



# 2014 Troubles: Mismanagement Mess

***Obama's Failure To Manage His Own Government Is Dragging Down Democrats In 2014***

## OBAMA'S INABILITY TO GOVERN IS WEIGHING DOWN DEMOCRATS AHEAD OF NOVEMBER

**The Scandals Plaguing Obama's Administration Raise "Competence Questions" And Have "Eroded The Public's Faith That He Knows What He's Doing."** "The current scandal engulfing the VA is the latest example of competence questions surrounding this White House, but they include everything from the rollout of HealthCare.gov to the targeting of tea party groups by a Cincinnati IRS office. While none of these problems are easily tied directly to a decision Obama made (or didn't make), they have all eroded the public's faith that he knows what he's doing." (Chris Cillizza, "Americans Are Starting To Doubt Obama Is A Good Boss," [The Washington Post](#), 6/3/14)

- **The Series Of Problems Enveloping Obama's Administration Are "Politically Problematic For Democrats" Running In 2014.** "Which is what makes the series of problems within his administration of late all the more politically problematic for Democrats trying to hold onto their Senate majority — and narrow their House minority — this November." (Chris Cillizza, "Americans Are Starting To Doubt Obama Is A Good Boss," [The Washington Post](#), 6/3/14)

**"Obama Is In Danger Of Cementing An Image Of Haplessness That Would Be Hard To Undo."** (Fred Hiatt, "Needed: A New Team Of Rivals," [The Washington Post](#), 7/13/14)

**"Obama Is Facing Growing Doubts About His Competence And Ability To Accomplish Anything In His Second Term — Even Among Groups That Have Been His Strongest Supporters."** "President Barack Obama is facing growing doubts about his competence and ability to accomplish anything in his second term — even among groups that have been his strongest supporters, a new Wall Street Journal/NBC News poll has found." (Janet Hook, "Obama's Competence Questioned In WSJ/NBC Poll," [Wall Street Journal](#), 6/18/14)

- **"At The Same Time, Americans Seem To Be Losing Faith In Mr. Obama's Ability To Accomplish His Goals, With 54% Of Those Polled Saying They No Longer Feel The President 'Is Able To Lead The Country And Get The Job Done,' Compared With The 42% Who Said He Could."** (Patrick O'Connor, "Poll Shows Erosion In President's Support," [Wall Street Journal](#), 6/18/14)
- **"And 41% Said His Administration's Performance Has Gotten Worse Over The Past Year, Compared With The 15% Who Noted Improvement."** (Patrick O'Connor, "Poll Shows Erosion In President's Support," [Wall Street Journal](#), 6/18/14)

**Quinnipiac Poll: 54 Percent Of Voters Say The Obama Administration Has Not Been Competent In Running Government, While 44 Percent Say It Has.** ([Quinnipiac University Poll](#), 1446 RV, MoE 2.6%, 6/24-30/14)

## ON ISSUE AFTER ISSUE, OBAMA HAS DEMONSTRATED A FAILURE OF LEADERSHIP AND EVEN KNOWLEDGE OF HIS OWN GOVERNMENT

### *Dysfunction At The Veterans Affairs Administration*

**CNN Headline: “With VA, Obama Management Style Under Fire Again”** (Jim Acosta, “With VA, Obama Management Style Under Fire Again,” [CNN](#), 5/21/14)

- **“The President Has Been Caught Off Guard By Failures Inside His Administration Before.”** (Jim Acosta, “With VA, Obama Management Style Under Fire Again,” [CNN](#), 5/21/14)

**VA Scandal Raises Questions Whether Obama “Has Lost Grasp Of The Government.”** “Fixing the problem at the department now becomes an urgent political matter for the president, once again raising questions about whether the candidate who pledged in 2008 and 2012 to make government work efficiently has lost grasp of the government he now leads.” (Michael D. Schear and Richard A. Oppel, Jr., “V.A. Chief Resigns In Face Of Furor For Delayed Care,” [The New York Times](#), 5/30/14)

**National Journal’s Ron Fournier: Obama’s Response To The VA Scandal Is “Pathetic” And Shows How “He Didn’t Govern.”** RON FOURNIER: “That is their view and it’s pathetic. The President came into office knowing that this was a systemic problem.” KING: “He campaigned on this in 2008 and the Bush Administration, and the problems were there in the Bush Administration, but they warned him during the transition. They said here’s a problem, we’re passing on to you.” FOURNIER: “And he knew it was going to get much worse because he was winding down the wars, as he promised to do. And he knew this had to be radical overhaul, not around the edges. And what did he do like he’s done with a lot of other things? He didn’t pay attention. He didn’t govern. And now he’s holding nobody accountable.” ([CNN’s “New Day,”](#) 5/22/14)

### *Crisis Of Competence At The Border*

**The Border Crisis Has “Renewed Questions About The Administration’s Competence.”** “The emergency has also renewed questions about the administration’s competence, reminiscent of those raised during the 2010 Gulf of Mexico oil spill, last year’s botched rollout of the health-care law and more recent revelations of mismanagement that jeopardized care of patients at veterans hospitals.” (Karen Tumulty and David Nakamura, “Border Crisis Scrambling The Politics Of Immigration Policy,” [The Washington Post](#), 7/12/14)

- **“Another Week, Another Crisis For The Obama White House -- This Time All The Central American Children Who Have Crossed Into The Country.”** “Another week, another crisis for the Obama White House -- this time all the Central American children who have crossed into the country. Today, the White House is formally asking Congress for about \$2 billion for immigration judges, attorneys, and asylum officials. But what we find striking is that this is yet another event controlling the White House rather than the other way around.” (Chuck Todd, Mark Murray and Carrie Dann, “Runaway Country: Why Is Washington So Bad At Crisis Management?,” [NBC News](#), 7/8/14)

**Rep. Henry Cuellar (D-TX): Obama Plays Pool And Drinks Beer In Colorado, But “Can’t Even Go 242 Miles To The Texas Border?”** CUELLAR: “When I saw, and I hate to use the word bizarre, but under the circumstances, when he is shown playing pool in Colorado, drinking a beer, and he can’t even go 242 miles to the Texas border?” (MSNBC’s Andrea Mitchell Reports, 7/7/14)

- **Cuellar: Obama Looks “Aloof And Detached.”** CUELLAR: “He either can roll up his sleeves and go down to the border or he can just look aloof and detached.” (MSNBC’s Andrea Mitchell Reports, 7/7/14)

### *The IRS Scandal*

**“Just Like Other Big Scandals” The Obama Administration “Was Caught Off Guard” By The IRS Targeting Of Conservatives.** “Sources who have tracked the White House’s handling of other big scandals—including Fast and Furious and Solyndra—said it appears the administration was caught off guard by the IRS story.” (Kelsey Snell And Darren Samuelsohn, “How Not To Handle A Scandal,” [Politico](#), 5/21/13)

- **Time’s Joe Klein: “Yet Again, We Have An Example Of Democrats Simply Not Managing The Government Properly And With Discipline.”** (Joe Klein, “IRS Mess,” [Time](#), 5/11/13)

**Obama Claimed He First Learned About The IRS Scandal From “News Reports.”** OBAMA: “Let me take the IRS situation first. I first learned about it from the same news reports that I think most people learned about this. I think it was on Friday. And this is pretty straightforward. If, in fact, IRS personnel engaged in the kind of practices that have been reported on, and were intentionally targeting conservative groups, then that’s outrageous.” (President Barack Obama, [President Obama And Prime Minister Cameron Hold A Joint Press Conference](#), Washington, D.C., 5/13/13)

- **The New York Times’ Maureen Dowd: “Enhancing His Image As A Stranger In A Strange Land, The President Said He Learned About It From News Reports On May 10. Then He Waited Three Days To Descend From The Mountain And Express Outrage.”** (Maureen Dowd, “Taxing Times For Obama,” [The New York Times](#), 5/18/13)

**Nate Silver: “I.R.S. Targeting Of Conservative Groups Could Resonate In 2014.”** (Nate Silver, “I.R.S. Targeting Of Conservative Groups Could Resonate In 2014,” [The New York Times](#), 5/13/13)

### **ObamaCare**

**White House Officials “Never Anticipated The Magnitude” Of The ObamaCare Rollout Debacle.**

“The story of how a technology-obsessed White House failed to head off a technological disaster may be as simple as is mind-boggling to the law’s supporters. Senior White House officials claim they just never anticipated the magnitude of the problems that would unfold — there was concern, yes, but not an impending sense of doom.” (Carrie Budoff Brown, “The Making Of An Obamacare Management Failure,” [Politico](#), 11/12/13)

- **In May Of 2013, The Obama Administration Was Confident The Website Would Work.** “Officials have reportedly been testing the systems extensively, both internally and with outside troubleshooters. Despite stories of missed deadlines, the administration is confident the federal IT will function as planned.” (Jonathan Cohn, “My Five Obamacare Anxieties,” [The New Republic](#), 5/13/13)

**“The Disastrous Launch Of The \$319 Million Healthcare.Gov Last October Will Remain A Black Eye For The Obama Administration.”** “The disastrous launch of the \$319 million healthcare.gov last October will remain a black eye for the Obama administration. ‘This has been really wounding,’ says a former administration official. ‘We’ve been engaged in a 50-year war on the role of government. Please do not help the other side!’” (Tim Dickinson, “Obamacare: It’s Working!” [Rolling Stone](#), 4/9/14)

- **“For Many Americans, Obamacare Is Synonymous With A Buggy Website.”** (Tim Dickinson, “Obamacare: It’s Working!” [Rolling Stone](#), 4/9/14)

**The Washington Post’s Ezra Klein: The Obama Administration Managed To Mismanage What Was “The White House’s Top Priority.”** “In the months before the launch almost every senior member of the Obama administration had a little calendar board tacked up in a prominent spot in their office. ‘75 days until Obamacare’ it would say. The next morning they would tear off the page. ‘74 days until Obamacare’ it would say. The message -- to them and to their visitors -- was clear: This was the White House’s top priority.” (Ezra Klein, “Five Thoughts On The Obamacare Disaster,” [The Washington Post](#), 10/14/13)

- **Klein: “The Magnitude Of This Failure Is Stunning.”** “The magnitude of this failure is stunning. Yes, the federal health-care law is a complicated project, government IT rules are a mess, and the scrutiny has been overwhelming. But the Obama administration knew all that going in. They should’ve been able to build an online portal that works.” (Ezra Klein, “Five Thoughts On The Obamacare Disaster,” [The Washington Post](#), 10/14/13)

### ***NSA Spying***

**Obama May Have Gone As Long As “Five Years Without Knowing His Own Spies Were Bugging The Phones Of World Leaders,” Including German Chancellor Angela Merkel.** “The White House cut off some monitoring programs after learning of them, including the one tracking Ms. Merkel and some other world leaders, a senior U.S. official said. Other programs have been slated for termination but haven’t been phased out completely yet, officials said. The account suggests President Barack Obama went nearly five years without knowing his own spies were bugging the phones of world leaders.” (Siobhan Gorman and Adam Entous, “Obama Unaware As U.S. Spied On World Leaders: Officials,” [The Wall Street Journal](#), 10/28/13)

**Diplomatic Relations With Germany Under The Obama Administration Have “Plunged To A New Low.”** “Diplomatic relations between Germany and the US plunged to a new low after Angela Merkel’s government asked the top representative of America’s secret services in Germany to leave the country.” (Philip Oltermann And Spencer Ackermann, “Germany Asks Top US Intelligence Official To Leave Country Over Spy Row,” [The Guardian](#), 6/10/14)

**MSNBC’s Mika Brzezinski Said The Notion That Obama Didn’t Know About The Merkel Affair Is “Embarrassing And Concerning.”** BRZEZINSKI: “If the president doesn’t know this is happening. That’s sort of embarrassing and concerning.” (MSNBC’s “Morning Joe,” 10/28/13)

**Former Intelligence Official: Eavesdropping On An Allied Leader Is “The Kind Of Thing That’s Hard To Miss.”** But former officials have said that the raw intercepts, if interesting, would have been included in large briefing books given regularly to Mr. Obama’s national security advisers—he is on his third—and their senior deputies, and other National Security Council officials with responsibility for Europe. ‘It may not have jumped out at them,’ said one former official who knows the process intimately. ‘But it’s the kind of thing that’s hard to miss.’” (Mark Mazzetti and David E. Sanger, “Tap On Merkel Provides Peek At Vast Spy Net,” [The New York Times](#), 10/30/13)

## **IT’S NOT JUST OBAMA: DEMOCRATS IN 2014 STATES ARE ALSO PROVING THEY CAN’T MANAGE THEIR GOVERNMENTS**

### ***Colorado***

**Gov. John Hickenlooper (D-CO) Praised Colorado’s Health Insurance Exchanges Created Under ObamaCare.** “Hickenlooper also praised the state’s new health insurance exchanges under the Affordable Care Act, a comment that drew applause and a standing ovation from Democrats, but silence from Republicans.” (Lynn Bartels, “Gov. Hickenlooper’s State Of The State: ‘Colorado Does Not Shut Down,’” [The Denver Post](#), 1/9/14)

- **Hickenlooper: “Colorado Has Outperformed The National Exchange And Most States.”** “In that vein, the General Assembly, with bipartisan support, created Connect for Health Colorado. While other states have struggled with enrollment and implementation, Colorado has outperformed the national exchange and most states. More than 139,000 residents now have health insurance who didn’t have it before.” (Gov. John Hickenlooper, [Remarks On The State Of The State](#), Denver, CO, 1/9/14)

**A Review Of The Connect For Health Colorado Website Found That It Was “Shockingly Bad” And Deserved “Public Scrutiny.”** “Over the weekend, I got an inside look at the state’s official website



designed to connect Coloradans with health insurance plans. It wasn't pretty ... I do see it as my job to make sure that government services run effectively. The experience provided by this website was so shockingly bad that I felt the website needed public scrutiny and a detailed breakdown of the many failings of its design." (Brandon Rittiman, "Colorado Health Exchange Site Needs Surgery," [9News.com](http://9News.com), 7/2/14)

- **9News Headline: "Colorado Health Exchange Site Needs Surgery"** (Brandon Rittiman, "Colorado Health Exchange Site Needs Surgery," [9News.com](http://9News.com), 7/2/14)

## ***Oregon***

**Gov. John Kitzhaber (D-OR): "It's Very, Very Important For The State Of Oregon To Design, Implement And Operate A Health Insurance Exchange, Rather Than Default To The Federal Government."** KITZHABER: "I just want to say that we've all felt from the beginning that it's very, very important for the state of Oregon to design, implement and operate a health insurance exchange, rather than default to the federal government." (Gov. John Kitzhaber, [Remarks](#), 3/8/12)

- **A Majority Of Voters Believe Kitzhaber Is "Personally To Blame" For The Failures Of Cover Oregon.** "Gov. John Kitzhaber has said the failure of Cover Oregon could harm his chances of re-election in November, and an exclusive KATU/SurveyUSA poll shows there might be some truth to that ... But here's something to watch. A majority of voters think Kitzhaber is personally to blame for Cover Oregon's failure. Twenty percent said he's to blame for all of Cover Oregon's problems, 19 percent said he's to blame for most of the problems and 37 percent said he's to blame for some of the health exchange's problems. Only 19 percent said he deserves none of the blame." (Hillary Lake, "Exclusive Poll: Majority Holds Kitzhaber Accountable For Cover Oregon Failure," [KATU](#), 6/11/14)

**Cover Oregon Has Spent Nearly \$250 Million In Federal Grant Money To Produce A Failed Exchange.** "Cover Oregon and its partner state agency, the Oregon Health Authority, spent upwards to \$250 million and never produced a fully functional website. The debacle led to intense media scrutiny and withering criticism." (Jeff Manning, "Cover Oregon: Retention Bonuses Offered To Employees Who Stick Around," [The Oregonian](#), 6/24/14)

- **Oregon Received A Total Of \$305 Million In Grants To Build Its ObamaCare Exchange.** "The federal government has issued a total of \$305 million in grants to Oregon to perform feasibility studies as well as to build, test and operate the exchange. An unknown fraction of those grants have been spent." (Dan Mangan, "Congressmen Want Probe Of Oregon's Obamacare Exchange," [CNBC](#), 2/13/14)

## ***Hawaii***

**Gov. Neil Abercrombie (D-HI) Predicted "Hawaii Will Be Among The First, If Not The First In The Nation To Fully Accommodate The Affordable Care Act."** ABERCROMBIE: "So I want to acknowledge all those who have put in countless numbers of hours to meet the federal requirements, to work together in a collaborative basis, to meet the deadlines. To assure that Hawaii will be among the first, if not the first, in the nation to fully accommodate the Affordable Care Act and its implementation." (Neil Abercrombie, [Press Conference](#), 9/17/13)

**Due To The "Anemic Enrollment," The Hawaii Health Connector Will Not Be Able To Pay Its Bills When Federal Grant Money Dries Up Next Year.** "As the Hawaii Legislature weighs bills that would make sweeping changes to the state's ObamaCare program, the interim director of Hawaii's healthcare exchange on Wednesday laid out a grim financial picture facing the agency. With anemic enrollment by individuals and little interest among small-business employers, the state's nonprofit exchange — known as the Hawaii Health Connector — is unlikely to have enough money to pay its bills, even under the best

of circumstances, when federal grant money dries up in 2015.” (Maeve Reston, “Grim Scenario For Hawaii’s ObamaCare Plan: The Numbers Don’t Add Up,” [Los Angeles Times](#), 2/27/14)

- **“To Date, The Connector Has Raised Only \$40,350 In User Fees, According To Nathan Hokama, The Exchange’s Spokesman.”** (Cathy Bussewitz, “Insurance CEO: Shut Down Hawaii Health Exchange,” [The Associated Press](#), 5/10/14)

**Michael Gold, CEO Of The State’s Largest Health Insurance Company, Has Called On The State To Abandon Its ObamaCare Exchange, Citing Higher Costs And Taxes.** “The chief executive of Hawaii’s largest health insurance company is calling on Hawaii to shut down its beleaguered health insurance exchange, which was set up as part of President Barack Obama’s signature health care law. Michael Gold, president and CEO of Hawaii Medical Services Association, says the state shouldn’t keep spending money on the Hawaii Health Connector, a system that he says is financially unsustainable and does not work. ... Gold said trying to sustain the exchange is the wrong approach because it would cost the public too much, either through fees on insurance companies or taxes.” (Cathy Bussewitz, “Insurance CEO: Shut Down Hawaii Health Exchange,” [The Associated Press](#), 5/10/14)

### **Massachusetts**

**After Receiving \$174 Million In Federal Grants To Develop Their Exchange, Massachusetts Still “Does Not Have A Full Analysis Of The Final Cost.”** “The federal government originally gave Massachusetts a \$174 million grant to develop the new health insurance system. Given the technological problems, the state does not yet have a full analysis of the final cost.” (Shira Schoenberg, “Massachusetts Health Connector To Pay \$35 Million To Sever Ties With Technology Vendor CGI Over Failed Website,” [The Springfield Republican](#), 6/20/14)

**State Officials Have Estimated The Cost Of A “Dual-Track” Plan Currently Underway To Fix Massachusetts’ Exchange Problems At \$120 Million.** “The Health Connector is current employing the technology company Optum to pursue two separate tracks to get a working site. It is customizing off-the-shelf software called hCentive, and it is also looking at joining the federal health exchange website if it cannot get hCentive working in time. Cohen said Friday that the state appears to be ‘on track’ to get the hCentive software up and running by the open enrollment period. State officials have estimated the cost of the ‘dual-track’ plan at \$120 million.” (Shira Schoenberg, “Massachusetts Health Connector To Pay \$35 Million To Sever Ties With Technology Vendor CGI Over Failed Website,” [The Springfield Republican](#), 6/20/14)

**Massachusetts Is Paying An Additional \$35 Million To Sever Ties With CGI, Which “Created Its Problematic Health Insurance Exchange Website.”** “The Massachusetts Health Connector will pay another \$35 million to CGI, the company that created its problematic health insurance exchange website, as part of an agreement allowing the state to sever ties with CGI.” (Shira Schoenberg, “Massachusetts Health Connector To Pay \$35 Million To Sever Ties With Technology Vendor CGI Over Failed Website,” [The Springfield Republican](#), 6/20/14)

- **The \$35 Million Payment Is On Top Of The \$17 Million That Massachusetts Has Paid CGI To Date.** “The state’s original contract with CGI was for \$89 million with payments due as parts of the project were completed. Until now, the state had paid just \$17 million. The agreement signed Friday will cost the state another \$35 million.” (Shira Schoenberg, “Massachusetts Health Connector To Pay \$35 Million To Sever Ties With Technology Vendor CGI Over Failed Website,” [The Springfield Republican](#), 6/20/14)