



Meet Mr. Compromise

As November Nears, Team Obama Is Trying To Spin His Hyper-Polarized Term Into One Of Compromise

CANDIDATE OBAMA PROMISED TO CHANGE THE POLITICS OF WASHINGTON

Candidate Obama Promised To End “Bitterness And Pettiness And Anger” In Washington And “Build A Coalition For Change That Stretches Through Red States And Blue States.” OBAMA: “You said the time has come to move beyond the bitterness and pettiness and anger that’s consumed Washington. To end the political strategy that’s been all about division and instead make it about addition. To build a coalition for change that stretches through red states and blue states. Because that’s how we’ll win in November, and that’s how we’ll finally meet the challenges that we face as a nation. We are choosing hope over fear. We’re choosing unity over division and sending a powerful message that change is coming to America.” (Senator Barack Obama, Remarks At The Iowa Caucus, [Des Moines, IA](#), 1/3/08)

TODAY, TEAM OBAMA SAYS HE IS “COMMITTED TO COMPROMISE” BUT HIS RECORD POINTS TOWARD DIVISION

Obama Campaign Adviser David Plouffe: “Obama Is The One Person In Washington Who’s Very Committed To Compromise.” “President Obama’s top campaign strategist, David Plouffe, blamed Republicans in Congress for not working with the president, and said that ‘President Obama is the one person in Washington who’s very committed to compromise.’” (Leigh Ann Caldwell, “Obama Aide: President Is ‘Committed To Compromise,’” [CBS News](#), 9/9/12)

- **Plouffe: “The American People Want Us To Compromise And They Want A Balanced Approach.”** “The president’s adviser, who also ran Mr. Obama’s 2008 presidential campaign, said this election is going to send a message to Washington politicians. ‘I do think one of the messages that’s going to come through in this election is, the American people want us to compromise and they want a balanced approach.’” (Leigh Ann Caldwell, “Obama Aide: President Is ‘Committed To Compromise,’” [CBS News](#), 9/9/12)

Under Obama, Washington Is More Polarized Than Ever

Polarization Is “As Deep As It Has Been In Modern Times.” “Today Obama’s words sound quaint, even naive. Instead of bipartisanship, there is polarization as deep as it has been in modern times.” (Dan Balz, “Obama Did Not Change Washington, Was There A Way Around United Republican Opposition?” [The Washington Post](#), 9/1/12)

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“The Political System Seems Frozen And More Resistant To Compromise Than Ever.” “Instead of cooperation, there is confrontation. Instead of civility, there is rudeness. The political system seems frozen and more resistant to compromise than ever. Two months before the 2012 election, the campaign has become an all-or-nothing battle over the future direction of the country.” (Dan Balz, “Obama Did Not Change Washington, Was There A Way Around United Republican Opposition?” [The Washington Post](#), 9/1/12)

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 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)

Gallup: “Obama Ratings Historically Polarized.” (Jeffrey M. Jones, “Obama Ratings Historically Polarized,” [Gallup](#), 1/27/12)

- **Gallup: Obama Ran On “Bringing Americans Together, But That Has Not Been The Case In Practice To Date” Leaving Obama’s Ratings “Consistently Among The Most Polarized For A President In The Last 60 Years.”** “Obama ran his successful 2008 presidential campaign partly on bringing Americans together, but that has not been the case in practice to date. Republicans rarely say they approve of the job he is doing, while Democrats rarely say they disapprove. Thus, Obama’s ratings have been consistently among the most polarized for a president in the last 60 years.” (Jeffrey M. Jones, “Obama Ratings Historically Polarized,” [Gallup](#), 1/27/12)

Obama Has Admitted That 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)

ONCE IN OFFICE, OBAMA PURSUED A PARTISAN AGENDA

Obama’s “Advisers Cannot Point To A Clear Strategy For Trying To Create A Climate Of Cooperation.” “There are also questions about how hard Obama tried. His advisers cannot point to a clear strategy for trying to create a climate of cooperation — other than their belief that the support he won in the election and the economic crisis would create those conditions.” (Dan Balz, “Obama Did Not Change Washington, Was There A Way Around United Republican Opposition?” [The Washington Post](#), 9/1/12)

“It Was The Promise That First Brought Barack Obama To National Attention, And The One That His Presidency Has Most Conspicuously Been Unable To Fulfill — The Hope Of National Unity.” (David Lauter, “Obama Faces Deep Division,” [Los Angeles Times](#), 9/1/12)

- **Obama's Legislative Agenda "Made The Bipartisan Politics" He Promised In 2008 "All But Impossible."** "Obama's legislative goals — a government guarantee of health coverage, stronger regulation of the financial industry, new environmental controls to fight global warming — all would expand government. Pushing those ideas, even in forms that some liberals found too weak, clashed directly with the intensifying desire of Republican voters to roll government back. That made the bipartisan politics Obama had spoken of all but impossible." (David Lauter, "Obama Faces Deep Division," [Los Angeles Times](#), 9/1/12)
- **Obama Got Almost Everything He Wanted Out Of The Democrat-Controlled Congress.** "He passed \$830 billion in stimulus, \$3 billion for cash for clunkers, \$30 billion in small business loans, \$30 billion for mortgage modification, the GM-Chrysler bailouts, ObamaCare, Dodd-Frank, credit card price controls, Build America Bonds, jobless benefits for a record 99 weeks, and more. The only priorities that a Democratic Congress blocked were cap-and-tax and union card check, and both of those would have further damaged growth and jobs. Even last December, after Republicans had retaken the House, Mr. Obama won his one-year payroll tax cut, more jobless benefits and most of what he wanted." (Editorial, "The Latest Jobs Plan," [The Wall Street Journal](#), 9/9/11)

During The Stimulus Negotiations, Obama's Response To Republican Suggestions Was "I Won"

Once In The White House, Obama Focused On "A Legislative Strategy Reliant On Getting Overwhelming Support From Democrats, At The Expense Of Building Bipartisan Coalitions." "Once in the White House, faced with a towering heap of problems, cosseted by a Democratic majority and confronted by a hostile Republican crowd, Obama cast his lot with a legislative strategy reliant on getting overwhelming support from Democrats, at the expense of building bipartisan coalitions and forming solid relationships with the opposition." (Mark Halperin, "Can Obama Rebuild Bipartisan Trust?" [Time](#), 2/16/10)

- **During Stimulus Negotiations, Obama Told Republicans That In Terms Of Ideological Differences "I Won. So I Think On That One, I Trump You."** "As the president, he had told Kyl after the Arizonan raised objections to the notion of a tax credit for people who don't pay income taxes, Obama told Cantor this morning that 'on some of these issues we're just going to have ideological differences.' The president added, 'I won. So I think on that one, I trump you.'" (Jake Tapper and Huma Khan, "'I Won:' President Obama Works to Be Bipartisan But Shows There Are Clear Limits," ABC News' [Political Punch](#), 1/23/09)
- **GOP Congressmen Were Rebuffed When They Told Obama They Wanted To Work With Him To Achieve Reform.** "Boehner told reporters that the president has not invited House GOP leaders to the White House for meetings on healthcare reform since the end of April. Earlier this year, GOP leaders sent a letter to the president in May stating that they would like to work with the administration to find 'common ground' on healthcare reform. But the administration responded with a tersely worded letter indicating that they had healthcare reform under control." (Molly Hooper, "Boehner: GOP Leaders Haven't Met Obama For Health Talks Since April," [The Hill's "Briefing Room" Blog](#), 9/9/09)
- **Rep. Jim Cooper (D-TN): "We Are Explicitly Told Not To Work With Republicans."** "Tom Daschle, Bob Dole and Howard Baker did what Congress is failing to do... And the White House released a statement praising this bipartisan leadership. In the House of Representatives, meanwhile, we are explicitly told not to work with Republicans." (Rep. Jim Cooper, "Reconciliation Rules - Not Bipartisanship - Will Kill Health Care Reform," [The Huffington Post](#), 6/18/09)

Obama Walked Away From The Grand Bargain With Republicans Because He Feared Backlash From Democrats

“When The Debt-Ceiling Negotiations Collapsed Amid Recriminations On Both Sides, Obama Decided To Move Virtually Full Time Into Campaign Mode.”

(Dan Balz, “Obama Did Not Change Washington, Was There A Way Around United Republican Opposition?” [The Washington Post](#), 9/1/12)

- **Obama Feared Backlash From The Left If He Agreed To The Grand Bargain.** “The negotiations with House Republicans were Obama’s clearest opportunity to realize his 2008 campaign pledge to usher in a more productive, bipartisan era in Washington. The president has since pivoted to make a more concerted appeal to the Democratic base, blasting those he calls intransigent Republicans at every opportunity. But in the Post’s version of events, Obama is portrayed as worrying he would face a backlash from the left if he pulled the trigger.” (Jake Sherman, “Debt Story Tally: John Boehner 1, President Obama 0,” [Politico](#), 3/18/12)

Obama’s Then-Chief Of Staff Bill Daley Confirmed That The President Lost His Nerve And Walked Away From The Deal.

“And former Obama chief of staff Bill Daley provided surprising, on-the-record support of the GOP’s insistence that the president deserves blame for losing his nerve.” (Jake Sherman, “Debt Story Tally: John Boehner 1, President Obama 0,” [Politico](#), 3/18/12)

- **“Daley Said The White House Privately Fretted That Democrats Would Go Ballistic ...”** “Daley said the White House privately fretted that Democrats would go ballistic if the president agreed to \$800 billion in new tax revenues when some Republican senators had signaled willingness to go along with as much as \$2 trillion.” (Jake Sherman, “Debt Story Tally: John Boehner 1, President Obama 0,” [Politico](#), 3/18/12)
- **Obama Was Nervous About How To Sell The Deal, So He “Upped The Ante” In A Way That Killed The Deal.** “But interviews with most of the central players in those talks — some of whom were granted anonymity to speak about the secret negotiations — as well as a review of meeting notes, e-mails and the negotiating proposals that changed hands, offer a more complicated picture of the collapse. Obama, nervous about how to defend the emerging agreement to his own Democratic base, upped the ante in a way that made it more difficult for Boehner — already facing long odds — to sell it to his party. Eventually, the president tried to put the original framework back in play, but by then it was too late. The moment of making history had passed.” (Peter Wallsten, Lori Montgomery, and Scott Wilson, “Obama’s Evolution: Behind The Failed ‘Grand Bargain’ On The Debt,” [The Washington Post](#), 3/17/12)

Democrats Were Nervous About Losing Their Political Advantage On Medicare As A Result Of Obama’s Proposed Cuts During The Debt Ceiling Debate.

“That’s why Democrats are so nervous about what might happen to Medicare as a result of the debt ceiling crisis. In their eyes, the Ryan plan had completely turned the tables for 2012. It was going to be about Ryancare, not Obamacare.” (David Nather, “Does Deal Muddy Medicare Waters?” [Politico](#), 7/31/11)

- **Top Senate Democrats Opposed Making Any Cuts To Medicare Because It Robs Democrats Opportunity To Demagogue Republicans On The Issue.** “Top Democrats in charge of keeping the Senate in Dem hands and maintaining the political health of the party — DSCC chair Patty Murray and messaging chief Chuck Schumer — have privately expressed frustration that deep Medicare cuts risk squandering the major political advantage Democrats have built up on the issue, people familiar with internal discussions say.” (Greg Sargent, “Top Senate Dems Privately Warn: Deep Medicare Cuts Will Squander Our Big Advantage On Issue,” [The Washington Post’s “The Plum Line”](#), 7/11/11)

Obama Refused To Work With Republicans On The American Jobs Act

Obama Used His Jobs Bill As A “Political Weapon Rather Than As A Means Of Fixing The Nation’s Economic Woes And Putting Americans Back To Work.” “It underscored Obama’s dilemma as he travels the country seeking to isolate Republicans to take the blame if his jobs bill doesn’t pass -- without

a clear strategy for ensuring it does. The approach puts the Obama administration at risk of appearing to use the president's \$447 billion jobs bill as a political weapon rather than as a means of fixing the nation's economic woes and putting Americans back to work. And it relies heavily on the assumption that the public won't also hold Obama accountable if he can't get Congress to act." (Julie Pace, "Obama Knocks GOP Leader, Says GOP Blocks Jobs Vote," [The Associated Press](#), 10/4/11)

Obama Didn't Do Much To Help The Jobs Act Pass. "President Barack Obama didn't do much to bring along lawmakers on his jobs bill — and it showed in the Senate vote Tuesday. The \$447 billion measure stalled after struggling to win even a simple majority to move forward, on its surface an embarrassing setback at the hands of the Democratic-controlled Senate." (Carrie Budoff Brown and Glenn Thrush, "Obama Looks Past Hill On Jobs Bill," [Politico](#), 10/11/11)

- **"Aides Would Not Say Whether He Reached Out To Undecided Lawmakers, As He Usually Does Ahead Of Major Votes."** "The president met last week with Senate Democratic leaders, but unlike previous votes on signature legislation, the White House hasn't spent much energy twisting arms to win support. Aides would not say whether he reached out to undecided lawmakers, as he usually does ahead of major votes." (Carrie Budoff Brown and Glenn Thrush, "Obama Looks Past Hill On Jobs Bill," [Politico](#), 10/11/11)

Obama Didn't Negotiate With Republicans On His Jobs Package. "President Obama says he won't negotiate a jobs package with Republicans ... Obama has pretty much ignored GOP efforts to negotiate this time, having been dissatisfied with past talks over the federal debt limit and deficit reduction." (Richard Wolf, "Obama Won't Negotiate With Republicans On Jobs," [USA Today](#), 10/13/2011)

IN A SECOND TERM, OBAMA'S STYLE OF COMPROMISE WILL STICK TO STRONG-ARMING TACTICS

Obama Says He Is "More Than Happy With Work With The Republicans" If They Agree To Raise Taxes. "President Barack Obama said in an interview partly broadcast Sunday that he would be 'more than happy to work with the Republicans' to trim the swelling national debt — as long as they drop their opposition to raising taxes on the wealthiest Americans." (Olivier Knox, "Obama: I'll Work With Republicans If They Agree to Raise Taxes," [Yahoo News' "The Ticket"](#), 9/9/12)

- **Obama: "But We've Also Got To Ask People --Like Me Or Gov. Romney...To Do A Little Bit More."** "You can't reduce the deficit unless you take a balanced approach that says, 'We've got to make government leaner and more efficient,' the president told CBS's Scott Pelley. 'But we've also got to ask people --like me or Gov. Romney, who have done better than anybody else over the course of the last decade, and whose taxes are just about lower than they've been in the last 50 years - to do a little bit more.'" (Olivier Knox, "Obama: I'll Work With Republicans If They Agree to Raise Taxes," [Yahoo News' "The Ticket"](#), 9/9/12)