



# Team Obama Spends Sunday On Defense

*If It's Sunday, It's Time For Team Obama To Play Defense*

## ON DEFENSE OVER MEDICARE

*Obama Campaign Can't Answer Questions About Obama's Plan To Bankrupt Medicare*



### [Watch Gibbs Dodge The Findings Of Medicare's Actuary](#)

**Fox's Chris Wallace:** "That is the argument that the Obama campaign makes – that the \$716 billion is all in cuts to providers and insurance companies and it will have no effect on benefits or services to the beneficiaries. Let me ask my question. Medicare's own actuary, own actuary of Medicare - not of the Romney campaign - says that is impossible. That you can't have the same services for \$716 billion less. And let's put up some of what the Medicare actuary says. They say that 15 percent of Medicare providers will be unprofitable by 2019. 25 percent of Medicare providers will be unprofitable by 2030. And the Medicare actuary concludes – this is his quote - in practice Medicare providers could not sustain continued negative margins and, absent legislative changes, would have to withdraw – withdraw - from providing services to Medicare beneficiaries, merge with other provider groups or shift substantial portions of the Medicare costs it to their non-Medicare non-Medicaid providers. In other words, according to the actuary, Medicare patients, millions of them will lose access to Medicare benefits."

**Senior Obama Campaign Adviser Robert Gibbs:** "If Medicare companies that are involved in the program continue doing what they are doing, which is inefficient."

**Wallace:** "Wait a minute. The actuary says, in practice, Medicare providers could not sustain continuing negative margins."

**Gibbs:** "If Medicare providers continue to do what we are doing. Right now, under the old program, Chris, if a senior got readmitted over and over and over to the hospital for the same illness, they got paid every

single time the senior got admitted into the hospital. Why not strengthen the benefit by adding preventive health care to it and trying to ensure that the patient gets accountable care and treated before they get that disease.”

**Wallace:** “If the providers don't do it, then what happens is, under your plan, this unelected board, 15 bureaucrats come in and they decide what, well, you are laughing at it but that is it. The IPAB.”

**Gibbs:** “I guess I am laughing at your characterization of it.”

**Wallace:** “Are they an elected board?”

**Gibbs:** “They are medical professionals, they are people we trust to make medical decisions.”

**Wallace:** “Are they elected by anybody? They are an unaccountable unelected board that comes in and will make decisions on what the providers and what hospitals have to do and Congress either has to vote it all up or all down.”

(Fox's [“Fox News Sunday,”](#) 8/19/12)

### ***Campaign Adviser Robert Gibbs Dismisses The Findings Of Medicare's Own Actuary On Obama's Devastating Cuts To Medicare***

**Obamacare's Cuts Will Cause Enrollment In Medicare Advantage To “Plummet By About 50 Percent” And Leave Seniors With “Higher Out-Of-Pocket Costs.”** “In addition to flagging provider cuts as potentially unsustainable, the report [HHS] projected that reductions in payments to private Medicare Advantage plans would trigger an exodus from the popular alternative. Enrollment would plummet by about 50 percent. Seniors leaving the private plans would still have health insurance under traditional Medicare, but many might face higher out-of-pocket costs.” (Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar, “Report Says Health Care Will Cover More, Cost More,” [The Associated Press](#), 4/23/10)

**Medicare's Actuary Warned That 15 Percent Of “Hospitals, Skilled Nursing Facilities, And Home Health Agencies” Will Not Be Profitable By 2019 Due To Obama's Medicare Cuts.** “In the Office of the Actuary's April 22, 2010 memorandum on the estimated financial effects of the Affordable Care Act, we noted that by 2019 the update reductions would result in negative total facility margins for about 15 percent of hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, and home health agencies. This estimated percentage would continue to increase, reaching roughly 25 percent in 2030 and 40 percent by 2050. In practice, providers could not sustain continuing negative margins and, absent legislative changes, would have to withdraw from providing services to Medicare beneficiaries, merge with other provider groups, or shift substantial portions of Medicare costs to their non-Medicare, non-Medicaid payers.” (“Projected Expenditures Under An Illustrative Scenario With Alternative Payment Updates To Medicare Providers,” [Center For Medicare & Medicaid Services](#), 5/13/11)

**The Columbus Dispatch, On Obamacare's Medicare Cuts: “Would Limit The Availability Of Care For Millions Of Seniors In The Medicare Program...”** “Almost daily, the ill effects of the health-care overhaul passed by Congress last month are becoming apparent. ... That's just for starters. The report also warns that the \$575 billion in Medicare reductions that are supposed to help pay for the overhaul are unrealistic. ... This would limit the availability of care for millions of seniors in the Medicare program at a time when doctors and hospitals already will be stretched thin by the addition of millions of other Americans clamoring to use the health insurance the overhaul will provide.” (Editorial, “Malpractice,” [The Columbus Dispatch](#), 4/28/12)

- **Obama's Medicare Cuts Mean Hospitals And Other Health Care Providers “Might Drop Medicare Patients.”** “15 percent of hospitals and other care facilities that rely on Medicare

reimbursements would become unprofitable, meaning that they might drop Medicare patients.”  
(Editorial, “Malpractice,” [The Columbus Dispatch](#), 4/28/12)

- **FactCheck.org: Obama’s Promise To Seniors On Medicare “That ‘Benefits Will Remain The Same’ Is Just As Fictional As The Town Of Mayberry...”** “Currently, about 1 in every 4 Medicare beneficiary is enrolled in a Medicare Advantage plan. For many of them, the words in this ad ring hollow, and the promise that ‘benefits will remain the same’ is just as fictional as the town of Mayberry was when Griffith played the local sheriff.” (Brooks Jackson, “Mayberry Misleads On Medicare,” [FactCheck.org](#), 7/31/10)

## ON DEFENSE OVER TRANSPARENCY

***When Pressed, Senior Adviser Robert Gibbs Says Obama Is Transparent Because He’s Taken “A Question”***



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**Fox’s Chris Wallace:** “If the President is so interested in transparency, as you indicate, why is it that he has held one news conference at the White House this year and that was back in March, more than five months ago, and why is it that he refused to release documents to Congress and invoked executive privilege on Operation Fast and Furious?”

**Senior Obama Campaign Adviser Robert Gibbs:** “The situation of interviewing the President. The President, let me just give you some statistics. I wrote the statistics down so I wouldn’t get them wrong. In the month of August, and we’re only 19 days into August, the President has done 13 local TV interviews.”

**Wallace:** “That includes Entertainment Tonight and that included being asked what his favorite workout song was.”

**Gibbs:** “Do I get to answer the questions, too? 11 radio interviews and five round-table interviews with 15 journalists.”

**Wallace:** “Why not sit down with the White House Press Corps?”

**Gibbs:** “Look, I think the President. The President did take a question from the White House Press Corps regarding the shooting that happened in Wisconsin.”

**Wallace:** “A question?”

**Gibbs:** “I think the White House Press Corps. I’ve spent a little bit of time in the press room. The White House Press Corps has good questions, but so do local TV stations in Iowa and in Colorado, in Ohio, who

regularly get to ask the President questions. The notion that this President is somehow not doing interviews is ridiculous. Not long ago we were answering questions and charges from the Republican that somehow Barack Obama was overexposed. “

**Wallace:** “We are looking forward to our first interview of his presidency here on ‘Fox News Sunday.’”

**Gibbs:** “Well, I know the president has spent some time with Bret Baier. I believe you interviewed the president at the White House when I was there. Is that correct?”

**Wallace:** “That’s true. In February, one month into his presidency.”

**Gibbs:** “Not too bad.”

(Fox’s [“Fox News Sunday.”](#) 8/19/12)

### ***Obama Hasn’t Taken A Question From The White House Press Corps In Over Two Months***

**Obama Hasn’t Taken Questions From The White House Press Corps On U.S. Soil Since June 8.** “The White House press corps has not formally been given the opportunity to ask questions of the president on U.S. soil since his appearance in the briefing room on June 8 (when he said ‘the private sector is doing fine.’)” (Jake Tapper, “President Obama Takes Questions From People Mag, Entertainment Tonight, Disses White House Press Corps,” [ABC News](#), 8/16/12)

- **“His Last Formal White House News Conference Was On March 6.”** (Jake Tapper, “President Obama Takes Questions From People Mag, Entertainment Tonight, Disses White House Press Corps,” [ABC News](#), 8/16/12)

**Obama Hasn’t Taken Questions From The White House Press Corp In Two Months, But Recently Took Questions From Entertainment Tonight And People Magazine.** “President Obama hasn’t formally taken questions from the White House press corps in more than two months, while on the campaign trail in Iowa yesterday he made time for reporters from People Magazine and Entertainment Tonight.” (Jake Tapper, “President Obama Takes Questions From People Mag, Entertainment Tonight, Disses White House Press Corps,” [ABC News](#), 8/16/12)

- **NBC’s Andrea Mitchell: “When Is [Obama] Going To Be Accessible For Questions Other Than To People Magazine And Entertainment Tonight?”** (MSNBC’s [“Andrea Mitchell Reports.”](#) 8/16/12)
- **NBC’s Chuck Todd: “Why Build A Press Briefing Room If The President Isn’t Going To Brief The Press?”** “‘I hate the fact that they have made me worry more about access than reporting. Why build a press briefing room if the president isn’t going to brief the press?’ NBC News chief White House correspondent Chuck Todd told POLITICO, who said the White House’s disregard for the press has ‘reached a new low.’” (Byron Tau and Dylan Byers, “Obama’s Soft-Media Strategy,” [Politico](#), 8/17/12)

**“At The Same Point In Their Reelection Campaign, George W. Bush And Bill Clinton Had Held 17 And 16 Pressers, Respectively. Obama Has Held Just Eight.”** “Indeed, Obama has held half as many availabilities as his two most recent predecessors at this point in the year of their reelection campaigns, according to data provided by Towson professor and presidential scholar Martha Joynt Kumar. At the same point in their reelection campaign, George W. Bush and Bill Clinton had held 17 and 16 pressers, respectively. Obama has held just eight.” (Byron Tau and Dylan Byers, “Obama’s Soft-Media Strategy,” [Politico](#), 8/17/12)

## **ON DEFENSE, OBAMA CAMPAIGN ADMITS THE VP IS A “DISTRACTION”**

### ***Obama’s Deputy Campaign Manager Called Biden A “Distraction”***



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**Obama Campaign Manager Stephanie Cutter Admits Joe Biden Is A “Distraction.”** CNN’S JIM ACOSTA: “And not to belabor this too long, but was it at the very least, a poor choice of words?” CUTTER: “I think it is a distraction I think the word distracted from the larger point, and the point is that Wall Street shouldn’t be unshackled. Wall Street shouldn’t be deregulated, I think Wall Street and main street need to play by the same set of rules. The middle-class can’t carry the burden any longer, that’s what happened in the last decade, they had to bail out Wall Street.” (CNN’s [“State Of The Union,”](#) 8/19/12)

***DGA Chairman Gov. Martin O’Malley Says Biden’s Words Were “Indelicate”***



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**DGA Chair Gov. Martin O’Malley (D-MD) Admits Biden’s Chains Remark Was “An Indelicate Choice Of Words.”** NBC’S DAVID GREGORY: “Governor O’Malley, ‘put y’all back in chains,’ what was the Vice President doing there? Was it over the top?” GOVERNOR MARTIN O’MALLEY (D-MD): “I think it was an indelicate play on the Republican words of shackling the economy with regulations, and shackling small businesses. And so it was certainly and indelicate choice of words.” (NBC’s [“Meet The Press,”](#) 8/19/12)

***Biden And His Verbal Tendencies Present A Number Of Challenges For Obama***

**Recent Biden Gaffes “Reignited Discussion Of Whether He Distracts From His Party’s Message Or Reinforces It.”** “Pointed assertions from Vice President Joe Biden this week have reignited discussion of whether he distracts from his party’s message or reinforces it, a question that has arisen periodically since President Barack Obama chose him as his running mate four years ago. Mr. Biden drew sharp criticism from Republicans after telling a Virginia audience, which included a large number of African-Americans, that GOP presidential candidate Mitt Romney wants to ‘put you all back in chains’ by rolling back new Wall Street regulations.” (Carol E. Lee and Danny Yadron, “Biden’s Remarks Draw New Scrutiny,” [The Wall Street Journal](#), 8/15/12)

**Biden’s “Pentchanted For Off-Message Moments Regularly Sends Aides In The West Wing And At**



**Chicago Re-Election Headquarters Into Orbit. His Staff's Response Is Effectively To Try To Save Biden From Himself.** "But his penchant for off-message moments regularly sends aides in the West Wing and at Chicago re-election headquarters into orbit. His staff's response is effectively to try to save Biden from himself. During the Virginia trip reporters were hustled out of retail campaign stops in diners and other intimate settings, aides tried to edit media pool reports for any potential land mines that could be seized on by Republicans and even hovered at close range to eavesdrop on journalists' conversations with attendees at Biden rallies." (Jonathan Martin, "Mission Impossible: Managing Joe Biden," [Politico](#), 8/16/12)

**"What's Perhaps Most Striking About The Biden Staff's Attempts At Press Management Is Their Effort To Influence What Goes In The Pool Reports From His Off-Schedule Stops."** "What's perhaps most striking about the Biden staff's attempts at press management is their effort to influence what goes in the pool reports from his off-schedule stops. Because the entire press corps cannot easily jam in, say, a diner or private home, it is standard practice to have a single designated reporter take notes and share the material with colleagues from other news organizations. These reports are designed entirely for the media, but are distributed by White House staffers. In the case of Obama, as with his predecessors, the reports are simply forwarded without comment by e-mail to a news media distribution list." (Jonathan Martin, "Mission Impossible: Managing Joe Biden," [Politico](#), 8/16/12)

## ON DEFENSE, OBAMA CAMPAIGN IS LYING ABOUT PRIORITIES USA AD

***Obama Deputy Campaign Manager Stephanie Cutter Says She "Didn't Know" Joe Sptic's Story Until "Only Recently"***



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**Obama Deputy Campaign Manager Stephanie Cutter: "I Didn't Know The Facts Of When Mr. Sptic's Wife Got Sick And I Only Recently Learned Them Through All Of The Hysteria Over That Ad."** ABC NEWS' JAKE TAPPER: "Okay, I only have a couple minutes left, I want to get both of your thoughts on some independent groups and questions. Stephanie, if you could clear something up for me. When the pro-Obama Super PAC Priorities USA Action introduced an ad that suggested Mitt Romney was responsible in some way for the death of a steelworker's wife, you said, quote, 'I don't know the facts about when this individual's wife got sick or the facts about his health insurance.' But, in actuality, you were on a conference call where that steelworker himself told his story. Can you explain why you said you didn't know the facts about the situation?" CUTTER: "Because I didn't. I didn't know the facts of when Mr. Sptic's wife got sick and I only recently learned them through all of the hysteria over that ad." (ABC's ["This Week"](#), 8/19/12)

***But The Obama Campaign Has Touted Joe Sptic's Story Time And Time Again***

**While Team Obama Insists It's Not "Familiar" With The Story Of Priorities USA Star Joe Sptic, All They Have To Do Is "Check Their Own Campaign Archives."** "When President Obama's aides said they

weren't familiar with former Missouri steelworker Joe Soptic's life story, all they had to do was check their own campaign archives. Soptic, laid off from Bain Capital-owned GST Steel, stars in a Priorities USA Action spot this week in which he tells of how his wife died without health insurance after he lost his job." (Reid J. Epstein, "Team Obama Says They Don't Know Story Of Man Who Stars Of Its TV Ad, Conference Call," [Politico](#), 8/8/12)

**Obama Deputy Campaign Manager Stephanie Cutter Hosted A Call With Soptic In May.** "But Cutter hosted an Obama campaign conference call in May in which Soptic told reporters the very story featured in the Priorities spot." (Reid J. Epstein, "Team Obama Says They Don't Know Story Of Man Who Stars Of Its TV Ad, Conference Call," [Politico](#), 8/8/12)

- **"On The May 14 Obama Campaign Call, Soptic Detailed His Wife's Illness And Death."** (Reid J. Epstein, "Team Obama Says They Don't Know Story Of Man Who Stars Of Its TV Ad, Conference Call," [Politico](#), 8/8/12)
- **Cutter: "Thank You, Joe. We Really Appreciate You And David Sharing Your Experiences."** (Obama For America, [Press Call](#), 5/14/12)

**Joe Soptic, The Star Of The Priorities USA Ad, Was Featured In An Obama Ad In May That Called Romney A "Vampire."** "Joe Soptic, the star of a new Priorities USA Action ad attacking Mitt Romney and a former employee of GST Steel, implies that Romney killed his wife — but it's not the first charge he's leveled at the presumptive Republican nominee. Soptic was featured in the controversial ad aired by the Obama campaign in May that called Romney a 'vampire' — a charge that drew condemnation from Democrats, including Newark Mayor Cory Booker." (Zeke Miller, "Man In Super PAC Ad Starred In Controversial Obama Ad," [BuzzFeed](#), 8/8/12)

- **"Soptic Also Appeared, Wearing What Appears To Be An Identical Shirt, In A May Television Ad For The Obama Campaign."** (Reid J. Epstein, "Team Obama Says They Don't Know Story Of Man Who Stars Of Its TV Ad, Conference Call," [Politico](#), 8/8/12)

**"Soptic Was Also Featured On The Obama Campaign Website."** (Zeke Miller, "Man In Super PAC Ad Starred In Controversial Obama Ad," [BuzzFeed](#), 8/8/12; Grant Fuller, "Faces Of Romney Economics: Joe Soptic, American Steelworker," [Obama For America](#), 5/15/12)

**On Its Website, The Obama Campaign Describes Joe Soptic As A Former GST Steelworker "Whose Wife Died Of Lung Cancer After He Lost His GST Health Plan."** ([Obama For America](#), Accessed 8/19/12)

**"The Longstanding Relationship With Soptic Strains The Obama Campaign's Evasiveness On The Priorities Ad, In Which Aides Have Said They Can't Comment On It Because They Are Unfamiliar With The Facts."** (Zeke Miller, "Man In Super PAC Ad Starred In Controversial Obama Ad," [BuzzFeed](#), 8/8/12)