

THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL COMMITTEE WEEKLY UPDATE

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE DNC COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

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This week, President Obama and other officials responded to the attempted terror attack in New York City and maintained their focus on responding to the BP oil leak and containing environmental damage from the spill. Also this week, President Obama and Democrats in Congress continued to press forward with tough Wall Street reforms as Senators began debate on amendments to the reform legislation. In addition, the Administration announced that the end to some of the insurance industry's worst practices – including rescission – will come immediately as a result of reform. Finally, Democrats in Ohio selected Lieutenant Governor Lee Fisher as their nominee for Senate, and Democrats in North Carolina narrowed the field to Secretary of State Elaine Marshall and former State Senator Cal Cunningham, all of whom would serve Americans well in Congress.

What's Happening?

Terror in Times Square: This week, New Yorkers escaped a potential tragedy in Times Square. In this case, an alert citizen and the professionalism, dedication and bravery of law enforcement officials prevented what could have been scores of deaths and injuries. Just 53 hours after the attempted Times Square bombing, law enforcement officials apprehended the suspected bomber, and were able to gain valuable information from him regarding his planning and preparation for the attack. As a result of their swift action, Americans are safer and our nation is more secure. We can all feel safer knowing that there are committed local, state, and federal counter-terrorism officials at work around-the-clock all across America, and that we have a President who is fully committed to supporting their efforts. Following the attempted attack, President Obama said:



"Around the world and here at home, there are those who would attack our citizens and who would slaughter innocent men, women and children in pursuit of their murderous agenda. They will stop at nothing to kill and disrupt our way of life. But once again, an attempted attack has been failed.

"It has failed because ordinary citizens were vigilant and reported suspicious activity to the authorities. It failed because these authorities -- local, state and federal -- acted quickly and did what they're trained to do... As Americans, and as a nation, we will not be terrorized. We will not cower in fear. We will not be intimidated. We will be vigilant. We will work together. And we will protect and defend the country we love to ensure a safe and prosperous future for our people. That's what I intend to do as President and that's what we will do as a nation."

Action in Louisiana: This week, President Obama and other top Administration officials continued to focus on the BP oil spill, working to ensure that the federal government is doing everything possible to respond to the oil leak. With thousands of federal workers and a large influx of federal equipment into the area, the government is doing everything possible to mitigate the damaging effects of the oil leak. During his visit to Louisiana on Sunday, the President said:

"The oil that is still leaking from the well could seriously damage the economy and the environment of our Gulf states and it could extend for a long time. It could jeopardize the livelihoods of thousands of Americans who call this place home. And that's why the federal government has launched and coordinated an all-hands-on-deck, relentless response to this crisis..."

"From day one we have prepared and planned for the worst, even as we hoped for the best. And while we have prepared and reacted aggressively, I'm not going to rest -- and none of



the gentlemen and women who are here are going to rest -- or be satisfied until the leak is stopped at the source, the oil on the Gulf is contained and cleaned up, and the people of this region are able to go back to their lives and their livelihoods."

Our thoughts and prayers remain with all those affected by the spill.

Wall Street Reform: On Tuesday, the Senate began taking up proposed amendments to the Wall Street reform legislation – the next step in Congressional Democrats’ effort to pass strong Wall Street reforms that hold big banks accountable and provide strong consumer financial protections. But while Democrats continued working to pass the best possible legislation, Republicans threatened to weaken reforms with amendments creating loopholes for lobbyists and other special interests. Commenting on the Republicans’ stand for Wall Street and against Main Street, DNC Chairman Tim Kaine said:

"Democrats in Congress have worked hard to craft a bill that will reshape the financial system in a way that works for all Americans – that restrains Wall Street risk-takers and holds big banks accountable when their bets go bad. Unfortunately, Republicans have not only opposed Democrats’ efforts to achieve the strongest-possible bipartisan reforms – it appears that their main goal has been to weaken reform legislation by carving out loopholes for big banks and Wall Street institutions..."

"I call on Senate Republicans to act responsibly to allow reform to move forward, and to stop offering amendments that will create legislative loopholes for big banks and weaken financial protections for ordinary American small businesses and families."

Benefits of Health Reform: We all know the benefits of health reform are historic – but what many folks don’t know is just how quickly those historic benefits will kick in. Already, the new law is prompting an end to some of the insurance industry’s worst practices, bringing change to Americans in need of care even before the law requires insurance companies to change. As the *New York Times* reported on Monday:

"Americans are already starting to see the benefits of health care reform. The new law requires health insurance companies — starting in September — to end their most indefensible practice: rescinding coverage after a policyholder gets sick. In recent days insurers and their trade association have rushed to announce that they will end rescissions immediately. That is very good news for the thousands of people who each year pay their premiums but lose their coverage just when they are likely to run up big medical bills."

In addition to putting an end to rescission, the *Washington Post* reports many companies will begin allowing younger Americans up to age 26 to remain on their parents’ insurance beginning this spring, a change not required until September. In the words of Nancy-Ann DeParle, director of the White House Office of Health Reform:

"It's heartening to see that the insurance companies who employed these terrible practices -- and fought reform -- are coming around doing the right thing by instituting the ban right away...We'll be watching closely and holding them to their word."

May 4 Primaries: On Tuesday, Democrats in Ohio selected Lieutenant Governor Lee Fisher as their nominee for Senate, while Democrats in North Carolina narrowed the field of candidates to Secretary of State Elaine Marshall and former State Senator Cal Cunningham. Each of these candidates has proven experience serving their state and fighting for policies that will help revive the American economy and restore American opportunity. And each of these Democrats would serve Americans well in Congress.

In contrast, the Republican nominations resulting from Tuesday’s primaries revealed weak candidates and a conflicted party. In Ohio, Republicans nominated Rob Portman, a central figure of President Bush’s economic team whose policies proved disastrous for Ohio’s working families and sank the American economy into recession. Republicans in North Carolina re-nominated Senator Richard Burr, a man with a history of cozying up to lobbyists and defending the broken status quo. In fact, while voters in North Carolina cast their primary ballots, Burr spent the evening at a fundraiser in Washington, DC. And Republicans in Indiana chose Dan Coats as their Senate nominee. Coats is an establishment Republican steeped in the culture of Washington and a super-lobbyist beholden to special interests for his wealth.



As Republicans' Senate selections in these states show, Americans who want a strong leader who will stand up for their interests will have an easy choice this November: to vote Democratic.

Organizing for America



VOTE 2010: On Monday, Senior Advisor to OFA David Plouffe and OFA National Director Mitch Stewart held an online strategy session for OFA volunteers across the country, detailing volunteers' role in the fall elections. The strategy session followed last week's unveiling of OFA's VOTE 2010 effort, which will focus on bringing new 2008 voters back to the polls, energizing core Democratic constituencies, and registering new voters. Across the country, volunteers tuned in to hear what they can do between now and November to help to secure Democratic victories and turn the tide in races across the country.

Following the session, David Plouffe said:

"Pundits and Republicans in Washington speak about the midterm elections as a foregone conclusion. Midterm elections are historically difficult for first term Presidents, but...the plan we laid out today is a very strong one and plays on the strength of OFA's many talented volunteers nationwide. I believe that if we work together, just as we did in 2008, Democrats will once again beat the expectations at the polls this November."

Added Mitch Stewart:

"We have heard from thousands of our volunteers that they are excited to get back to the electoral organizing they were so good at in 2008, and I think this bodes well for Democrats in the elections this fall. We have a lot of work ahead of us, but we are excited and eager to start knocking on doors and making phone calls."

To see the strategy session for yourself, please visit <http://my.barackobama.com/page/content/2010strategyhighlights/>. And for more information about the 'VOTE 2010' campaign, you can visit <http://www.barackobama.com/2010/>.

Wall Street Reform Day of Action: On Thursday, OFA supporters across the country took part in a day of action, sending a strong message from Main Street to Republican lawmakers that Wall Street reform is a critical element of economic recovery.

In New York City, OFA volunteers handed out literature describing the benefits of Wall Street reform outside the New York Stock Exchange. In Jacksonville, Florida, volunteers set up a Main Street phone booth to connect concerned citizens with their Members of Congress, allowing them to make their views on Wall Street reform known. In Royal Oak, Michigan, volunteers participated in a rally for reform and press conference with Congressman Gary Peters. In Oakland, California, volunteers took part in a "Teach In" on Wall Street reform. And that's just a small sampling of the many events which took place across the country. As the Day of Action unfolded, it was clearer than ever that OFA volunteers are active and working in every single state to help the President pass strong Wall Street reforms.

Holding Republicans Accountable

Focus on Hawaii: Last Friday, the DNC released a new web video targeting Charles Djou, the Republican candidate in Hawaii's special Congressional election this month. The ad, entitled "You Can't Vote 'No Opinion' in Congress," highlights Djou's refusal to take a position on Wall Street reform. As Democratic leaders in Congress work to overcome Republican obstructionism to Wall Street reforms that would hold big banks accountable and provide strong consumer protections, the people of Hawaii deserve a leader who will stand up for their best interests. The ad shows that Djou – who continues to dodge questions on Wall Street reform – is clearly not that kind of leader.



You can watch the video for yourself at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TRpNFNLLa1c>.

Key Issues in the News and Background

Talking Points: First Quarter GDP

- Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is the broadest measure of a country's economic well-being. It illustrates whether the economy is contracting or expanding. Just one year ago, the American economy was contracting at a rate of 6.4 percent. In the first quarter of this year, the American economy expanded at a rate of 3.2 percent.
- Our economy, which contracted for four straight quarters, has now been growing for the last three quarters.
- That economic expansion is promoting new job growth – while America was losing jobs 12 months ago, American businesses are adding jobs today.
- After the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, the American economy is again heading in the right direction.
- But while that is good news, President Obama knows we still have a long way to go – too many Americans are still looking for jobs that don't yet exist.
- This Administration can't replace every job that was lost – and that isn't government's role. American industry and American businesses have always been the engines of American job creation.
- But what government can do – and what this Administration is doing – is helping to create the economic conditions in which businesses can feel comfortable expanding and adding workers.
- This Administration has cut taxes for small businesses, supported loans to American businesses worth billions of dollars, and invested in areas of the American economy with the highest growth potential – areas such as green industries.
- Because of these actions and other measures undertaken by the President – beginning with the Recovery Act – the American economy is back on track, and Americans are starting to return to work.
- There is still a long way to go to achieve full economic recovery– but the first-quarter GDP numbers released today show that we're heading in the right direction.
- This Administration will continue doing everything possible to move America forward in that direction, to support growth, and to create jobs.

Talking Points: The Oil Spill in the Gulf of Mexico

- From day one, President Obama has treated the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico with the seriousness a situation like this requires.
- The response to the BP oil spill began with a search and rescue mission for Deepwater Horizon workers by the U.S. Coast Guard and other partners.
- At the same time, command center operations were set up to begin assessing and addressing the environmental impact of the oil leak.
- Immediately following the initial explosion, the President began monitoring the situation, communicating with the governors of potentially affected states, and consulting on the response – ordering that the Administration leverage every available resource to address the spill.
- Administration officials have also been closely coordinating with local authorities since the initial explosion, and have been holding regular calls with BP leadership to talk about federal oversight of and support for BP's response effort.

- While BP is ultimately responsible for paying for the costs of repair and clean-up operations, this Administration is working hard to meet its responsibilities to all affected communities.
- The President has dispatched the Secretaries of the Interior and Homeland Security, as well as the Administrator of the EPA, the NOAA Administrator, and his Assistant for Energy and Climate Change Policy to the Gulf Coast to guarantee that the federal government is doing everything possible to respond to the oil leak.
- There are now thousands of federal response personnel working in the affected area to protect the shoreline and wildlife, as well as more than 200 response vessels and aircraft that are assisting in containment and clean-up efforts. Federal officials have worked to lay more than 500,000 feet of protective boom to contain the spill, and more help is still to come.
- So far, more than 1 million gallons of oil-water mix have been recovered and 190,000 gallons of dispersant have been deployed.
- This incident has been declared a spill of national significance, and Commandant Admiral Thad Allen of the U.S. Coast Guard is now serving as the National Incident Commander for the Administration's ongoing efforts.
- In addition, President Obama has asked the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a thorough review of the explosion and oil leak, and to report on additional precautions which may be required to prevent such accidents from happening in the future.
- And federal teams have been dispatched to the Gulf to inspect all other existing deepwater rigs and platforms, to address safety concerns regarding that equipment.
- President Obama has made it clear that domestic oil production is an important piece of America's overall strategy for energy security – but he has also emphasized that domestic production must be held to high standards of safety and responsibility, for the sake of American workers as well as our environment.