

THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL COMMITTEE WEEKLY UPDATE

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE DNC COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

September 13, 2013

President Obama and First Lady Michelle Observe 9/11 Anniversary



On Wednesday – in honor of the twelfth anniversary of the September 11th attacks – President Obama, the First Lady, Vice President Biden, Dr. Biden and the White House staff gathered on the South Lawn to observe a moment of silence at 8:46 AM, the time the first plane struck the World Trade Center.

There was also a ceremony held at the Pentagon Memorial in Arlington, Virginia with the President and Defense Secretary Hagel. Another moment of silence was held at 9:37 to commemorate the losses of life at the Pentagon.

The President gave remarks, honoring those lost on September 11th, those lost a year ago in Benghazi, and the men and women in the military lost since 2001.

President Obama said:

"They left this Earth. They slipped from our grasp. But it was written, 'What the heart has once owned and had, it shall never lose.' What your families lost in the temporal, in the here and now, is now eternal. The pride that you carry in your hearts, the love that will never die, your loved ones' everlasting place in America's heart."

In the afternoon, President Obama took part in a day of service with Food & Friends, an organization that gives meals to those with life-changing illnesses. Following the morning service, the First Lady visited Fort Belvoir to complete a service project with military children at the USO Wounded Warrior Care Center. The First Lady then visited with service members at the National Intrepid Center of Excellence (NICoE) which offers treatment for traumatic brain injuries where she met with the family caregivers of wounded service members.

[First Lady Launces "Drink Up" Campaign](#)



On Thursday, First Lady Michelle Obama launched her new "Drink Up" campaign from Watertown, Wisconsin. The initiative promotes Americans drinking more water, especially children. Inspired by her *Let's Move!* Campaign, the First Lady hopes to encourage more Americans to embrace healthier habits like drinking more water.

Mrs. Obama said:

"And I've come to realize that if we were going to

take just one step to make ourselves and our families healthier, probably the single best thing we could do is to simply drink more water. It's as simple as that. Drink more water."

"Drink Up" is partnering with water filter companies, bottled water companies, and tap water representatives to put out PSAs, billboards, and web ads to motivate drinking more water. The Drink Up logo alone will be featured on a half a billion water bottles.

Read more about the First Lady's initiative [here](#).

[DNC Chair Honors the 19th Anniversary of the Violence Against Women Act](#)

On Friday, the nineteenth anniversary of the Violence Against Women Act, DNC Chair Debbie Wasserman Schultz released the following statement:

"Nineteen years ago today, the Violence Against Women Act was signed into law. This landmark legislation was a result of years of dedication and perseverance by women's advocates and the incredible leadership of then-Senator Biden. The law combined tough new provisions to hold violent offenders accountable with programs to provide services for the victims of such violence.

"Since its signing, VAWA has improved the criminal justice response to violence against women, states have reformed their laws to take violence against women more seriously, and fewer people are suffering from domestic violence.

"When the Violence Against Women Act first became law in 1994, it received overwhelming bipartisan support, as well as when it came up for reauthorization in 2000 and 2005. This is commonsense legislation that everyone should support, but unfortunately that is not the case in today's GOP. When Democrats acted to strengthen VAWA in 2012, Republicans in the House attempted to weaken it. Unfortunately, even when this commonsense legislation did pass with unanimous Democratic support, a majority of Republicans sided with the Tea Party and against the interests of women-- voting against it.

"Despite the tremendous impact of the Violence Against Women Act, the truth is that far too many women in this country still face the violent reality of domestic abuse and rape, and far too many die every day because of violence in their communities and their own homes. We can and must do more. As Democrats, we will continue to work tirelessly to prevent violence against all Americans."

President Obama's Weekly Address: Calling for Limited Military Action in Syria



In his weekly address, President Obama makes the case for limited and targeted military action to hold the Assad regime accountable for its violation of international norms prohibiting the use of chemical weapons.

Text of the address below:

Almost three weeks ago in Syria, more than 1,000 innocent people – including hundreds of children – were murdered in the worst chemical weapons attack of the 21st century. And the United States has presented a powerful case to the world that the Syrian government was responsible for this horrific attack on its own people.

This was not only a direct attack on human dignity; it is a serious threat to our national security. There's a reason governments representing 98 percent of the world's people have agreed to ban the use of chemical weapons. Not only because they cause death and destruction in the most indiscriminate and inhumane way possible – but because they can also fall into the hands of terrorist groups who wish to do us harm.

That's why, last weekend, I announced that, as Commander in Chief, I decided that the United States should take military action against the Syrian regime. This is not a decision I made lightly. Deciding to use military force is the most solemn decision we can make as a nation.

As the leader of the world's oldest Constitutional democracy, I also know that our country will be stronger if we act together, and our actions will be more effective. That's why I asked Members of Congress to debate this issue and vote on authorizing the use of force.

What we're talking about is not an open-ended intervention. This would not be another Iraq or Afghanistan. There would be no American boots on the ground. Any action we take would be limited, both in time and scope – designed to deter the Syrian government from gassing its own people again and degrade its ability to do so.

I know that the American people are weary after a decade of war, even as the war in Iraq has ended, and the war in Afghanistan is winding down. That's why we're not putting our troops in the middle of somebody else's war. But we are the United States of America. We cannot turn a blind eye to images like the ones we've seen out of Syria. Failing to respond to this outrageous attack would increase the risk that chemical weapons could be used again; that they would fall into the hands of terrorists who might use them against us, and it would send a horrible signal to other nations that there would be no consequences for their use of these weapons. All of which would pose a serious threat to our national security.

That's why we can't ignore chemical weapons attacks like this one – even if they happen halfway around the world. And that's why I call on Members of Congress, from both parties, to come together and stand up for the kind of world we want to live in; the kind of world we want to leave our children and future generations.

Watch President Obama's weekly address [here](#).

[DNC Chair Debbie Wasserman Schultz Recognizes Yom Kippur](#)

Friday evening marks the beginning of Yom Kippur. DNC Chair Debbie Wasserman Schultz released the following statement in recognition of that occasion:

"Yom Kippur, beginning this evening, is the holiest day of the year for the Jewish community. We have an opportunity to reflect on the past year, to consider our words and deeds and think how we can renew our commitments to justice, community and repairing the world.

"On this day of fasting and prayer, we think not just about how we can improve our own lives, but more importantly how we can positively contribute to the lives of those around us and the world through teshuvah, tefilah and tzedakah – repentance, prayer and good deeds. These values transcend all religions and communities, and bring out the best in each of us.

"Among the many blessings that come from holidays, we are granted this moment of stillness that allows us to reflect on the progress we are making toward positive change. In the Year 5774, let us strive to be generous with one another. In my family, on Yom Kippur we share with our children an important teaching from Rabbi Tarfon. He said: 'It is not your responsibility to finish the work of Tikkun Olam [perfecting the world], but you are not free to desist from it either.' Let us all take the time to recommit ourselves in our own lives to these values as we look toward the year ahead.

"I wish all those observing Yom Kippur a meaningful fast and a blessed new year."

[Waste of Time: House GOP Votes for 41st Time to Gut ObamaCare](#)

As part of John Boehner and Eric Cantor's never-ending quest to placate their Tea Party base, on Thursday Congressional Republicans voted for the 41st time to gut ObamaCare.

Thursday's vote came on the heels of the non-partisan Center on Budget and Policy Priorities releasing a [study](#) that found that delaying implementation of the individual mandate "would raise the number of uninsured Americans by about 11 million in 2014" and individual market premiums would rise 27% over the current law.

It's high time that Congressional Republicans stop wasting time and doing the Tea Party's bidding and start leading. In less than three week, tens of millions of Americans will finally have access to quality affordable health care – many for the first time ever. They should be working to make sure the law works for everyone, not trying to undermine it at every turn.

Key Point from the AP: Thursday's vote was the 41st by House Republicans to repeal, de-fund or change the health care law since it was passed in 2010 without a single Republican vote.

[House Passes Bill To Delay Obamacare Subsidies](#)

AP/ Stephen Ohlemacher

The House passed a bill Thursday to ban new subsidies to help people buy health insurance until the Obama administration enacts a new verification system to ensure benefits go only to those who are eligible.

Democrats say the bill, which has no chance in the Democratic-controlled Senate, would unnecessarily delay subsidies slated to start next year. The White House has threatened a veto.

Thursday's vote was the 41st by House Republicans to repeal, de-fund or change the health care law since it was passed in 2010 without a single Republican vote. A few changes have been enacted, but the effort has largely been unsuccessful.

The 235-191 vote was mostly along party lines, with Republicans in favor and Democrats opposed.

This week, House Republican leaders delayed voting on a bill to fund the government beyond the end of the month

after some GOP lawmakers complained the measure didn't adequately withhold funding for the health care law. If the impasse persists, it could result in a partial government shutdown at the end of the month.

"Delay, de-fund, repeal, replace. That is exactly what we want to do, because this law has become so amazingly unpopular with the American people," said Rep. Marsha Blackburn, R-Tenn.

Under the law, many low- and middle-income families that don't get health insurance through work will be eligible for subsidies to help buy insurance through state-based exchanges. Eligibility is based on income.

Republicans say there aren't enough safeguards to prevent fraud. They say federal regulations issued over the summer would enable people to get subsidies without adequately verifying their income. The bill would delay the subsidies until the inspector general for the Department of Health and Human Services certifies that they will only go to people who are eligible.

"This bill would protect American taxpayers from the staggering amount of fraud and abuse in Obamacare exchanges," said Rep. Diane Black, R-Tenn. the main sponsor of the bill. Under the law, people applying for subsidies will be asked to estimate their family incomes for 2014. Open enrollment starts next month.

Income estimates will be checked against tax and Social Security records, according to the Obama administration. If there are significant discrepancies, there will be additional checks using information from a credit rating agency. If taxpayers still get more subsidies than they are entitled to, they may have to repay part or all of them when they file their federal tax returns the following year.

Democrats note that the subsidies will be paid directly to insurance companies, making it even more difficult for people to profit from fraud. Taxpayers will receive benefits through reduced premiums.

"Your bill will do nothing but prevent millions of hard-working American families from gaining affordable health care coverage," said Rep. Frank Pallone, D-N.J.

[The GOP's Dangerous Plans: Shutdown or Default](#)

On Friday, DNC Communications Director Mo Elleithee released the following memo blasting Republicans for their dangerous plans to shut down the government and default on our obligations.

From: Mo Elleithee, DNC Communications Director

To: Interested Parties

Date: September 13, 2013

Subject: The GOP's Dangerous Plans: Shutdown or Default

Shutting down the government? Defaulting on our obligations?

Can anyone *honestly* believe that either is a good thing for our country?

Business leaders and economists sure don't. They know that either a default or a shutdown would be devastating for the economy:

- According to the [chief economist](#) for the National Association of Credit Unions, failing to honor our obligations means "we basically would default on our debt, interest rates would go through the roof, and we'd fall into another recession, kind of like the one we went through in 2007 and 2008."
- [New York Times](#) recently [reported](#) "economists warn that a default resulting from a failure to raise the government's debt limit could tip the economy back into recession."
- A Barclays' analysis showed a government shutdown would result in a [reduced](#) GDP and at least [800,000](#) federal workers would be furloughed.

The American people don't want it, and it is crystal clear who they'd blame if it happens. A CNN [poll](#) out just this week found that if there were a government shutdown, 51% of Americans would blame Republicans while just 33% would blame the President. Earlier this summer a [Pew Poll](#) found that "more Americans believe Republicans in Congress, rather than the Obama administration, would be mainly responsible if the two sides cannot agree on a plan to increase the federal debt limit."

But despite clear evidence that it's both bad policy *and* bad politics, Republicans in Washington have made these two plans the centerpiece of their fall legislative agenda.

There's no question what the result would be. They've taken us down both these paths before. In 1995 and 1996 Republicans shut down the government, hurting our economy and damaging our credibility as a nation. In 2011 Republicans brought the country to the brink of default, causing America's credit to be downgraded for the first time ever.

So why are Republicans so dead set on perusing a legislative agenda that is politically toxic and dangerous for the economy?

For two reasons.

- 1) Despite the American people's strong desire for elected leaders to put ideology aside and find common ground, Congressional Republicans are so focused on undermining the President and his legislative agenda that they are willing to risk harming the economy, even if it they hurt the economic wellbeing of ordinary Americans in the process.
- 2) Because Republican leaders aren't leading – they're trying to placate the Tea Party base that is calling the shots in today's GOP.

GOP 'leaders' are letting the tail wag the dog, plain and simple.

The far right is calling the shots in today's GOP. Just look at the news from the last 24 hours:

- Yesterday, House GOP leaders pulled a continuing resolution to fund the government through December 15th because, according to [Politico](#) "the GOP is clearly struggling with itself over how best to keep the government operating and placate conservatives who want to cut off all funding for implementing Obama's signature reforms."
- In response, [43 house Republicans](#) backed a plan that funds the government only if ObamaCare is defunded, a plan that just [6%](#) of registered voters support.
- While Republicans couldn't pass a plan to fund the government this week, GOP leadership acquiesced to far-right demands and passed legislation to gut ObamaCare for the [41st time](#).
- Today, the conservative [Washington Times](#) is out with an editorial imploring House Republicans to 'muster a little courage' and gut ObamaCare, claiming that "government shutdown under President Clinton 17 years ago...wasn't so bad as they remember."

Since last November, Republicans have pledged to change their ways, moderate their message and reach out to a broader electorate.

But the proof is in the pudding. Instead of heeding their own advice, Republican leaders are getting ready to go to war with ObamaCare -- again -- just to placate their far-right base, even if that means driving the U.S. and world economies over a cliff.

Forty-one failed votes to defund or repeal Obamacare are apparently not enough for the "new and improved" same old GOP. They are once again prepared to risk our economy rather than work to find common ground.

And the American people will suffer as a result.

The time has come for Republicans to stop their brinkmanship and work with the President and Congressional Democrats towards a better bargain for all Americans.

[In the States](#)

See below for a look at this week's news from states across the country.

- After months of being criticized for accepting thousands of dollars in gifts from scandal-ridden CEO of Star Scientific, Virginia GOP gubernatorial candidate Ken Cuccinelli's campaign donated \$18,000 to charity. The DNC released a [statement](#) questioning his motivation and trustworthiness concerning the scandal.
- After the defeat in the Colorado recall this week, the Democrats still control both chambers and are focused on making voting easier and getting progressive bills passed this year, including common-sense gun reforms are still the law. The Democratic Party has already bolstered its effort to expand voting rights through the National Voter Registration Project, an outgrowth of our belief that when more citizens are involved in the political process, the better it is for the country.
- In his latest assault against the implementation of Obamacare in his state, Florida Governor Rick Scott announced he will [ban outreach workers known as Navigators](#) from helping uninsured people understand and register for Obamacare.
- Governor Nikki Haley of South Carolina put party politics first this week when she [opposed a Medicaid expansion to improve access to health care](#) and an estimated 44,000 jobs added to her state's economy.