



Obama's Second-Term Blues

Second-Term Woes Mount As Obama Faces A Troubled Agenda And Opposition From Fellow Democrats

OBAMA HASN'T BEEN ABLE TO GET MEMBERS OF HIS OWN PARTY TO GET ON BOARD WITH HIS SECOND-TERM AGENDA

Obama Is "Trapped In A Very Frustrating Box" And "Realizes That The Vast Majority Of Congress Is As Impervious To His Pressure As It Is His Charm." "Obama, regardless of the personality and political approach he displays on any given day, keeps running into the same wall of insurmountable opposition. The cold, hard reality is that the president is trapped in a very frustrating box: He realizes that the vast majority of Congress is as impervious to his pressure as it is his charm. He is damned if he does, damned if he doesn't — and he knows it, several of his friends tell us." (Jim VandeHei and Mike Allen, "Behind The Curtain: Obama, Boxed In," [Politico](#), 4/18/13)

Top Democratic Official: "POTUS Really Doesn't Have Any Sway With Red-State Dems." "He will most likely get nothing on guns despite his vow after Wednesday's Senate defeat that 'this effort is not over.' He will most likely get nothing more on a grand bargain to lift the economy. He stands a decent chance of getting an immigration deal. But as one influential Democratic adviser told us, that's only because the president has largely stayed on the sidelines. 'POTUS really doesn't have any sway with red-state Dems,' said a top Democratic official close to the White House." (Jim VandeHei and Mike Allen, "Behind The Curtain: Obama, Boxed In," [Politico](#), 4/18/13)

- **"Democratic Senators, The Official Added, 'Won In States That POTUS Lost — Some By Huge Margins. Also, Even In Blue States, Many Democrats Ran Ahead Of POTUS.'"** (Jim VandeHei and Mike Allen, "Behind The Curtain: Obama, Boxed In," [Politico](#), 4/18/13)
- **"Newly Reelected And Emboldened Red-State Democrats, As Well As Senators Up For Reelection In 2014, Want And Need To Show Independence From The White House."** "Newly reelected and emboldened red-state Democrats, as well as senators up for reelection in 2014, want and need to show independence from the White House. For these Democrats, a visit or endorsement by Obama is not going to help them win, although they will be happy to have his money or checks from his donor network." (John Bresnahan and Manu Raju, "Red-State Democrats May Break With White House," [Politico](#), 1/8/13)

Senate Democrats Are Creating A Roadblock And Deserting Obama's Agenda

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Senator Mark Begich (D-AK): “We’re Not Going To Do The Same Ol’, Same Ol’. I Think That’s A Struggle With The Administration At Times.” “Reid singles out those who are up for reelection and does whatever he can to promote their agenda and protect them from politically charged votes, aides said Friday. ‘What you have in the Democratic Caucus — probably more so now than the Republican [Conference] — you have a sizable amount of moderates,’ Sen. Mark Begich (D-Alaska), up for reelection in 2014, told POLITICO. ‘We are kind of practical, let’s get things done, we’re willing to try some new stuff. But we’re not going to do the same ol’, same ol’. I think that’s a struggle with the administration at times.’” (John Bresnahan and Manu Raju, “Red-State Democrats May Break With White House,” [Politico](#), 1/8/13)

- **Senator Tom Udall (D-NM): “We May Have Some Other Agenda Ourselves.”** “‘We may have some other agenda ourselves,’ added Sen. Tom Udall (D-N.M.), who also faces voters in two years. ‘We may as a Senate decide that we want to do something about jobs. The Senate may decide it wants to do something about small business and a tax package. We may want to do something on tax reform itself. Our agenda depends on our 55 senators — [and] what we decide we want to put on the floor.’” (John Bresnahan and Manu Raju, “Red-State Democrats May Break With White House,” [Politico](#), 1/8/13)

“A Senior Democratic Aide Said The White House Must Recognize The ‘Blunt Political Reality’ That 20 Democratic Senators Will Face Reelection In A Cycle In Which Control Of The Senate Is At Stake.” (John Bresnahan and Manu Raju, “Red-State Democrats May Break With White House,” [Politico](#), 1/8/13)

- **Democratic Strategist: “To The Extent That They Break With The President, It Could Be — I Don’t Want To Say It Is — A Big Advantage For Them In Deep-Red States.”** “While the 2014 Senate map may favor Republicans, the GOP would have to essentially run the table in six of seven red states where Democrats hold seats to win a majority. Opposing Obama on some issues may even help some Democratic incumbents, all of whom are leading or very competitive in early polls. ‘To the extent that they break with the president, it could be — I don’t want to say it is — a big advantage for them in deep-red states,’ said a Democratic strategist.” (John Bresnahan and Manu Raju, “Red-State Democrats May Break With White House,” [Politico](#), 1/8/13)

OBAMA IS TO BLAME FOR HIS TROUBLED AGENDA – HE TOOK “COMPLETE CONTROL” OF THE WHITE HOUSE

“Obama Has Begun His Second Term By Consolidating His Personal Control Of The White House, Democrats In And Outside The Administration Say.” “President Barack Obama has begun his second term by consolidating his personal control of the White House, Democrats in and outside the administration say, reflecting a shift from his less centralized first term. The shift has become clear in the new style of management under Obama's new chief of staff, Denis McDonough, who — unlike his predecessors — acts more as Obama's enforcer than as a principal in his own right.” (Evan McMorris-Santoro and Ben Smith, “Obama Takes Control In The Second Term,” [BuzzFeed](#), 4/8/13)

- **“For The Time Being, The Plan Seems To Be Set: With His Second Term Legacy At Stake, It's Obama In Charge.”** “Obama is taking the risky path again, running things himself as Congress takes up the explosive issues of immigration reform, gun control, and returns to a budget fight. For the time being, the plan seems to be set: With his second term legacy at stake, it's Obama in charge.” (Evan McMorris-Santoro and Ben Smith, “Obama Takes Control In The Second Term,” [BuzzFeed](#), 4/8/13)

Former Obama Aide Jonathan Prince: “Obama ‘Is In Complete Control Of The White House.’” “Obama ‘is in complete control of the White House,’ said Jonathan Prince, a Democratic political consultant who was a foreign policy aide in Obama's first term. And the coming years will reveal whether

the president's command of the details and sense of himself as the smartest man in the room will produce a newly effective presidency — or a worrisome centralization.” (Evan McMorris-Santoro and Ben Smith, “Obama Takes Control In The Second Term,” [BuzzFeed](#), 4/8/13)

- **Top Democrat: “On Most Days It's Hard To Tell Him He's Wrong About Anything.”** “But Obama did not, when he took office just over four years ago, pretend to know more about running a White House than aides like Emanuel, who had been schooled in the battles of the Clinton administration. And while the president made the big calls, like pushing for a health-care overhaul, he did not always drive the administration's strategy on getting his agenda achieved. That has now, fully, changed. ‘You're talking about somebody who has a tremendous amount of confidence in his own capacities,’ said a top Democrat. ‘It's hard to imagine that four or five years into the thing now, he does not at this point feel like he has a better handle on it than any else in the building.’ ‘On most days it's hard to tell him he's wrong about anything — it's hard to tell him five years in he knows the rhythm of the place and he knows what works best for him,’ the Democrat said.” (Evan McMorris-Santoro and Ben Smith, “Obama Takes Control In The Second Term,” [BuzzFeed](#), 4/8/13)

For Liberals, The White House “Management Shift Comes With Hints Of A Leftward Policy Turn” Because “Obama Is Calling The Plays.” “To the White House's allies on the left, who have always believed (in spite of occasional evidence to the contrary) that the president is privately more liberal than his policies, the management shifts come with hints of a leftward policy turn. There are no more pet projects, and no more doubts. Obama is calling the plays, and McDonough is making sure they are run.” (Evan McMorris-Santoro and Ben Smith, “Obama Takes Control In The Second Term,” [BuzzFeed](#), 4/8/13)