



State Of Obama's Union: What 2 Watch 4

Tonight, Obama's Sixth State Of The Union Will Feature The Same Old Rhetoric And More Broken Promises

Obama's Most Anticipated State Of The Union Proposals May Give Many Americans "Déjà Vu" Because They Are "From Last Year's Address." "SOTU Déjà vu – 'We must do more to combat climate change.' 'I realize that tax reform and entitlement reform will not be easy.' 'Send me a comprehensive immigration reform bill in the next few months, and I will sign it right away.' Pundits can picture Obama uttering all of those phrases on Jan. 28, 2014. Trouble is: they're all from LAST YEAR's address." (Carrie Dann, "2014 State Of The Union: Six Things To Expect During Obama's Speech," [NBC](#), 1/27/14)

- **"A Lot Of This Year's Big Ticket Items Are Going To Sound Very Familiar To His Audiences."** (Carrie Dann, "2014 State Of The Union: Six Things To Expect During Obama's Speech," [NBC](#), 1/27/14)

Obama's 2014 State Of The Union Will Try To Avoid His Mistakes Of 2013, "When A Long List Of Unfulfilled Policy Goals" Dragged Him Down "Like An Anchor." "No longer about bold ambitions, this year's State of the Union address will focus more on what's actually achievable. For the White House, that dose of realism is aimed at avoiding a repeat of 2013, when a long list of unfulfilled policy goals - including gun control and an immigration overhaul - dragged President Barack Obama down like an anchor. Tuesday's prime-time address will focus instead on redefining success for Obama - not by what he can jam through Congress but rather by what he can accomplish through his own presidential powers." (Julie Pace, "For Obama, An Address Focused On What's Achievable," [The Associated Press](#), 1/27/14)

After Years In The National Spotlight, Multiple State Of The Union Speeches, And "A Tendency To Rely Too Heavily On Speechmaking When In A Bind," The Novelty Of Obama's Oratory Is Fading. "Obama's oratory has always been the most powerful weapon in the White House arsenal, able to change conventional wisdom, unstick public opinion and embarrass recalcitrant opponents. But after 10 years in the national spotlight, four State of the Union speeches and a tendency to rely too heavily on speechmaking when in a bind, the novelty is fading." (Jay Newton-Small, "Barack Obama Will Try To Outrun History At 2014 State Of The Union," [Time](#), 1/26/14)

OBAMACARE

Politico Headline: "State Of The Union 2014: The Search For A Non-Awkward Obamacare Shout-Out" (David Nather, "State Of The Union 2014: The Search For A Non-Awkward Obamacare Shout-Out," [Politico](#), 1/27/14)

The Disastrous ObamaCare Rollout Continues To Haunt The Administration

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“It Will Be Obama’s Most High-Profile Address Since The Clunky Rollout Began, And Although It Has Come A Long Way Since The Worst Days Of October, It’s Still Not Enough For Him To Say, ‘Nailed It.’” (David Nather, “State Of The Union 2014: The Search For A Non-Awkward Obamacare Shout-Out,” [Politico](#), 1/27/14)

According To White House Officials, “No One Would Say The Administration Had Turned The Corner On The Obamacare Story.” “The officials also said Mr. Obama has been pleased with current enrollment numbers for the Affordable Care Act, though no one would say the administration had turned the corner on the Obamacare story.” (Major Garrett, “‘Unfinished Business’ On Obama’s Pre-State Of The Union Agenda,” [CBS News](#), 1/7/14)

- **The Obama Administration Can’t “Put Away The Fire Extinguishers Yet” On ObamaCare.** “That doesn’t mean the Obama administration can put its fire extinguishers away though. The age mix isn’t right yet with too many older adults and not enough younger ones. The early sign-ups in the exchanges may not include a lot of actual uninsured people, although some have probably been added through Medicaid. Insurers are still waiting for the ‘back end’ of the website, the part that handles their payments, to be built.” (David Nather, “State Of The Union 2014: The Search For A Non-Awkward Obamacare Shout-Out,” [Politico](#), 1/27/14)

As Obama Tries To Move Beyond The ObamaCare Rollout, The Administration Is Facing New Questions About The Long-Term Viability Of The System

Yesterday, Retiring Rep. Jim Moran (D-VA) Warned There May Not Be Enough Young, Healthy Enrollees In ObamaCare. “The White House on Monday dismissed concerns by retiring Rep. Jim Moran (D-Va.), who in a radio interview on Monday said he didn’t think enough young, healthy consumers would purchase ObamaCare policies. Moran told WAMU that millennials ‘are less likely to sign up’ for health insurance on the federal exchanges.” (Justin Sink, “WH Sees ‘Surge’ In Young O-Care Enrollees,” [The Hill](#), 1/27/14)

- **Moran: “I Don’t Think We’re Going To Get Enough Young People Signing Up To Make This Bill Work As It Was Intended To Financially.”** “I think they feel more independent, I think they feel a little more invulnerable than prior generations,’ Moran says. ‘But I don’t think we’re going to get enough young people signing up to make this bill work as it was intended to financially.’ Healthcare experts have warned of a so-called ‘death spiral’ if too few young, healthy adults buy into the ObamaCare marketplace to offset the costs of insuring older and sick Americans.” (Justin Sink, “WH Sees ‘Surge’ In Young O-Care Enrollees,” [The Hill](#), 1/27/14)

The Obama Administration “Released Demographic Data For ObamaCare That Shows Only 24 Percent Of Those Who Have A Selected Plan Are In The Critical 18- To 34-Year Old Age Group.” “The Obama administration for the first time Monday released demographic data for ObamaCare that shows only 24 percent of those who have selected a plan are in the critical 18- to 34-year-old age group.” (Jonathan Easley, “One-Quarter Of ObamaCare Signups Were Young People, Administration Says,” [The Hill’s Health Watch](#), 1/13/14)

The Number Of Younger Enrollees Is Well “Below The Level That Health Care Experts Say Is Required” For ObamaCare To Work. “That’s well below the 40 percent benchmark embraced by the administration, and is below the level that healthcare experts say is required for the law to function well.” (Jonathan Easley, “One-Quarter Of ObamaCare Signups Were Young People, Administration Says,” [The Hill’s Health Watch](#), 1/13/14)

- **The White House Goal Was To Have 2.7 Million Young Americans – Approximately 40 Percent Of Enrollees – Enrolled In A Health Plan In The First Year.** “This is below the White House’s target. The Obama administration has previously said that if 7 million people enrolled in coverage as expected, 2.7 million of them -- or about 40 percent -- would have to be young adults.” (Sarah Kliff, “One In Four ObamaCare Enrollees Are Young Adults. That’s Below The Target,” [The Washington Post’s Wonk Blog](#), 1/13/14)

THE ECONOMY

“President Barack Obama Is Calling 2014 ‘A Year Of Action’ For Creating Jobs And Economic Opportunities For American Families.” (“On Jobs, Obama Calls 2014 ‘A Year Of Action,’” [The Associated Press](#), 1/11/14)

The White House Seemingly Forgot About Many Of Obama’s 2013 State Of The Union Economic Proposals

Obama In His 2013 State Of The Union: “Tonight, I’m Announcing The Launch Of Three More Of These Manufacturing Hubs ... A Network Of 15 Of These Hubs...” BARACK OBAMA: “So tonight, I’m announcing the launch of three more of these manufacturing hubs, where businesses will partner with the Department of Defense and Energy to turn regions left behind by globalization into global centers of high-tech jobs. And I ask this Congress to help create a network of 15 of these hubs and guarantee that the next revolution in manufacturing is made right here in America. We can get that done.” (President Barack Obama, [Remarks By The President In The State Of The Union Address](#), Washington, D.C., 2/12/13)

- **Obama Had Promised To Name His Manufacturing Hubs By The End Of 2013, But Waited Until 2014 To Make The First Announcement.** “In the address, he also promised to create three manufacturing hubs where businesses could work with government to create high-tech jobs, and highlighted the promise in a speech at an Asheville, North Carolina, truck plant the next day. The administration launched competitions to create the three new hubs in May, pledging \$200 million in funding from the Defense, Energy and Commerce departments, and matching funds from industry, and state and local sources. The winners were to be announced by the end of 2013 but have not yet been named.” (Roberta Rampton, “Obama To Take Action On Manufacturing Goal Next Week,” [Reuters](#), 1/11/14)

In Obama’s 2013 State Of The Union, He Promised To Partner With The 20 Hardest Hit Areas In America During 2013. “And this year, my administration will begin to partner with 20 of the hardest-hit towns in America to get these communities back on their feet. We’ll work with local leaders to target resources at public safety, and education, and housing. We’ll give new tax credits to businesses that hire and invest. And we’ll work to strengthen families by removing the financial deterrents to marriage for low-income couples, and do more to encourage fatherhood -- because what makes you a man isn’t the ability to conceive a child; it’s having the courage to raise one.” (President Barack Obama, [Remarks By The President In The State Of The Union Address](#), 2/12/13)

- **Obama Waited Until January 2014 To Name His Five “Promise Zone” Communities, Despite Unveiling The Program In His 2013 State Of The Union.** “Obama also pledged to identify five communities that would be targeted for tax incentives and federal grants under a government ‘Promise Zone’ program. And it was only this month that the Obama administration named the five communities that qualified for ‘Promise Zone’ designation.” (Jim Kuhnhenn, “State Of The Union: Of Pledges, Pleas And Setbacks,” [The Associated Press](#), 1/22/14)

And While Americans Were Waiting For Obama To Act, Many Were Still Struggling In The Obama Economy

20.55 Million Americans Are Unemployed, Underemployed, Or Are Only Marginally Attached To The Labor Force. ([Bureau Of Labor Statistics](#), Accessed 1/27/14)

- **10.4 Million Americans Are Unemployed.** ([Bureau Of Labor Statistics](#), Accessed 1/27/14)
- **7.8 Million Americans Are Working Part-Time For Economic Reasons.** ([Bureau Of Labor Statistics](#), Accessed 1/27/14)
- **2.4 Million Americans Were Marginally Attached To The Labor Force.** ([Bureau Of Labor Statistics](#), Accessed 1/27/14)

10.4 Million Americans Are Currently Unemployed. ([Bureau Of Labor Statistics](#), Accessed 1/23/14)

13.1 Percent Of Americans Are Either Unemployed, Marginally Attached To The Workforce Or Working Part-Time For Economic Reasons. ([Bureau Of Labor Statistics](#), Accessed 1/23/14)

INCOME INEQUALITY

“One Of Obama’s Major Themes For 2014 Will Be The Perils Of Rising Income Inequality.” (Sahil Kapur, “White House Previews Obama’s 2014 Agenda Before State Of The Union,” [Talking Points Memo](#), 1/8/14)

Obama’s 2012 State Of The Union Address Also Was “Deeply Saturated With The Message Of Income Inequality,” Which Obama Called The “Defining Issue Of Our Time.” “President Obama delivered a State of the Union address Tuesday that was deeply saturated with the message of income inequality, a populist idea that the White House hopes will resonate on the campaign trail. Calling it the ‘defining issue of our time,’ Obama made the case that Americans now face a choice between a country where a ‘shrinking number of people do really well’ and a society where every individual gets a fair shot.” (Charles Riley, “Obama Focuses State Of The Union On Income Inequality,” [CNN Money](#), 1/24/12)

Despite Obama’s Many Pledges, Incomes Have Declined And Poverty Has Increased On His Watch

Since President Obama Took Office, Median Household Income Has Declined By \$3,827 From \$56,124 In January 2009 To \$52,297 In December 2013. (Gordon Green and John Coder, “Household Income Trends Series: November 2013,” [Sentier Research](#), 1/23/13)

The Poverty Rate Has Increased To 15 Percent, From 13.2 Percent, Since Obama Became President. ([U.S. Census](#), Accessed 1/13/14)

- **The Number Of People In Poverty Reached A Record Level Of 46.5 Million In 2012 After 6.7 Million Had Fallen Into Poverty Since Obama Became President.** ([U.S. Census](#), Accessed 1/13/14)

The Average Week’s Unemployed Has Nearly Doubled Since Obama Became President – From 19.8 Weeks In January 2009 To 37.1 Weeks In December 2013. ([Bureau Of Labor Statistics](#), Accessed 1/23/14)

ENERGY

Senior Administration Official: Obama Wants To Do All That He Can To Make Climate Change And Clean Energy Part Of His Presidential Legacy. “The issue is all but dead in Congress for the foreseeable future, but the official said Obama wants to do all that he can to make it part of his presidential legacy.” (Sahil Kapur, “White House Previews Obama’s 2014 Agenda Before State Of The Union,” [Talking Points Memo](#), 1/8/14)

You Probably Won’t Hear Obama Mention That His Expected Proposals On Coal-Fired Plants Are Having Devastating Effects For Coal Communities

“The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s Long-Awaited Guidelines Are Expected To Make It More Difficult For New Coal-Fired Power Plants To Be Built.” (Valerie Volcovici, “U.S. EPA Sets First-Ever Curbs On Power Plant Pollution,” [Reuters](#), 9/20/13)

The Wall Street Journal Headline: “The Future Of Coal: New Pollution Rules Choke Old Power Plants” (Rebecca Smith And John W. Miller, “The Future Of Coal: New Pollution Rules Choke Old Power Plants,” [The Wall Street Journal](#), 1/7/14)

Or That Obama Has Failed To Approve The Job-Creating Keystone Pipeline

The White House Has Failed “So Far To Approve The Keystone XL Pipeline From Alberta To Nebraska, Which Would Help Carry Crude From Canada To United States Refineries On The Gulf

Coast. “Officials say the White House's failure so far to approve the Keystone XL Pipeline from Alberta to Nebraska, which would help carry crude from Canada to United States refineries on the Gulf coast, has dampened the faith of prime minister Stephen Harper in deeper North American integration: Canada is looking across the Pacific for oil markets.” (“Ready To Take Off Again?” *The Economist*, 1/4/14)

- **“Behind The Scenes, A Complex Political Calculus Is At Play On Everything From The Timing Of The Decision [On Keystone] To The Outcome.”** (Jeff Mason, “Analysis: Politics, Legacy Loom Over Obama Decision On Keystone XL Pipeline,” [Reuters](#), 1/27/14)

Former Obama National Security Advisor Tom Donilon: I Would Recommend That Obama Approve Keystone Pipeline. WALTER ISAACSON: “I know you’re not in the administration anymore, so maybe you could answer. Would you recommend for the keystone pipeline if you were there?” DONILON: “You know, I would.” (Tom Donilon, [Remarks At Aspen Institute Forum](#), Washington, D.C., 1/7/14)

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Obama Is Expected To Mention International Trade In His Address Tonight. “Two other issues that Obama is likely to mention in his State of the Union speech – global warming and international trade – remain more niche concerns, cited by fewer than one-third of the public as a top priority.” (David Lauter, “Deficit Reduction Drops As A Public Priority, New Poll Shows,” [Los Angeles Times](#), 1/27/14)

But Obama’s Trade Agenda Is Stalled By Members Of His Own Party In Congress

“President Barack Obama Threw A Trade Party And Almost No Democrats Showed Up.” (Eric Bradner, “Hill Democrats MIA On Obama’s Trade Agenda,” [Politico](#), 1/15/14)

Obama “Is Pushing For Legislation To Ease The Passage Of A Pair Of Massive Trade Deals, But The White House Can’t Even Find A Democratic Co-Sponsor In The House.” “His administration is pushing for legislation to ease the passage of a pair of massive trade deals, but the White House can’t even find a Democratic co-sponsor in the House. Meanwhile, the bill’s main Democratic backer in the Senate, Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus, is on his way out, and key senior Democrats on the committee, including its incoming chairman, say they either don’t support the bill or want to change it.” (Eric Bradner, “Hill Democrats MIA On Obama’s Trade Agenda,” [Politico](#), 1/15/14)

IRAN

Obama Is Expected To Tout His Deal With Iran That Would Limit Sanctions. “Obama will have other foreign policy initiatives to discuss, namely the first substantive negotiations to scale back Iran’s nuclear program. ... He will likely make the case for patience in the State of the Union, especially with the Senate, which is now considering new sanctions against Iran that the president believes could scuttle negotiations.” (Scott Wilson, “Obama’s 7 State Of The Union Talking Points. No. 5: Ending The War In Afghanistan,” [The Washington Post](#), 1/26/14)

But Now, Democrats Are Some Of The Most Vocal Critics Of Obama’s Iran Policy

Reuters’ Headline: “Senate Majority Support Iran Sanctions Bill Opposed By Obama” (Timothy Gardner And Patricia Zengerle, “Senate Majority Support Iran Sanctions Bill Opposed By Obama,” [Reuters](#), 1/9/14)

- **More Than Half Of U.S. Senators Support The Iran Sanctions Bill.** “More than half of U.S. senators support a bill to impose new sanctions on Iran should the Islamic Republic break an agreement to curb its nuclear program, aides said on Thursday, but there was no plan yet to debate the measure.” (Timothy Gardner And Patricia Zengerle, “Senate Majority Support Iran Sanctions Bill Opposed By Obama,” [Reuters](#), 1/9/14)

Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-NY): “I Am Disappointed By The Terms Of The Agreement Between Iran And The P5+1 Nation Because It Does Not Seem Proportional.” “‘I am disappointed by the terms of the agreement between Iran and the P5+1 nation because it does not seem proportional,’ Schumer said.” (Evan Puschak, “Critics Blast Iran Deal As US ‘Defeat,’” [MSNBC](#), 11/24/13)

INFRASTRUCTURE

Obama Will Also Call For “More Infrastructure Spending.” “He will also call for a higher minimum wage, more infrastructure spending and an expansion of prekindergarten education, issues on which the parties are less likely to agree.” (Peter Baker, “Obama Pursuing A Modest Agenda In State Of Union,” [The New York Times](#), 1/25/14)

Obama’s Calls For More Infrastructure Are Just Repeated Themes From His Past Four State Of The Union Addresses

2010: Obama Said That We Would “Put Americans To Work Today Building The Infrastructure Of Tomorrow.” “Next, we can put Americans to work today building the infrastructure of tomorrow. From the first railroads to the Interstate Highway System, our nation has always been built to compete. There’s no reason Europe or China should have the fastest trains, or the new factories that manufacture clean energy products.” (President Barack Obama, [Remarks By The President In State Of The Union Address](#), Washington, D.C., 1/27/10)

2011: Obama Said That We Would “Put More Americans To Work Repairing Crumbling Roads And Bridges.” “We’ll put more Americans to work repairing crumbling roads and bridges. We’ll make sure this is fully paid for, attract private investment, and pick projects based [on] what’s best for the economy, not politicians.” (President Barack Obama, [Remarks By The President In State Of The Union Address](#), Washington, D.C., 1/25/11)

2012: Obama Said “So Much Of America Needs To Be Rebuilt,” Highlighting America’s “Crumbling Roads And Bridges.” “Building this new energy future should be just one part of a broader agenda to repair America’s infrastructure. So much of America needs to be rebuilt. We’ve got crumbling roads and bridges; a power grid that wastes too much energy; an incomplete high-speed broadband network that prevents a small business owner in rural America from selling her products all over the world.” (President Barack Obama, [Remarks By The President In State Of The Union Address](#), Washington, D.C., 1/24/12)

2013: Obama Acknowledged America’s “Aging Infrastructure” And Said To “Ask Any CEO Where They’d Rather Located And Hire—A Country With Deteriorating Roads And Bridges, Or One With High-Speed Rail And Internet; High-Tech Schools, Self-Healing Power Grids.” “America’s energy sector is just one part of an aging infrastructure badly in need of repair. Ask any CEO where they’d rather locate and hire -- a country with deteriorating roads and bridges, or one with high-speed rail and Internet; high-tech schools, self-healing power grids. The CEO of Siemens America -- a company that brought hundreds of new jobs to North Carolina -- said that if we upgrade our infrastructure, they’ll bring even more jobs.” (President Barack Obama, [Remarks By The President In State Of The Union Address](#), Washington, D.C., 1/12/13)

And While Obama Has Talked Repeatedly About Infrastructure, The Manufacturing And Construction Industries Are Still Hurting Under His Watch

721,000 Construction Jobs Have Been Lost Since Obama Became President. ([Bureau Of Labor Statistics](#), Accessed 1/23/14)

528,000 Manufacturing Jobs Have Been Lost Since Obama Became President. ([Bureau Of Labor Statistics](#), Accessed 1/23/14)

- **The Bureau Of Labor Statistics Estimated Over 549,000 Manufacturing Jobs Will Be Lost Between 2012 And 2022.** (“Employment Projections – 2012-2022,” [U.S. Department Of Labor Bureau Of Labor Statistics](#), 12/19/13)