



Giving Up On Change

Obama Promised To Change Washington, But After Four Years As President He Now Says Washington Can't Be Changed From The Inside

Obama: “The most important lesson I’ve learned is that you can’t change Washington from the inside. You can only change it from the outside.” (President Barack Obama, Univision Town Hall, Miami, FL, 9/20/12)

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IN 2008, CANDIDATE OBAMA PROMISED TO CHANGE WASHINGTON, BUT NOW HE’S CHANGED HIS TUNE

Obama In 2008: “The Ways Of Washington Must Change And They Must Change Now. And That’s Why I’m Running For President Of The United States.” OBAMA: “I began this race for the presidency as the one candidate who hasn’t spent a lot of time steeped in the ways of Washington. But I’ve been there long enough to know that if we want to keep the American promise, if we want to keep it alive, the ways of Washington must change and they must change now. And that’s why I’m running for President of the United States.” (Sen. Barack Obama, [Remarks](#), Grand Junction, CO, 9/15/08)

Obama In 2008: “Washington Is Broken. My Whole Campaign Has Been Premised From The Start On The Idea That We Have To Fundamentally Change How Washington Works.” (Sen. Barack Obama, [Remarks At ServiceNation Summit](#), New York, NY, 9/11/08)

Obama In 2008: “We Know That The Time For Change Has Come.” OBAMA: “Because at this defining moment in our history – with our nation at war, and our economy in recession – we know that the American people cannot afford four more years of the same failed policies and the same old politics in Washington. We know that the time for change has come.” (Sen. Barack Obama, [Remarks](#), Springfield, IL, 8/23/08)

Obama In 2008: “And That’s Why I’m Running For President Of The United States Of America, To Bring About Fundamental Change In Washington And Fundamental Change In This Country.” (Sen. Barack Obama, [Remarks During Town Hall Meeting](#), Albuquerque, NM, 8/18/08)

DESPITE HIS LOFTY RHETORIC, OBAMA HAS FAILED TO CHANGE WASHINGTON

The Washington Post’s Dana Milbank: “The president came here to change Washington and Washington has changed him.” (CNN’s [“Anderson Cooper 360,”](#) 3/8/12)

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“The Hard Truth Is That Washington Next Year Will Look Indistinguishable From The One Obama Warned Against During His Election-Night Victory Speech...” “The hard truth is that Washington next year will look indistinguishable from the one Obama warned against during his election-night victory speech, when he called on Republicans and Democrats to ‘resist the temptation to fall back on the same partisanship and pettiness and immaturity that has poisoned our politics for so long.’” (Carrie Budoff Brown and Jonathan Allen, “Partisan D.C.: Obama’s Broken Promise,” [Politico](#), 1/17/12)

Obama Has Been “Unable To Bridge A Political Divide That Had Only Grown Wider Since He Took Office With A Promise To Change The Ways Of Washington...” “A president who promised to bring the country together, who confidently presented himself as the transformational figure able to make that happen, now had his chance. But, like earlier policy battles, the debt ceiling negotiations revealed a divided figure, a man who remained aloof from a Congress where he once served and that he now needed. He was caught between his own aspirations for historical significance and his inherent political caution. And he was unable to bridge a political divide that had only grown wider since he took office with a promise to change the ways of Washington, underscoring the gulf between the way he campaigned and the way he had governed.” (Peter Wallsten, Lori Montgomery, and Scott Wilson, “Obama’s Evolution: Behind The Failed ‘Grand Bargain’ On The Debt,” [The Washington Post](#), 3/17/12)

The Washington Post’s Dan Balz: “Obama Has Proven To Be A Divisive President.” “That the country is polarized is beyond question. Obama has proven to be a divisive president, despite his insistence that he is open to compromise and accommodation.” (Dan Balz, “Roberts’s Health-Care Ruling Sends A Message To Politicians,” [The Washington Post](#), 6/30/12)

- **“And, Far From Breaking A Generation-Long Partisan Standoff In Washington, Obama’s Presidency Has Been Almost Entirely Defined By It.”** (John F. Harris and Jonathan Martin, “DNC 2012: Barack Obama, The Conventional President,” [Politico](#), 9/3/12)

Obama’s Failure To Transcend Washington Partisanship “Has Never Been More Glaringly Obvious.” “Candidate Barack Obama promised to transcend Washington partisanship. President Obama plummeted into it. As the House returns Tuesday for the final session of his first term, Obama’s failure to fulfill this central claim of his 2008 campaign has never been more glaringly obvious.” (Carrie Budoff Brown and Jonathan Allen, “Partisan D.C.: Obama’s Broken Promise,” [Politico](#), 1/17/12)

“For All His Talk About Moving Beyond Conventional Political Tricks,” Obama Is “Doing Just That.” “The second is that Barack Obama, for all his talk of moving beyond conventional political tricks, is doing just that, which wouldn’t be so glaring had it not been for his incessant call for a newer, cleaner and more transparent paradigm for American politics.” (Jim VandeHei, “The Political Transformation,” [Politico](#), 2/9/12)

Obama Has Made A Series Of “Calculated, Overtly Political Gestures That Are Far More Transactional Than Transformational.” “But what’s transpired over the past several weeks isn’t debatable: He’s made a series of calculated, overtly political gestures that are far more transactional than transformational.” (Jim VandeHei, “The Political Transformation,” [Politico](#), 2/9/12)

Historian Doris Kearns Goodwin Says Obama’s “Tenure Is Viewed Through The Prism Of His Failure To Transcend The Deep Divisions In Washington.” “Doris Kearns Goodwin, who has written several presidential histories and has come to know Obama personally, said the 44th president’s policies — such as a stimulus package that may have averted another Depression and an overhaul of health care policy — most likely will be seen as profoundly far-reaching. But in contrast to the soaring expectations Obama himself helped set, Goodwin said his tenure is viewed through the prism of his failure to transcend the deep divisions in Washington.” (John F. Harris and Jonathan Martin, “DNC 2012: Barack Obama, The Conventional President,” [Politico](#), 9/3/12)

- **Goodwin: “The Country Assumed What He Meant By [Being] Transformational Was That He Would Get The Two Sides To Come Together Because Our First Image Of A Leader Just Sticks.”** ““The country assumed what he meant by [being] transformational was that he would get the two sides to come together because our first image of a leader just sticks,’ Goodwin said, citing his famous 2004 Democratic convention speech when he called for an end to mindless partisanship.” (John F. Harris and Jonathan Martin, “DNC 2012: Barack Obama, The Conventional President,” [Politico](#), 9/3/12)