

# FAILED PROMISE

## OBAMA HASN'T LIVED UP TO THE HOPE



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## Pivoter In Chief

### *After Criticism For Not Focusing On Jobs In His Inaugural Address, Obama Promises To Pivot Back To Jobs...Again*

**National Journal Headline: "Stung By Media's Focus On Liberal Agenda, Obama Pivots Back To Economy"** (Ron Fournier, "Stung By Media's Focus On Liberal Agenda, Obama Pivots Back To Economy," [National Journal](#), 2/8/13)

**ABC's Rick Klein: "He's Pivoted Enough To Have Spun Himself Around, More Than A Few Times."** "ABC's Rick Klein: He's pivoted enough to have spun himself around, more than a few times. But President Obama's latest turn toward jobs, in tomorrow's State of the Union address, will be about as memorable as the other turns so long as the fiscal and budget debates that have paralyzed Washington for two years now remain unresolved." (Michael Falcone, "The State Of The Union Is...", [ABC News' The Note](#), 2/11/13)

**The Associated Press Headline: "Obama Will Pivot Back To Jobs In State Of The Union"** (Julie Pace, "Obama Will Pivot Back To Jobs In State Of The Union," [The Associated Press](#), 2/9/13)

**Obama Aides Said To Watch Out For A Speech "Tilted Heavily Toward Policies Pledging Action On Joblessness, Growing The Economy And Expanding The Middle Class."** "Job One for President Obama in his State of the Union address will be to convince Americans that his top priority is *their* jobs. White House officials tell me they feel stung by coverage of the inaugural address. Reporters highlighted the president's left-leaning stances on immigration, gun control, climate change and gay and women's rights. Obama's aides argue that he devoted more inaugural address language to the economy, jobs and the deficit than all other issues combined. Still, the perception remains that Obama lost focus on the economy -- the top issue in the minds of most voters. So look for an address Tuesday tilted heavily toward policies pledging action on joblessness, growing the economy and expanding the middle class, White House officials said Friday." (Ron Fournier, "Stung By Media's Focus On Liberal Agenda, Obama Pivots Back To Economy," [National Journal](#), 2/8/13)

- **A Senior Democrat Consultant Close To The White House Said Obama "Needs To Get Back To Jobs, Jobs And Middle-Class Jobs."** "One senior Democratic consultant with ties to both the White House and Capitol Hill said he's not surprised by the slip in polls for two reasons. First, independent voters might want Obama talking more about their jobs and the economy. Second, liberal Democrats are unhappy with reports about Obama's aggressive drone warfare. 'He needs to get back to jobs, jobs and middle-class jobs,' the Democrat said, speaking on condition of anonymity to avoid retribution from the White House." (Ron Fournier, "Stung By Media's Focus On Liberal Agenda, Obama Pivots Back To Economy," [National Journal](#), 2/8/13)

## OBAMA HAS “PIVOTED” BACK TO JOBS SINCE HIS FIRST YEAR IN OFFICE

**DECEMBER 2009:** “SIREN: White House Plans ‘Very Hard Pivot To Jobs’ Next Month.” (Mike Allen, “SIREN: White House Plans ‘Very Hard Pivot To Jobs’ Next Month -- Will Be ‘Prescriptive’,” [Politico’s “Playbook”](#), 12/23/09)

**JANUARY 2010:** Obama Says He Will “Have A Sustained And Relentless Focus Over The Next Several Months On Accelerating The Pace Of Job Creation, Because That’s Priority Number One.” (President Barack Obama, [Remarks At The House Democratic Caucus Retreat](#), Washington, D.C., 1/14/10)

- **Obama Told A Town Hall In Tampa, Florida That “Creating Jobs Has To Be Our Number One Priority In 2010.”** OBAMA: “The worst of the storm has passed. But I think all of you understand the devastation remains. One in 10 Americans still can’t find work. That’s why creating jobs has to be our number one priority in 2010.” (President Barack Obama, [Remarks At Town Hall Meeting](#), Tampa, FL, 1/28/10)
- **By March 2010, *The New York Times*’ Jeff Zeleny Asked “Whatever Happened To That Shift From Health Care To The Economy?”** “By the time March arrived, President Obama was supposed to be entering his third month of the year talking about three things: jobs, jobs, jobs. ... So whatever happened to that shift from health care to the economy?” (Jeff Zeleny, “A Plan To Talk About Jobs, Elbowed Aside By Health Care,” [The New York Times](#), 3/2/10)

**APRIL 2010:** “Obama To Focus On Jobs, Rural Economy In Two-Day Midwest Trip.” (Roger Runningen, “Obama To Focus On Jobs, Rural Economy In Two-Day Midwest Trip,” [Bloomberg](#), 4/27/10)

- **Obama “Turns Attention To” Jobs And The Economy On Campaign-Style Swing.** “President Barack Obama embarks on a two-day, campaign-style swing through the rural Midwest today to talk about the U.S. economy and jobs as he turns attention to what will be a top issue in the November midterm elections.” (Roger Runningen, “Obama To Focus On Jobs, Rural Economy In Two-Day Midwest Trip,” [Bloomberg](#), 4/27/10)

**MAY 2010:** “Democrats Shifting Focus Back To Jobs Creation.” (Jackie Calmes, “Democrats Shifting Focus Back To Jobs Creation,” [The New York Times](#), 5/18/10)

- **“A Year That Democrats Decried Would Be About ‘Jobs, Jobs, Jobs’ Has Produced A Far Different Check List.”** “A year that Democrats decried would be about ‘jobs, jobs, jobs’ has produced a far different check list as its sixth month nears: health care, financial regulation, energy, a nuclear arms treaty and a Supreme Court vacancy, as well as investigations into a mine accident, a calamitous oil spill, a failed terrorist attack in Times Square and alleged Wall Street fraud. ... They hope to change that starting this week.” (Jackie Calmes, “Democrats Shifting Focus Back To Jobs Creation,” [The New York Times](#), 5/18/10)

**JUNE 2010:** The Obama Administration Kicks Off “Recovery Summer ... A Six-Week Long Push Designed To Highlight The Jobs Accompanying A Surge In Stimulus-Funded Projects.” “Vice President Joe Biden today will kick off the Obama administration’s ‘Recovery Summer,’ a six-week-long push designed to highlight the jobs accompanying a surge in stimulus-funded projects to improve highways, parks, drinking water and other public works.” (Mike Allen, “Obama, Biden Declare ‘Recovery Summer’,” [Politico](#), 6/17/10)

**SEPTEMBER 2010:** Obama Launches A “Hail-Mary Pass To Stimulate The Economy And Create New Jobs.” “Facing a grim unemployment picture and potentially disastrous mid-term elections for Democrats, President Obama is launching the political equivalent of a hail-Mary pass to stimulate the economy and create new jobs.” (Editorial, “Desperately Seeking Jobs,” [The Miami Herald](#), 9/8/10)

- **“Voters Are Entitled To Ask Why The Administration Has Waited So Long To Focus On Job Creation ...”** “Voters are entitled to ask why the administration has waited so long to focus on job creation (beyond government jobs). By doing so very late in the game, it suggests that Mr. Obama is desperate to find solutions for an economic stimulus plan that failed.” (Editorial, “Desperately Seeking Jobs,” [The Miami Herald](#), 9/8/10)

**DECEMBER 2010: President Obama Said “We Now Have To Pivot And Focus On Jobs And Growth.”**

(President Barack Obama, [News Conference](#), Washington D.C., 12/22/10)

**JANUARY 2011: “The White House Has Quickly Pivoted To Jobs After The President’s State Of The Union.”** “Turning to domestic politics, the White House has quickly pivoted to jobs after the president’s State of the Union -- even if it’s being overshadowed by the situation in Egypt.” (Chuck Todd, Mark Murray, Domenico

Montanaro, and Ali Weinberg, “First Thoughts: Balancing Act,” [NBC News’ “First Read”](#), 1/31/11)

**APRIL 2011: “Obama’s Day: Turning Back To Jobs ... President Obama Returns Today To What He Calls His Top Priority: Jobs.”** “Though his presidential hours have been crowded by Libya, Japan and other foreign policy challenges, President Obama returns today to what he calls his top priority: jobs.”

(David Jackson, “Obama’s Day: Turning Back To Jobs,” [USA Today](#), 4/1/11)

**AUGUST 2011: “OBAMA AND SENATE DEMS PLAN PIVOT TO JOBS”** “OBAMA AND SENATE DEMS PLAN PIVOT TO JOBS: Senate Democrats hope they now have ‘checked the box’ on debt reduction and can move to an agenda focused on job creation and economic growth, through a combination of spending and tax cuts.” (Mike Allen, “DEMS PLAN PIVOT TO JOBS: Transportation, Infrastructure, Tax Breaks On Fall Agenda,” [Politico’s “Playbook”](#), 8/2/11)

- **MSNBC’s Chuck Todd: “I Feel Like My Head Is Spinning How Many Times, ‘This Is The Time The White House Was Gonna To Pivot To Jobs.’”** TODD: “How many times, though – I feel like my head is spinning how many times, ‘this is the time the White House was gonna to pivot to jobs.’ I mean it is it is sort of a recurring thing. What is it that he can do?” (MSNBC’s “Daily Rundown,” 8/3/11)
- **ABC’s Jake Tapper: “It Feels Like Every Couple Of Months I Am Reporting That The White House Is Announcing That They Are Pivoting To A Jobs Agenda ...”** TAPPER: “For the last two and a half years here as the White House correspondent for ABC News, it feels like every couple of months I am reporting that the White House is announcing that they are pivoting to a jobs agenda, and something else happens. ... But here we are again saying it. And, of course, unemployment is staggeringly high -- much higher than anybody thought it would be at this point.” (ABC’s, “Special Report With George Stephanopoulos,” 8/02/11)
- **The New York Times’ Helene Cooper: “I Wish I Had A Dollar For Every Time I Had Written A Story That Said The White House Is Shifting To Jobs, Jobs, Jobs.”** COOPER: “I gotta say Chuck, that tone in your voice sounds like you’ve heard this all before. I think –they’ve tried this so many times, I wish I had a dollar for every time I had written a story that said the White House is shifting to jobs, jobs, jobs.” (MSNBC’s, [“Daily Rundown”](#), 8/17/11)

## **OBAMA HAS ALWAYS HAD TO BE REMINDED TO FOCUS ON MAIN STREET RATHER THAN HIS OWN LOFTY LIBERAL GOALS**

**In January 2009, “The Vice President Begged Obama To Make His Early Presidency About Jobs” Rather Than Health Care.** “As a pure political proposition, Axelrod advised Obama to dedicate himself to the economy and maybe education, that perennial political winner. Now Axelrod suddenly had reinforcements elsewhere in the new administration. At a meeting in January 2009, the vice president

begged Obama to make his early presidency about jobs. The people who'd given him his mandate would understand that times had changed, Joe Biden said. 'They'll give you a pass on this one.'" (Noam Scheiber, *The Escape Artists*, 2012, p. 140)

- **During A January 2009 White House Meeting, Biden "Railed That The Government Was In No Fiscal Shape To Pursue A Health Care Overhaul" That Year.** "At one January meeting to discuss the budget, Mr. Biden railed that the government was in no fiscal shape to pursue a health care overhaul this year — to the dismay of many present and others who heard about it." (Mark Leibovich, "Speaking Freely, Biden Finds Influential Role," *The New York Times*, 3/28/09)

**Throughout 2009, Then-Obama Senior Advisor David Axelrod Advised Obama To Focus On The Economy While Then-Chief Of Staff Rahm Emanuel "Begged" Obama Not To Pursue Health Care Reform.** "At various points, Vice President Joe Biden, senior advisor David Axelrod and Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel advised the president to focus entirely on the economy and leave comprehensive health care for another day. 'I begged him not to do this,' Emanuel told me when I was researching my book about Obama's first year in office." (Jonathan Alter, Op-Ed, "Barney Frank Makes A Misdiagnosis On ObamaCare," *Bloomberg*, 4/19/12)

**"[E]ven After Winning The Presidency, Obama Was Loath To Accept That The Economy Was Singularly Important" And Disregarded Calls From Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner For It To Be The Immediate Focus.** "But even after winning the presidency, Obama was loath to accept that the economy was singularly important. During a conference call with several senior aides early in the transition, Geithner remarked to his new boss that 'your signature accomplishment is going to be preventing a Great Depression.' ... Even so, Obama's response was slightly jarring. 'That's not enough for me,' said the president-elect." (Noam Scheiber, *The Escape Artists*, 2012, p. 15-16)

- **"It Suddenly Dawned On Geithner That He And His Colleagues Were A Sideshow Rather Than The Main Attraction."** (Noam Scheiber, *The Escape Artists*, 2012, p. 15-16)