



# State Of Obama's Union: Economic Prosperity

***Promises To Improve Poverty And Incomes Are Staples In Obama's State Of The Union Addresses, But His Policies Do The Opposite***

**IN PAST STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESSES, OBAMA HAS CONSISTENTLY  
DENOUNCED ECONOMIC IMMOBILITY AND PLEDGED TO TAKE ACTION**

**In His 2013 State Of The Union, Obama Said It Was "Our Generation's Task...To Reignite The True Engine Of America's Economic Growth – A Rising, Thriving Middle Class."** "It is our generation's task, then, to reignite the true engine of America's economic growth – a rising, thriving middle class." (President Barack Obama, [State Of The Union Address](#), 2/12/13)

- **Obama Called For Building "New Ladders Of Opportunity Into The Middle Class."** "Tonight, let's also recognize that there are communities in this country where no matter how hard you work, it is virtually impossible to get ahead. Factory towns decimated from years of plants packing up. Inescapable pockets of poverty, urban and rural, where young adults are still fighting for their first job. America is not a place where the chance of birth or circumstance should decide our destiny. And that's why we need to build new ladders of opportunity into the middle class for all who are willing to climb them." (President Barack Obama, [State Of The Union Address](#), 2/12/13)

**In His 2012 State Of The Union, Obama Said "Restor[ing] An Economy Where Everyone Gets A Fair Shot" Was The "Defining Issue Of Our Time."** "The defining issue of our time is how to keep that promise alive. No challenge is more urgent. No debate is more important. We can either settle for a country where a shrinking number of people do really well while a growing number of Americans barely get by, or we can restore an economy where everyone gets a fair shot, and everyone does their fair share, and everyone plays by the same set of rules." (President Barack Obama, [State Of The Union Address](#), 1/24/12)

- **Obama's 2012 State Of The Union Address Was "Deeply Saturated With The Message Of Income Inequality," Which Obama Called The "Defining Issue Of Our Time."** "President Obama delivered a State of the Union address Tuesday that was deeply saturated with the message of income inequality, a populist idea that the White House hopes will resonate on the campaign trail. Calling it the 'defining issue of our time,' Obama made the case that Americans now face a choice between a country where a 'shrinking number of people do really well' and a society where every individual gets a fair shot." (Charles Riley, "Obama Focuses State Of The Union On Income Inequality," [CNN Money](#), 1/24/12)

## **BUT FIVE YEARS INTO HIS PRESIDENCY, OBAMA STILL HASN'T DELIVERED FOR AMERICANS FACING LOWER INCOMES AND INCREASED POVERTY**

**"For Many Families, The Recovery Doesn't Feel Much Different Than The Recession."** "The issue is more than political. For many families, the recovery doesn't feel much different than the recession. Real median household income of \$51,000 is 8 percent lower than in 2007." (David J. Lynch, "Obama Recovery Fails To Resonate As Americans Left Behind," [Bloomberg](#), 1/23/14)

**Since President Obama Took Office, Median Household Income Has Declined By \$3,795 From \$55,958 In January 2009 To \$52,163 In November 2013.** (Gordon Green and John Coder, "Household Income Trends Series: November 2013," [Sentier Research](#), 12/31/13)

**Per Capita Income Has Declined By \$2,030 Since Obama Took Office From \$29,349 In 2008 To \$27,319 In 2012.** ([U.S. Census](#), Accessed 1/23/14)

**The Poverty Rate Has Increased From 13.2 Percent The Year Before Obama Took Office To 15 Percent In 2012.** ([U.S. Census](#), Accessed 1/23/14)

- **Poverty Has Increased By 6.7 Million Since Obama Became President To A Record 46.5 Million In 2012.** ([U.S. Census](#), Accessed 1/23/14)

**Today, 18-34-Year-Olds Account For 46 Percent Of All Unemployed Americans.** ([Bureau Of Labor Statistics](#), Accessed 1/23/14)

- **Unemployment Rate Was 13.5 Percent In December For Those Under 25.** ([Bureau Of Labor Statistics](#), Accessed 1/23/14)

**The Average Week's Unemployed Has Nearly Doubled Since Obama Became President – From 19.8 Weeks In January 2009 To 37.1 Weeks In December 2013.** ([Bureau Of Labor Statistics](#), Accessed 1/23/14)

**Under Obama, The Labor Force Participation Rate Has Declined To A 36 Year Low Of 62.8 Percent In December 2013.** ([Bureau Of Labor Statistics](#), Accessed 1/23/14)

- **FLASHBACK: The Labor Force Participation Rate Was 65.7 Percent When Obama Became President.** ([Bureau Of Labor Statistics](#), Accessed 1/23/14)

**"Almost 4 Million People Have Been Out Of Work For More Than Six Months, Three Times The Pre-Recession Average."** (David J. Lynch, "Obama Recovery Fails To Resonate As Americans Left Behind," [Bloomberg](#), 1/23/14)

- **"One-Third Of Black Men Aren't Even In The Labor Force, The Highest Mark Since Records Began In 1972."** (David J. Lynch, "Obama Recovery Fails To Resonate As Americans Left Behind," [Bloomberg](#), 1/23/14)

**The Number Of Americans On Food Stamps Grew By 19,413,000 Under Obama, From 28,223,000 In 2008 To 47,636,000 In 2013, A 69 Percent Increase.** ([United State Department Of Agriculture](#), Accessed 1/23/14)

### ***Americans Are Losing Their Faith In Obama***

**Obama's Approval On The Economy Is Weakening, With Even Some Democrats Now Blaming Him For The Economy's Sluggish Recovery.** "Yet Obama will carry into next week's State of the Union address weakening approval ratings on the economy. What's happening, Republicans and some Democrats say, is that voters left behind in the recovery now blame him and not his predecessor, George W. Bush, and could punish Obama's fellow Democrats in this year's congressional elections." (David J. Lynch, "Obama Recovery Fails To Resonate As Americans Left Behind," [Bloomberg](#), 1/23/14)

**Last Month, 58 Percent Of Americans Disapproved Of Obama's Economic Stewardship.** "In a Bloomberg National Poll last month, 58 percent of Americans disapproved of Obama's economic stewardship, his worst showing since September 2011. Surveys by the Wall Street Journal/NBC News and Quinnipiac University show similar results." (David J. Lynch, "Obama Recovery Fails To Resonate As Americans Left Behind," [Bloomberg](#), 1/23/14)

**49 Percent Of Voters Blame "Policies Of The Present" For The Economic Problems, Versus 41 Percent Of Voters Who Blame "Policies Of The Past."** "By 49 percent to 41 percent, voters now blame "policies of the present" rather than "policies of the past" for their economic problems, a reversal from a year earlier, according to David Winston, a Republican pollster." (David J. Lynch, "Obama Recovery Fails To Resonate As Americans Left Behind," [Bloomberg](#), 1/23/14)

**"At Some Point, The President Is Going To Start Owning The Economy,' Said Simon Rosenberg, President Of NDN, A Democratic-Leaning Research Group. 'It Could Be We're At That Point.'" (David J. Lynch, "Obama Recovery Fails To Resonate As Americans Left Behind," [Bloomberg](#), 1/23/14)**

- **"The President And The Democrats Have To Do Much More,' Rosenberg Said. 'They Have To Make The Case Better. They're Losing The Argument.'" (David J. Lynch, "Obama Recovery Fails To Resonate As Americans Left Behind," [Bloomberg](#), 1/23/14)**

## **OBAMA HAS STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION IN ESCAPING POVERTY, BUT HAS PURSUED POLICIES THAT LOCK POOR CHILDREN INTO FAILING SCHOOLS**

**In His 2010 State Of The Union Address, Obama Said That Education Is "The Best Anti-Poverty Program."** "In the 21st century, the best anti-poverty program around is a world-class education. And in this country, the success of our children cannot depend more on where they live than on their potential." (President Barack Obama, [State Of The Union Address](#), 1/27/10)

- **Obama: "The Success Of Our Children Cannot Depend More On Where They Live Than On Their Potential."** (President Barack Obama, [State Of The Union Address](#), 1/27/10)

### ***Obama's Justice Department Filed Suit To Keep Poor Louisiana Children In Failing Schools***

**In August, Obama's Justice Department Filed Suit To Block Louisiana From Awarding Vouchers To Students In At Least 22 Districts Without A Court Order.** "The Justice Department said Louisiana has given vouchers this school year to students in at least 22 districts remaining under desegregation orders. It's asking the court, starting with the 2014-15 school year, to permanently block the state from awarding vouchers in districts that are under desegregation orders, unless those districts seek court approval. Louisiana lawmakers approved a voucher program in 2008 for low-income New Orleans students who were in failing schools. The Louisiana Scholarship Program was later expanded statewide. It allows children in school districts graded C, D or F to receive public money to attend private schools." ("Justice Dept. Tries To Stop La. School Vouchers," [The Associated Press](#), 8/25/13)

- **Approximately 86 Percent Of The Students In Louisiana's Voucher Program Came From Schools That Were Rated D Or F.** "The number that should matter to federal officials is this: Roughly 86 percent of students in the voucher program came from schools that were rated D or F. Mr. White called ironic using rules to fight racism to keep students in failing schools; we think it appalling." (Editorial, "Justice Department Bids To Trap Poor, Black Children In Ineffective Schools," [The Washington Post](#), 9/1/13)

**The Washington Post, On The Justice Department's Actions: "A Misguided Suit That Would Block These Disadvantaged Students From Getting The Better Educational Opportunities They Are Due."** "Nine of 10 Louisiana children who receive vouchers to attend private schools are black. All are poor and, if not for the state assistance, would be consigned to low-performing or failing schools with little chance

of learning the skills they will need to succeed as adults. So it's bewildering, if not downright perverse, for the Obama administration to use the banner of civil rights to bring a misguided suit that would block these disadvantaged students from getting the better educational opportunities they are due." (Editorial, "Justice Department Bids To Trap Poor, Black Children In Ineffective Schools," [The Washington Post](#), 9/1/13)

**After Public Uproar, The Justice Department Dropped Its Lawsuit Against The Program In November.** "The Obama administration's Justice Department has dropped a lawsuit aiming to stop a school voucher program in the state of Louisiana. A ruling Friday by a United States district court judge revealed that the federal government has "abandoned" its pursuit of an injunction against the Louisiana Scholarship Program, a state-funded voucher program designed to give students in failing public schools the opportunity to attend better performing public or private schools." (Michael Warren, "DOJ 'Abandons' Suit Against Louisiana School Voucher Program," [The Weekly Standard](#), 11/19/13)

### ***Throughout His Presidency, Obama Has Repeatedly Sought To Kill The DC Opportunity Scholarship Program***

**The D.C Opportunity Scholarship Program Allows Low-Income District Of Columbia Children To Attend Private Schools.** "House Speaker John A. Boehner (R-Ohio) and Sen. Joseph I. Lieberman (I-Conn.) announced Monday that the Education Department has agreed to fully implement the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program, which allows children from low-income District families to use federal vouchers of up to \$12,000 annually to attend private schools." (Editorial, "A Deal On School Vouchers That Helps D.C. Families," [The Washington Post](#), 6/20/12)

**In 2009, Obama Urged The Democrat Controlled Congress To End The Voucher Program.** "At the Obama administration's urging, Congress agreed in 2009 to phase out the program. But it was revived last year as part of a budget deal with House Republicans." ("Obama Budget Proposal Includes No New Funding For DC Private-School Vouchers," [The Associated Press](#), 2/14/12)

- ***The Washington Post: Obama Proposed Not Allowing New Students Into The D.C. Voucher Program "And Letting The Program Die By Attrition."*** "Mr. Obama has proposed letting the 1,700 students now in the program continue their schooling while admitting no new students and letting the program die by attrition." (Editorial, "Vouching For Vouchers," [The Washington Post](#), 5/14/09)

**Obama's FY 2013 Budget "[Requested] Zero Funding For The D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program" Despite "A Majority Of D.C. Residents Favor[ing] It."** "Mr. Obama's fiscal 2013 budget requests zero funding for the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program, which allows children from low-income D.C. families to attend private schools with federal vouchers of up to \$12,000 annually. It has proved popular and successful. More than 10,000 families have sought to participate since the program's start in 2004, and polls show a majority of D.C. residents favor it." (Editorial, "Who Will Rescue The D.C. Voucher Program This Time?" [The Washington Post](#), 4/10/12)

- ***The Washington Post: Obama's Decision Not To Fund The Program In His Budget Was In "Direct Contradiction To A Law He Signed Last Year."*** "As Mr. Boehner wrote on a blog Tuesday, it was President Obama who 'inexplicably' zeroed out funding for the program in his budget proposal, a decision in direct contradiction to a law he signed last year that authorized full funding for vouchers, along with monies for D.C. charter and traditional public schools. That legislation contains no cap on enrollment." (Editorial, "D.C. Children Left In The Lurch," [The Washington Post](#), 5/22/12)

**The Obama Administration Has Thrown Up Administrative Roadblocks To Hold Down Enrollment In The Program.** "The drop in participants is a natural outgrowth of two unforgiving scheduling decisions. First, the Education Department prevented the program's administrator from accepting applications after an arbitrary date of March 31 of this year, shutting out anyone who came forward after



that cutoff. Then, scholarship lotteries for the 2012-13 school year weren't allowed to take place until July, far later than many parents could wait to make decisions about where their kids would attend school in the fall. Nobody at the department can give straight answers as to why. In practical terms, what this means is that only 319 new students were offered scholarships, despite demand for many more." (Kevin P. Chavous, Op-ed, "A Second-Term Agenda For Obama: Stop Messing With School Vouchers In D.C.," [The Washington Post](#), 11/9/12)

### ***Obama May Be More Concerned With Pleasing Teachers Unions Than Helping Poor Students***

**Since The 2008 Election Cycle, Teachers Unions Have Contributed \$16.7 Million To Democrats, Representing 96 Percent Of Their Total Political Contributions.** ([Center For Responsive Politics](#), Accessed 9/3/13)

- **During The 2008 Election Cycle, Obama Received \$118,436 From Teachers Unions.** ([Center For Responsive Politics](#), Accessed, 9/3/13)
- **During The 2012 Election Cycle, Obama Received \$82,990 From Teachers Unions.** ([Center For Responsive Politics](#), Accessed, 9/3/13)

**Louisiana Teachers Unions Sued The State To Stop The Voucher Program.** "As expected, Louisiana's largest teachers association, some of its local chapters, and four individual public school teachers have filed two state lawsuits challenging the primary portions of the sweeping education overhaul that Gov. Bobby Jindal signed in April. The Louisiana Federation of Teachers argues on several fronts that the courts should strike down tenure and other personnel changes, along with a statewide program that will use the public school-financing formula to finance private school tuition grants." (Bill Barrow, "Teachers File State Lawsuits Challenging Gov. Jindal's Voucher, Tenure Laws," [The Times-Picayune](#), 6/7/12)

- **The Louisiana Association Of Educators Threatened To Sue Individual Schools That Participated In The Louisiana Voucher Program.** "A Louisiana teachers union is threatening private schools with legal action if they accept money from a new voucher program. The demand was sent a few weeks ago by the law firm representing the Louisiana Association of Educators and several other interests, and it argues the state-approved program is illegal because participating schools would be receiving an unconstitutional payment of public funds. The two-page letter further states if schools don't agree, then the law firm has "no alternative" than to take legal action." ("Louisiana Teachers Union Threatens To Sue Private Schools Over Voucher Program," [Fox News](#), 8/6/12)

**The Washington Post: Killing The D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Is Exactly What The Teachers Unions Want.** "The Obama administration closed the program to new students; children currently enrolled, while supposedly assured of getting vouchers until they graduate from high school, face uncertainty as the program's administrator pulls out. This is exactly what the program's chief antagonists, the teachers unions, want; the National Education Association lobbied fiercely against Mr. Lieberman's amendment." (Editorial, "Congress Must Act Soon To Reauthorize D.C. Scholarship Program," [The Washington Post](#), 3/10/10)