



It *Didn't* Work In Changing Washington

Obama Promised To Change Washington, But All We Got Was "More Of The Same"

CANDIDATE OBAMA PROMISED TO BE A UNITER

PROMISE: Obama: "Washington Is Broken. My Whole Campaign Has Been Premised From The Start On The Idea That We Have To Fundamentally Change How Washington Works." (Senator Barack Obama, [Remarks At Service Nation Summit](#), New York, NY, 9/11/08)

BROKEN: Obama Admitted Washington Is Stuck With "More Of The Same," And "Maybe A Little Worse." CNN's WOLF BLITZER: "When we spoke here end of 2008, 'hope and change.' You know what I see in Washington still to this day? OBAMA: "More of the same." BLITZER: "The same old same old." OBAMA: "Yeah." BLITZER: "A lot of bickering, backstabbing." OBAMA: "Maybe a little worse." (CNN's "[The Situation Room](#)," 8/16/11)

BROKEN: *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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FactCheck.org: "[I]t's Simply A Fact That The President Failed At 'Bringing Democrats And Republicans Together.'" "To be sure, the president did sign the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act into law in 2010, but it wasn't enacted by 'bringing Democrats and Republicans together.' The bill passed the Senate on Dec. 24, 2009, by a vote of 60-39, without any Republicans voting for it. And when the House passed its version of the bill almost three months later, by a vote of 219-212, it too garnered no support from Republicans. We won't offer any opinion about whether one side is more to blame than the other for that, but it's simply a fact that the president failed at 'bringing Democrats and Republicans together.'" (D'Angelo Gore, "Promises, Promises," [Fact Check.org](#), 1/4/12)

The Washington Post's Dan Balz: "Obama Has Proved 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)

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“Obama: The Most Polarizing President. Ever.” (Chris Cillizza and Aaron Blake, “Obama: The Most Polarizing President. Ever.,” [The Washington Post’s The Fix](#), 1/30/12)

- **Obama Ran On “Idea Of Uniting The Country” But “Each Of His First Three Years In Office” Have Been Marked With “Historic Highs In Political Polarization...”** “President Obama ran — and won — in 2008 on the idea of uniting the country. But, each of his first three years in office have marked historic highs in political polarization, with Democrats largely approving of him and Republicans deeply disapproving.” (Chris Cillizza and Aaron Blake, “Obama: The Most Polarizing President. Ever.,” [The Washington Post’s The Fix](#), 1/30/12)
- **“Put Simply: That The Country Is Hardening Along More And More Strict Partisan Lines.”** (Chris Cillizza and Aaron Blake, “Obama: The Most Polarizing President. Ever.,” [The Washington Post’s The Fix](#), 1/30/12)

Obama’s Relationship With Republicans Is “Broken” As A Result Of “Hardball Political Tactics, Irreconcilable Policy Differences And Perceived Personal Snubs.” “His relationship with Republican lawmakers is broken, the victim of grand expectations and hardball political tactics, irreconcilable policy differences and perceived personal snubs.” (Carrie Budoff Brown and Jonathan Allen, “Partisan D.C.: Obama’s Broken Promise,” [Politico](#), 1/17/12)

TODAY OBAMA IS TAKING AN “OVERTLY PARTISAN PATH” TO GET ELECTED

Obama’s Message Is Divisive, On The Campaign Trail And Off

The Washington Post’s Dan Balz Said Obama’s Current Message Of Political Confrontation Is A Contrast From His 2008 “Aspirational” Message. “But what resonated most was the aspirational side of his message. The country would meet its challenges only one way — together. Contrast that with the way he talked about the election as the sun was setting Thursday night in a park in Parma, Ohio. ‘There are two fundamentally different visions about how we move the country forward,’ he said. ‘And the great thing about our democracy is you get to be the tiebreaker.’” (Dan Balz, “Obama Then And Now,” [The Washington Post](#), 7/7/12)

- **The Washington Post’s Dan Balz: “But At Its Core, Obama’s Message Has Shifted.”** “But at its core, Obama’s message has shifted. The urgency in his appeal is grounded in his conviction that this is an election about ideas and policies and political philosophies, that the country faces a crucial moment and a clear choice. The country is in a far different place than it was when he first ran for office, and he is in a far different battle. And he has decided how he will fight it between now and November.” (Dan Balz, “Obama Then And Now,” [The Washington Post](#), 7/7/12)

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)

- **Obama Has Taken A “Different, Harder-Edged, More Overtly Partisan Path That Is Now Defining His Reelection Campaign.”** “In the end, that brief effort, described by White House officials as the most intense and consequential of Obama’s presidency, not only illuminated pitfalls in the road he had taken during the previous three years but also directed him down a different, harder-edged, more overtly partisan path that is now defining his reelection campaign.” (Peter Wallsten, Lori Montgomery, and Scott Wilson, “Obama’s Evolution: Behind The Failed ‘Grand Bargain’ On The Debt,” [The Washington Post](#), 3/17/12)

“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)
- **“So Much For The High Road: Victory Is More Important Than Purity.”** (Jim VandeHei, “The Political Transformation,” [Politico](#), 2/9/12)

In 2012, The So-Called Uniter Of 2008 Embraces Negative Attacks

Obama “Pummel[ed] Mitt Romney With A Volley Of Attack Ads Once Romney Sewed Up The Republican Nomination.” “Barack Obama has made his mistakes as a politician and as a president, but here is one thing he indisputably did right: pummel Mitt Romney with a volley of attack ads once Romney sewed up the Republican nomination.” (Frank Rich, “Frank Rich: Nuke ‘Em,” [New York Magazine](#), 6/17/12)

- **Since April, Obama Has Aired 118,775 Negative Commercials And 56,128 Positive Commercials.** “The ratio of negative ads, which are defined as those in which a campaign mentions its rival by name, tells the story. Since April, after Mr. Romney became the presumptive nominee, Mr. Obama broadcast negative commercials 118,775 times compared with 56,128 times for positive commercials.” (Jeff Zeleny, “Obama Team Taking A Gamble Going Negative,” [The New York Times](#), 7/28/12)

Obama “Not Only Approves Of His Television Ads” But “He Also Screens Many Of Them In Advance.” “The president not only approves of his television ads, as federal election law requires him to say in each commercial, he also screens many of them in advance, either on his iPad or during a regular Sunday evening meeting with political advisers at the White House.” (Jeff Zeleny, “Obama Team Taking A Gamble Going Negative,” [The New York Times](#), 7/28/12)

Obama’s Lofty Campaign Rhetoric Layered Over Attack Ads Is A Harder Sell This Time

On The Campaign Trail, Obama Is Implying That “Republicans Are Responsible For The Tenor And Volume” Of Negative Ads. “It’s nothing like the first campaign, the former Illinois state legislator and U.S. senator said — when he and his wife circulated fliers printed at Kinko’s. It sure isn’t. Yet the way the president told it today, it sounded as if the Republicans are responsible for the tenor and volume of it.” (Mark Silva, “\$10 M Checks, Obama Complains – Yet Look Who’s Gone Negative,” [Bloomberg](#), 7/6/12)

The Huffington Post’s Sam Stein: In 2008 Obama Was Able To Run Negative Ads And Keep His “Brand” But Today, “It’s Diminishing.” MSNBC’S MIKA BRZEZINSKI: “Well when asked who is running

a more negative campaign, 22% said Obama's campaign was worse, 12% said Romney's, and 34% said both were bad." MSNBC's JOE SCARBOROUGH: "Okay, so, in this case, who would have believed, Sam Stein, four years ago, that the President from 'Hope And Change' would almost doubled his Republican candidate as being seen as running a more negative campaign? And again, I think that's a crisis and do you agree with Mark that perhaps that's the reason that you're suddenly seeing positive campaign ads from President Obama?" STEIN: "Yeah, I agree with Mark. I mean, you know, that was the brand. Obama was someone who was post-partisan. He didn't engage in politics as usual. That's what got him to 53% in 2008. It was sort of a myth in some respects, because as Steve can attest, they ran negative ads. They were pretty good at it in 2008, but he was able to keep that brand and well what this poll shows is it's diminishing. And I think you're seeing a subtle shift -- maybe not so subtle, from the campaign where they want to focus more on, you know, the positive elements of his platform. They want to rebut this small business attack, but also talk about the President's agenda. The other thing that's at play is that Obama is just on the air more than Mitt Romney in large part because of the restrictions in spending money prior to convention so more people are seeing negative ads from him. That's going to change after the convention but again, the convention speeches are going to set the tone as well." (MSNBC's "Morning Joe," 7/25/12)

"There Was Never Any Doubt That Obama Would Run Hard-Hitting Ads." (Beth Fouhy, "Obama Negative Ads Could Hurt Personal Popularity," [The Associated Press](#), 7/24/12)

- **Obama "Assailed John McCain On TV Four Years Ago Even As He Cultivated An Image As Someone Who Always Played Above-Board Politics."** "For one, he's proven to be a cut-throat campaigner, having assailed Sen. John McCain on TV four years ago even as he cultivated an image as someone who always played above-board politics." (Beth Fouhy, "Obama Negative Ads Could Hurt Personal Popularity," [The Associated Press](#), 7/24/12)
- **"In 2008, Obama Was Willing To Tear Down His Opponents If Necessary. He Ran More Negative Ads Than Any Candidate In History."** (John Dickerson, "Obama Winning Ugly," [Slate](#), 7/16/12)
- **PolitiFact: Obama In 2008 Ran "More Negative Ads In American History" Than Any Other Presidential Candidate.** "Rubio said, 'No candidate has run more negative ads in American history than Barack Obama did in 2008, especially in the general.' In sheer numbers, that statement is correct: Obama bought many more ads than McCain did, both positive and negative. Nevertheless, two studies suggest that, overall, Obama's ads were not significantly more negative than his rival. He ran the most negative ads because he ran the most ads. We rate Rubio's statement Mostly True." ("Marco Rubio Said 'No Candidate Has Run More Negative Ads In American History Than Barack Obama In 2008," [Tampa Bay Times](#), ["PolitiFact"](#) 2/6/12)
- **Obama's 2008 "Hope And Change Campaign Was The Happy Cover On A Dogged, Overwhelming Attack Campaign."** "We're talking about a campaign that outspent John McCain by as much as a 3-1 ratio in the final stretch, and devoted most of that money to negative ads. The 'hope and change' campaign was the happy cover on a dogged, overwhelming attack campaign." (David Weigel, "The Myth Of The Positive 2008 Obama Campaign," [Slate](#), 5/22/12)