

# THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL COMMITTEE WEEKLY UPDATE

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE DNC COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

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## Honoring Our Veterans

### **Thanking Those Who Serve and Have Served.**

After a Veterans Day breakfast in the East Room of the White House, President Obama and the First Lady joined Vice President Biden and Dr. Biden for a Veterans Day Service at Arlington National Cemetery. The President took part in the wreath-laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknowns, before speaking to a crowd gathered at the Memorial Amphitheater. Here's an excerpt from his remarks:

"Ninety-one years ago today, the battlefields of Europe fell quiet as World War I came to a close. But we don't mark this day each year as a celebration of victory, as proud of that victory as we are. We mark this day as a celebration of those who made victory possible. It's a day we keep in our minds the brave men and women of this young nation -- generations of them -- who above all else believed in and fought for a set of ideals. Because they did, our country still stands; our founding principles still shine; nations around the world that once knew nothing but fear now know the blessings of freedom.

"That is why we fight -- in hopes of a day when we no longer need to. And that is why we gather at these solemn remembrances and reminders of war -- to recommit ourselves to the hard work of peace.

**A Memorial Service in Fort Hood.** On Tuesday, President Obama traveled to Fort Hood, TX to lead a memorial service for the 13 victims of the incomprehensible tragedy there last week. President Obama mentioned each victim by name, describing them and their families in personal terms. Here's an excerpt:

"...Major Libardo Eduardo Caraveo spoke little English when he came to America as a teenager. But he put himself through college, earned a PhD, and was helping combat units cope with the stress of deployment. He's survived by his wife, sons and step-daughters.

"Staff Sergeant Justin DeCrow joined the Army right after high school, married his high school sweetheart, and had served as a light wheeled mechanic and satellite communications operator. He was known as an optimist, a mentor, and a loving husband and loving father...

"It may be hard to comprehend the twisted logic that led to this tragedy. But this much we do know -- no faith justifies these murderous and craven acts; no just and loving God looks upon them with favor. For what he has done, we know that the killer will be met with justice -- in this world, and the next...

"Long after they are laid to rest -- when the fighting has finished, and our nation has endured; when today's servicemen and women are veterans, and their children have grown -- it will be said that this generation believed under the most trying of tests; believed in perseverance -- not just when it was easy, but when it was hard; that they paid the price and bore the burden to secure this nation, and stood up for the values that live in the hearts of all free peoples...



## [Happening this week](#)

**Health Insurance Reform Passes the House.** In a historic vote last Saturday night, the House of Representatives passed (220-215) its version of health reform legislation – the Affordable Health Care for America Act – a landmark bill that will ensure every American has access to quality, affordable, stable and secure health care coverage. The Act would crack down on some of the insurance industry's worst practices, extend coverage to 36 million Americans and cut the deficit by \$104 billion over ten years. Groups representing doctors and farmers, seniors, consumers, and cancer patients endorsed the bill. It passed the House with only one Republican vote.



**CBO Score of the Senate Bill Expected Before the End of the Week.** As soon as the CBO releases its score of the Senate's final health reform bill (which blends elements from the Senate's HELP and Finance Committees) Senator Harry Reid is expected to bring it to the floor for debate. The Senate could vote on a "motion to proceed" next week. On Tuesday, former president [Bill Clinton](#) spoke at a luncheon for Senate Democrats where he urged them to resolve their differences and pass an overhaul as soon as possible. After the meeting, Clinton told reporters: "It's not important to be perfect here. It's important to act, to move, to start the ball rolling. There will be amendments to this effort, whatever they pass, next year and the year after and the year after, and there should be. It's a big, complicated, organic thing. But the worst thing to do is nothing."

**President Obama Traveling to Asia.** President Obama will travel to Asia this week for meetings in Japan, China, Singapore and Korea. During meetings with the prime ministers of Japan and Singapore, the presidents of Russia, Indonesia, China and South Korea, discussions are expected to include the global economic recovery agenda, on-going operations in Afghanistan, our efforts to stop nuclear proliferation and the United States' commitment to clean energy and climate change. This is President Obama's first trip to Asia (it also marks the first time in history that an American president will meet with the 10 ASEAN countries).

**December Jobs Summit at the White House.** President Obama announced plans Thursday to host a "Forum for Jobs and Economic Growth" at the White House. The Forum will convene business executives, economists, financial experts and union leaders who will examine initiatives to accelerate job creation. Since the beginning of the recession, we've lost more than 7 million jobs. The Administration has acted boldly to stabilize the financial system, stem the foreclosure crisis and stimulate our economy; but despite the fact that the economy grew for the first time in a year last quarter, economic growth has not yet resulted in job creation (jobs are historically a lagging economic indicator). "We all know there are limits to what government can and should do even during such difficult times," President Obama said. "But we have an obligation to consider every additional, responsible step that we can to encourage and accelerate job creation in this country."

## [Organizing for America](#)

**THANK YOU!** After the historic vote on Saturday, Organizing for America is hosting "thank you" events across the country to thank representatives for supporting health insurance reform. A few stories from around the country:

**Portland, ME.** [Portland Press Herald](#): About three dozen supporters greeted [U.S. Rep. Chellie] Pingree as she arrived at the Portland International Jetport from Washington on Sunday morning. They carried flowers, balloons, homemade cookies and signs praising her for her vote. "I just wanted to thank Chellie Pingree for stepping up and doing the right thing," said Maurie Hill, a 63-year-old retired nurse from Standish. Pingree said that although the House bill is not perfect, its passage helps move the ball forward. Her advice to her Senate colleagues? "Get voting!" she said. "It's not easy. We've been working on this for 10 months."



**Las Vegas, NV.** [KVBC-TV](#): Congresswoman Shelley Berkley received a warm welcome when she arrived at McCarran International Airport Sunday afternoon. She cast one of the 220 “yes” votes on the House floor Saturday night, helping to pass President Obama’s health care reform bill. “It’s up there at the same level as Social Security, Medicare, the civil rights legislation,” she says. The bill would create a public option and extend coverage to an estimated 96 percent of Americans, including many of the 460,000 Nevadans currently uninsured... “People lose health insurance, don’t have coverage every day. That’s the biggest concern for Nevadans,” says Jennifer Lopez, State Director for Organizing for America. “This bill will help many, many people.”

**Charleston, WV.** [Metro News](#): A coalition that pushed for health care reform is saying 'Thank You' to Third District Congressman Nick Rahall for voting for the U.S House of Representatives health care reform bill last weekend. The West Virginia AFL-CIO, West Virginia Education Association, West Virginians for Affordable Health Care, WV-Citizen Action Group, West Virginia Nurses Association and Organizing for America recognized Rahall Tuesday night at the West Virginia Health Right Building in Charleston. “We worked very closely with them over a number of years to provide an affordable, accessible, high quality health care for our people,” says Congressman Rahall.

**MUST READ: Great Piece on OFA.** In a must-read piece from Talking Points Memo – “[Inside DNC’s Organizing for America](#)” - Christina Belantoni writes: “Nine months ago when the Democrats who ran Barack Obama’s campaign created Organizing for America, no one was sure exactly how it would work or whether it was possible to harness the enthusiasm for the new president and translate it into action. But nearing the anniversary of Obama’s election, OFA has strengthened into a (smaller) mirror of the campaign, with volunteers in every single Congressional district and staff on the ground in every state but Oklahoma. They also are growing the Obama donor base. TPMDC has learned that 24.7 percent of the donations made online to OFA are new donors - people who didn't give during the campaign. That's a pretty striking figure give that a record 3 million people donated during 2007 and 2008. Organizationally, the boots-on-the-ground, Washington outsider vibe has translated into real results as well.” The TPM piece was followed up by a piece in ABC’s [The Note](#), and a segment on ABC’s [Top Line](#). Read the full transcript of Belantoni’s interview with OFA Director Mitch Stewart and Deputy Director Jeremy Bird [here](#). Spread the word!



### [Holding the GOP Accountable](#)

**32 Republicans Will Pay for Voting Against Their Districts on Health Reform.** Thirty-two members of the House, who represent districts President Obama won in 2008, voted against health insurance reform last weekend. OFA supporters and volunteers are holding Republicans accountable for voting against the views of their constituents and making sure these Republicans know there will be a political price to pay for standing with insurance companies to right reform. Immediately following the vote, OFA asked constituents in these 32 districts to write letters to their local papers and call their representatives offices. On Thursday, volunteers began scheduling visits to members’ offices to express their support for reform in person.

Here’s an excerpt from Mitch Stewart’s email to OFA supporters and volunteers in the 32 districts:

*A little over a year ago, the congressional district you live in voted to send Barack Obama to the White House and Rep. Dent to Congress. The message was clear: Rep. Dent’s constituents want change, and expect Rep. Dent to work with President Obama and reach across the aisle to help deliver it.*

*Last weekend, Rep. Dent was called upon to do just that, in the historic vote on health reform. The vote offered a clear choice: Support a bill which draws upon ideas from both parties to guarantee ‘s district residents secure, affordable health coverage without adding a cent to the deficit, or stand with the insurance companies and right wing pundits to put politics above doing the right thing and stand in the way of history. Unfortunately, Rep. made the wrong choice.*

*Insurance company lobbyists are constantly visiting congressional offices in Washington, and Rep. may be starting to forget the voters back home. There's one last upcoming vote in the House of Representatives before health reform can become law, so there's still time to remind Rep. what your district wants by arranging a visit of your own.*

**Call 'Em Out: House GOP.** At 11:15 pm last Saturday night the House pass historic health reform legislation. What did Congressional Republicans do to promote honest and rigorous debate? Not much. For the 12-hours leading up to the vote, GOP members stood at the podium spouting lie after lie in a last ditch effort to kill reform. This week we are calling them out. Our video takes on the outrageous lies during the House debate – that reform would result in a government takeover, add to the deficit, hurt small businesses, kick people off their insurance and cut Medicare - and debunks each one. Watch it [here](#).



### [Key Issues in the News & Background](#)

#### **Talking Points: House Votes to Pass the Affordable Health Care for America Act**

- Saturday night, in an historic vote, the House of Representatives passed a bill that would finally make the promise of quality, affordable health care for the American people a reality.
- The Affordable Health Care for America Act provides stability and security for Americans who have insurance; quality affordable options for those who don't; and brings down the cost of health care for families, businesses, and the government, while strengthening the financial health of Medicare.
- The legislation is fully paid for and will bring down the long-term federal deficit.
- The House of Representatives' historic step brings us far closer to comprehensive health insurance reform than ever before.
- Now it's time for the United States Senate to follow suit.
- Thanks to the long hours and hard work the Senate has already invested, it too is close to passing health reform legislation. The agreement between the House and Senate versions of reform is remarkable.
  - o Like the House bill, the Senate legislation would provide unprecedented security and stability for Americans with insurance. It would provide quality, affordable options for Americans without insurance. And it would lower costs for families, businesses, and our government.
  - o And like the House version, the Senate proposal is also fully paid for and would reduce our national deficit.
- President Obama looks forward to signing reform into law by the end of this year.

#### **Talking Points: Controlling Costs for Families, Small Businesses, and the Government**

- From the beginning of this process, President Obama has been clear that health insurance reform must not only provide security and stability for Americans with insurance and affordable options for uninsured Americans, it must also slow the unsustainable rise in costs that is burdening families, threatening businesses' viability, and exploding our national deficit.
- Fortunately, the House and Senate versions of reform several measures in common that will reduce the rapid growth in health care costs and provide Americans with higher quality care including:



- Changing the way our system handles hospitalizations, to prevent mistakes and unnecessary readmissions.
  - Creating incentives in the way we pay for care to reward quality of care rather than just the quantity of procedures.
  - Giving physicians incentives to collaborate in the coordination of patient care.
  - Investing in research into determining what works and what doesn't in health care.
  - Reducing hospital-acquired infections and other avoidable conditions acquired at health care facilities through rigorous reporting and transparency.
  - Putting prevention first, rewarding care that focuses on wellness and treating the whole patient in an integrated and coordinated delivery system.
  - Tackling the insurance bureaucracy, streamlining the payment system to save time and money that is currently spent processing claims and navigating the insurance system.
  - Establishing a health insurance exchange with a public insurance option, where individuals and small businesses can buy lower-cost insurance that will spur competition and put downward pressure on costs.
- These measures add to the down payment we've already made through the Recovery Act, to: switch from paper records to computerized records; strengthen preventive care; invest in patient-centered health research; and build up the workforce of primary care providers.
  - Several ideas that would help reduce the growth in costs are still being considered as the legislative process moves forward, including:
    - A fee on insurance companies offering high-premium plans. This fee would create a strong incentive for more efficient plans that would help reduce the growth of premiums.
    - Establishing a Medicare commission. The commission would propose and submit proposals to Congress suggesting how to extend the solvency of Medicare, slow Medicare cost growth, and improve the quality of care delivered to Medicare beneficiaries.

### **Talking Points: Forum On Jobs And Economic Growth**

- Over the past ten months, the Obama Administration has taken several bold actions to end the recession. The Administration and Democrats in Congress have worked to stabilize the financial system, revive lending to small businesses and families, and prevent responsible homeowners from losing their homes.
- The Recovery Act has cut taxes for middle class families, extended and increased unemployment insurance, and created and saved more than a million jobs.
- The economy is now growing again for the first time in more than a year (GDP was up 3.5 percent during the third quarter) – and faster than at any time in two years. But even though the loss of jobs has slowed, the progress made on economic growth has not yet led to job creation. This is not wholly unexpected.
- As President Obama has said, hiring often lags behind economic growth – given the magnitude of the recession, many employers are reluctant to hire. Small businesses and large firms are demanding more of employees, increasing hours, and adding temporary workers – but most of these companies have been willing to take the next step and hire again. This is one of the great challenges that remain in our economy – a challenge the Administration is determined to meet.
- President Obama and his economic team discuss options for job creation and continued economic growth every single day. As part of the ongoing process and as we move toward finalizing plans in the near future, they will continue to consult with experts in a broad range of fields.
- Our economy didn't get into this crisis overnight and we won't solve it overnight. Since the beginning of the recession our economy has lost more than 7 million jobs. The Administration is open to a range of ideas from across the spectrum, as the President and his team determine what the next steps are to address this crisis.

- Just last week President Obama discussed options for long term job creation with members of the President's Economic Recovery Advisory Board. The Forum for Jobs and Economic Growth is another opportunity to open up this discussion to some of the best and the brightest.
- CEOs and small business owners, academics and financial experts, labor leaders and nonprofits will be invited to the Forum at the White House to discuss the best options for put Americans back to work.
- The President wants to make sure that we do not make rash decisions – even driven by the best of intentions – particularly at a time when our resources are so limited. But President Obama and his economic team are open to any demonstrably good ideas to supplement the steps the Administration has already taken to help our economy grow and put America back to work.