



# State Of Obama's Union: Smarter Government

## *Obama's Repeated Calls For Smarter Government Have Done Little To Boost Americans' Confidence In His Administration*

### SINCE HE FIRST TOOK OFFICE, OBAMA HAS BEEN CALLING FOR A MORE RESPONSIBLE AND EFFICIENT GOVERNMENT

**Obama, In His 2011 State Of The Union: "We Shouldn't Just Give Our People A Government That's More Affordable. We Should Give Them A Government That's More Competent And More Efficient."** OBAMA: "Let me take this one step further. We shouldn't just give our people a government that's more affordable. We should give them a government that's more competent and more efficient. We can't win the future with a government of the past." (President Barack Obama, [Remarks By The President In State Of The Union Address](#), Washington, D.C., 1/25/11)

**Obama, 2012: Government Needs To Be "Leaner, Quicker, And More Responsive To The Needs Of The American People."** OBAMA: "The executive branch also needs to change. Too often, it's inefficient, outdated and remote. That's why I've asked this Congress to grant me the authority to consolidate the federal bureaucracy, so that our government is leaner, quicker, and more responsive to the needs of the American people." (President Barack Obama, [Remarks By The President In State Of The Union Address](#), Washington, D.C., 1/24/12)

- **Obama: "The Point Is, We Should All Want A Smarter, More Effective Government."** (President Barack Obama, [Remarks By The President In State Of The Union Address](#), Washington, D.C., 1/24/12)

**Obama, 2013: "It Is Not A Bigger Government We Need, But A Smarter Government That Sets Priorities And Invests In Broad-Based Growth. That's What We Should Be Looking For."** (President Barack Obama, [Remarks By The President In State Of The Union Address](#), Washington, D.C., 2/12/13)

**Obama, 2010: "It's Time The American People Get A Government That Matches Their Decency."** OBAMA: "It's because of this spirit -- this great decency and great strength -- that I have never been more hopeful about America's future than I am tonight. Despite our hardships, our union is strong. We do not give up. We do not quit. We do not allow fear or division to break our spirit. In this new decade, it's time the American people get a government that matches their decency; that embodies their strength. And tonight, tonight I'd like to talk about how together we can deliver on that promise." (President Barack Obama, [Remarks By The President In State Of The Union Address](#), Washington, D.C., 1/27/10)

**Obama, 2009: "Our Job Is To Govern With A Sense Of Responsibility."** OBAMA: "But I also know that in a time of crisis, we cannot afford to govern out of anger, or yield to the politics of the moment. My job -- our job -- is to solve the problem. Our job is to govern with a sense of responsibility." (President Barack Obama, [Address To Joint Session Of Congress](#), Washington, D.C., 2/24/09)

### OVER THE COURSE OF HIS PRESIDENCY, OBAMA BEEN A BYSTANDER AS HIS ADMINISTRATION HAS DEMONSTRATED INCOMPETENCE

## ***Obama Started His Second Term "In Complete Control" Of His White House But Failed To Lead As Scandals Erupted***

**"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)

- **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)

**Instead Of Moving His Second Term Agenda Forward, Obama Was "Besieged" By Controversies That Threatened His Credibility.** "The White House was besieged Tuesday by three controversies that threatened President Obama's second-term agenda and his administration's credibility. At a confrontational press briefing, White House press secretary Jay Carney tried to distance the president from the Internal Revenue Service's admission that it deliberately targeted conservative groups and the Justice Department's subpoena of Associated Press telephone records. Carney flatly denied any White House involvement in either issue, rejected the idea that there had been abuses of power and urged patience as investigations play out." (Justin Sink, "Controversies Threaten President Obama's Second-Term Agenda," [The Hill](#), 5/14/13)

- **"President Obama And His Insular Team Are Violating Almost Every Principle Of Crisis Management. Shoot Straight. Ditch The Spin. Don't Feed The Fire. Restore Trust."** (Ron Fournier, "Does Obama Need Staff Shakeup To Manage Scandals," [National Journal](#), 5/14/13)
- **Former Senior Obama Official: It's Like Obama Officials "Don't Know What They're Here To Do."** "'It feel like they don't know what they're here to do,' a former senior Obama administration official said. 'When there's no narrative, stuff like this consumes you.'" (Mike Allen and Jim VandeHei, "D.C. Turns On Obama," [Politico](#), 5/14/13)

**IRS TARGETING: Obama First Learned About The IRS Scandal From "News Reports."** OBAMA: "Let me take the IRS situation first. I first learned about it from the same news reports that I think most people learned about this. I think it was on Friday. And this is pretty straightforward. If, in fact, IRS personnel engaged in the kind of practices that have been reported on, and were intentionally targeting conservative groups, then that's outrageous." (President Barack Obama, [President Obama And Prime Minister Cameron Hold A Joint Press Conference](#), Washington, D.C., 5/13/13)

**DOJ SUBPOENAS: Obama First Learned About The Department Of Justice's Subpoenas For The Associated Press From "News Reports."** Q: "When did the President find out about the Department of Justice's subpoenas for the Associated Press?" CARNEY: "Yesterday. Let me just be clear. We don't have any independent knowledge of that. He found out about the news reports yesterday on the road." ([White House Press Briefing](#), 5/14/13)

**NSA SPYING ON FOREIGN LEADERS: Obama May Have Gone As Long As “Five Years Without Knowing His Own Spies Were Bugging The Phones Of World Leaders,” Including Merkel.** “The White House cut off some monitoring programs after learning of them, including the one tracking Ms. Merkel and some other world leaders, a senior U.S. official said. Other programs have been slated for termination but haven't been phased out completely yet, officials said. The account suggests President Barack Obama went nearly five years without knowing his own spies were bugging the phones of world leaders.” (Siobhan Gorman and Adam Entous, “Obama Unaware As U.S. Spied On World Leaders: Officials,” [The Wall Street Journal](#), 10/28/13)

- **MSNBC’s Mika Brzezinski Said The Notion That Obama Didn’t Know About The Merkel Affair Is “Embarrassing And Concerning.”** BRZEZINSKI: “If the president doesn't know this is happening. That’s sort of embarrassing and concerning.” (MSNBC’s “Morning Joe,” 10/28/13)

***Obama’s Signature Legislative Achievement Was A Train Wreck That He Didn’t See Coming***

**Obama On The Website’s Failed Launch: “Had I Been Informed, I Wouldn’t Be Going Out Saying, Boy, This Is Going To Be Great.”** QUESTION: “That's one question. Second question. You were informed, or several people in this building were informed two weeks before the launch of the website that it was failing the most basic tests internally, and yet a decision was made to launch the website on October 1st. Did you, sir, make that test? And if so, did you regret that?” PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA: “Okay, on the website, I was not informed directly that the website would not be working the way it was supposed to. Had I been informed, I wouldn’t be going out saying, boy, this is going to be great. I’m accused of a lot of things, but I don’t think I’m stupid enough to go around saying, this is going to be like shopping on Amazon or Travelocity a week before the website opens if I thought that it wasn’t going to work. So clearly, we and I did not have enough awareness about the problems in the website. Even a week into it, the thinking was that these were some glitches that would be fixed with patches, as opposed to some broader systemic problems that took much longer to fix and we’re still working on them. So that doesn't excuse the fact that they just don't work. But I think it’s fair to say that, no, Garrett -- Major, we would not have rolled out something knowing very well that it wasn’t going to work the way it was supposed, given all the scrutiny that we knew was going to be on the website.” (President Barack Obama, [Statement On The Affordable Care Act](#), Washington, DC, 11/14/13)

- **Secretary Of Health And Human Services Kathleen Sebelius Said That Obama Did Not Know About The ObamaCare Website’s Glitches And Shortcomings Prior To Its October 1 Launch Date.** CNN’s SANJAY GUPTA: “The president did say that he was angry about this. I mean do you know when he first knew that there was a problem?” SEBELIUS: “Well, I think it became clear fairly early on. The first couple of days, that...” GUPTA: “So not before that, though? Not before October 1st?” SEBELIUS: “No, sir.” GUPTA: “There was no concern at that point here in the White House or at HHS?” SEBELIUS: “I think that we talked about having -- testing, going forward. And if we had an ideal situation and could have built the product in, you know, a five-year period of time, we probably would have taken five years. But we didn't have five years. And certainly Americans who rely on health coverage didn't have five years for us to wait. We wanted to make sure we made good on this final implementation of the law. And, again, people can sign up. The call center is open for business. We’ve had 1,100,000 calls. We’ve had 19 million people visit the Web site, 500,000 accounts created. And people are shopping every day. So people are signing up and there's help in neighborhoods around the country, that people can have a one-on-one visit with a trained navigator and figure out how to sign up. So people are able to sign up.” (CNN’s “Anderson Cooper 360,” 10/22/13)

- **White House Press Secretary Jay Carney Confirmed Secretary Sebelius' Claims That The Administration "Did Not Know" The Significance Of The Glitches Until After The Rollout Began.** CARNEY: "Jim thank you for that question. Secretary Sebelius was referring to what I have said and what the President himself has said, which is that while we knew that there would be some glitches, and actually said publicly that we expected some problems, we did not know until the problems manifested themselves after the launch that they would be as significant as they turned out to be." (White House Press Briefing, Washington, D.C., 10/23/13)

**With His Response To ObamaCare's Failed Launch, "Once Again" Obama Risked "Looking Like A Bystander To His Own Presidency."** "Once again, Barack Obama risks looking like a bystander to his own presidency. Here's what he did to kick off the week: assemble a crowd in the Rose Garden to hear him repeat how 'frustrated' he was about the many problems that plagued the launch of the Affordable Care Act's website, promise that a 'tech surge' was already on its way to set those problems right and implore people to bear with him until they see what the program can do." (Edward-Isaac Dove, "President Obama's Passive Voice," [Politico](#), 10/22/13)

- **"Obama Is, After All, The President. He Has More Than A Little Say In What Happens Within His Own Administration."** "There's a level of semantic distance there, though, that often gets interpreted as an inherent refusal to take responsibility. Obama is, after all, the president. He has more than a little say in what happens within his own administration." (Edward-Isaac Dove, "President Obama's Passive Voice," [Politico](#), 10/22/13)
- **MSNBC's Chris Matthews: "Every Time Something Gets Screwed Up Out There, There's A Sense He Might Not Actually Be Involved. I Don't Think That's The Way It Ought To Be."** MATTHEWS: "What he doesn't seem to want to have is a chief executive strategy and a chief executive structure. He's not only the professor in charge, not only the visionary in charge, he's not only the foreign policy grand vizier, he's in fact the chief executive of the United States government responsible, yes for the IRS and all the agencies under him. Maybe you consider that conceptual but it's real and every time something gets screwed up out there, there's a sense he might not actually be involved. I don't think that's the way it ought to be." (MSNBC's "Morning Joe," 10/29/13)

## **A YEAR INTO HIS SECOND TERM, AMERICANS DON'T HAVE CONFIDENCE IN THE OBAMA'S ABILITY TO LEAD**

**Quinnipiac Poll: "The Obama Administration Is Not Competent Running The Government, Voters Say 53 - 42 Percent."** ([Quinnipiac University Poll](#), 1933 RV, 2.2 MoE%, 1/15/19/14)

**Quinnipiac Poll: 49 Percent Say Obama Is Not "Honest And Trustworthy," While 46 Percent Say He Is.** ([Quinnipiac University Poll](#), 1933 RV, 2.2 MoE%, 1/15/19/14)

**Tarrance Group/Lake Research Partners Poll: 57 Percent Of Likely Voters Disapprove Of Obama's Progress On Working With Congress, While Just 40 Percent Approve.** ([The Tarrance Group And Lake Research Partners Poll](#), 1000 LV, 3.1% MoE, 1/12-16/14)

**Tarrance Group/Lake Research Partners Poll: 55 Percent Of Likely Voters Disapprove Of Obama's Progress On Solving Problems, While Just 43 Percent Approve.** ([The Tarrance Group And Lake Research Partners Poll](#), 1000 LV, 3.1% MoE, 1/12-16/14)

**AP-GfK Poll: 58 Percent Of Americans Disapprove Of Obama's Management Of The Federal Government, While 39 Percent Approve.** ([AP-GfK Poll](#), 1060 A, 3.9% MoE, 1/17-21/14)