial support for innovative green businesses, and establishing tough new national fuel standards.
- The President believes those actions must now be followed by a comprehensive plan to transition America to a 21st century clean-energy nation. As he has said, we cannot continue to bind ourselves to 20th century energy resources.
- The House of Representatives has already passed a comprehensive energy and climate bill. Currently a similar bill with bipartisan ideas is working its way forward in the Senate. The President is dedicated to ensuring the success of comprehensive energy and climate legislation, and he will work with leaders of both parties to make the happen, because he believes the cost of inaction is simply too high.

Talking Points: Helping Small Businesses

- Historically, small businesses have created two-thirds of all new American jobs. They are a critical element of our national economy, and their success is critical to our national economic recovery.
- That's why President Obama is working to make it easier for small businesses to get off the ground and to expand and hire new workers.

- Last year, the Administration enacted no less than seven tax cuts for small businesses, in addition to the Making Work Pay tax credit, which benefits the vast majority of small business owners and American workers.
- Through the Recovery Act, the Administration supported more than 68,000 loans worth \$29 billion to small businesses, awarded small businesses more than \$8 billion worth of Recovery Act contracts, and jumpstarted loan-making at more than 1,300 banks and credit unions.
- As a result of the jobs bill enacted this spring, companies that hire unemployed workers are now eligible for tax cuts, and businesses that invest in new equipment can write off the costs of their investment.
- And as a result of health insurance reform, millions of small business owners are now eligible for a health care tax credit, notably decreasing the cost of insuring their workers.
- But the President knows there's still more we can do for small businesses, and that's why he is calling on Congress to approve additional tax breaks and lending incentives that will boost hiring and promote growth among small businesses.
- The legislation urged by the President would eliminate capital gains taxes for investments made in small firms, helping those firms to access more capital. And it would encourage more Americans to start their own business by providing tax relief to small business start-ups.
- In addition, the legislation backed by the President would create the small business lending fund that he proposed in his State of the Union address. That fund would help underwrite loans made by community banks, increasing the availability of credit for small businesses.
- And it would create a new state small business credit initiative, to help combat state cuts in lending to small firms and manufacturers – cutbacks that are countering our national recovery.
- On top of those legislative initiatives, the President is calling on Congress to expand existing SBA programs that have been successful in helping small businesses to grow across the country.
- The President hopes that Congress will quickly approve these measures – and that Republicans will join with Democrats in supporting these efforts.
- He is eager to sign new legislation in support of small businesses into law, because he believes that in doing so we can continue to move America forward out of recession and into recovery.
- While the President knows that government can't solve all of America's economic problems, he believes government is nonetheless uniquely able to boost job creation and economic growth by supporting the small businesses that create most of our America's jobs.

Talking Points: Release of Kagan Documents

- Last week, the National Archives released 43,099 pages of documents from Elena Kagan's time as Associate Counsel in the Clinton Administration. Those documents follow 46,711 pages of documents dating to Elena Kagan's work as a Domestic Policy Council in the Clinton White House that were previously released. The Administration proactively requested that the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) expedite the delivery of those documents to the Judiciary Committee.
- The Senate Judiciary Committee now has all notes, memos, and documents related to Kagan's White House service – and they have them all weeks in advance of Kagan's confirmation hearing. In fact, the Judiciary Committee has more exhaustive files on Kagan that they did on Chief Justice John Roberts prior to his hearing – and they received Kagan's documents earlier.

- As Chief Justice Roberts noted with regard to his service as Associate Counsel to President Reagan, a White House lawyer's job is "to be vigilant to protect the Executive's authority."
- And Senator Kyl discussed Justice Alito's role as an executive branch attorney by saying, "your job was to advance the policies of a president... He set the agenda and you helped him implement it."
- The documents released show that Elena Kagan played a similar role, working primarily with the White House policy councils. In addition, they demonstrate her fair-minded approach to a wide variety of legal issues – from bipartisan campaign finance legislation to research on welfare reform, to proposals to expand religious freedom.
- And the documents dating to her time on the Domestic Policy Council illustrate Kagan's role as a trusted advisor to the President whose responsibilities included a range of important issues, including legislative negotiations addressing protections for children from big tobacco and education policies aimed at closing the achievement gap and increasing education opportunities.
- In this work, Kagan was known as someone who could build consensus and achieve pragmatic solutions.
- Throughout Elena Kagan's nomination process, the White House has worked in good faith to ensure that the first set of documents were released – as promised – by June 4th, in order to allow the committee adequate time to prepare for Solicitor General Kagan's confirmation hearings, which are set to begin on June 28th.
- Throughout the month of June, NARA will release additional documents from Kagan's time in the White House. Specifically, they will release emails that she sent and received while working at the White House.
- In keeping with his commitment to transparency, President Obama has not made any claims to executive privilege nor sought to block the release of any of those documents.
- The documents released illustrate Solicitor General Kagan's primary goal – to advance the policy agenda of the President for whom she served. They do not reflect her personal positions on policy issues.
- As Tevi Troy, former Deputy Director of the Domestic Policy Council under President George W. Bush noted, "the heads of the policy councils are supposed to synthesize the views of the various administration players" by "seek[ing] to avoid 'process fouls' – the unfair stifling of dissenting views – as well as putting their thumbs too firmly on the scale." Which is why when his memos are released, they "will reveal summaries of the various perspectives rather than full-throated defenses of [his] own personal beliefs."
- Among the documents released last week are:
 - 41,928 pages that will be made publicly available
 - 1,351 pages of information that will be provided to the Senate Judiciary Committee but not publicly released due to of statutory restrictions. While many of these documents could be privileged, President Clinton has permitted the Committee to access them in order to enable the Committee to better assess Solicitor General Kagan's nomination.
 - 1,719 pages regarding Kagan's work on campaign finance issues
 - 1,548 pages regarding Kagan's work on welfare reform issues
 - 76 pages regarding Kagan's work on church and state issues