

September 2, 2012



# They (Haven't) Said It!

*Obama's Senior Advisors Can't Say Whether Americans Are Better Off After Four Years Of Obama*

DAVID AXELROD CAN'T SAY AMERICANS ARE BETTER OFF



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**When Asked If Americans Are Better Off Than They Were Four Years Ago, Obama Senior Advisor David Axelrod Doesn't Respond To The Question.** FOX'S CHRIS WALLACE: "But you keep talking about Romney. I'd like to talk about the Obama record and I want to put some statistics up on the screen. Unemployment was 7.8 percent when the president took office; it's now 8.3 percent. Median household income was almost \$55,000; it's now less than \$51,000. Gas was \$1.85 a gallon when he took office, now it's \$3.78, almost double. The national debt was \$10.6 trillion and it may go past \$16 trillion this week. So just looking at the president's record and those statistics, David, is the average American better off than four years ago?" OBAMA ADVISOR DAVID AXELROD: "Chris, as I said to you before, I think the average American recognizes that it took years to create the crisis that erupted in 2008 and peaked in January of 2009. And it's gonna take some time to work through it." (Fox's "[Fox News Sunday](#)," 9/2/12)

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## DAVID PLOUFFE CAN'T SAY AMERICANS ARE BETTER OFF



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**When Asked If Americans Are Better Off Than They Were Four Years Ago, Obama Senior Advisor David Plouffe Refuses To Say Yes Or No.** ABC'S GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS: "But yes or no, are Americans better off today than they were four years ago?" OBAMA ADVISOR DAVID PLOUFFE: "Listen, George, they did a good job of reciting all the statistics everyone's familiar with. I think everyone understands we were this close to a great depression. Because of the leadership of this President, we staved that off. We're beginning to recover. We have a lot more work to do. We need to grow jobs more quickly. We need to grow middle-class incomes more quickly. But, the question for the American people is, which path are we going to take? If we take Mitt Romney's path, economists have looked at this, the recovery would slow down, we wouldn't produce jobs. He would give huge tax cuts to people like himself and send the bill to the middle class and seniors. So, the question is, we're going to be far worse off if Mitt Romney is elected president and he gets a chance to enact the same economic policies that created the mess in the first place."

- **ABC'S George Stephanopoulos Responded "You Still Can't Say Yes" As To Whether Or Not Americans Are Better Off.** STEPHANOPOULOS: "So, it sounds like, a year ago, the President told me, I don't think Americans are better off than they were four years ago. You still can't say yes." PLOUFFE: "Well, we've clearly improved George from the depths of the recession. We were losing 800,000 jobs a month. We're now gaining them. The unemployment rate was around 10, it's come down. We're beginning to see a manufacturing sector emerge. One of the great bright spots right now is we're adding manufacturing jobs. The American automotive industry was close to extinction. Mitt Romney would've let it go away, by the way. We wouldn't have an American automotive industry if he was president. President Obama secured that. We're beginning to really make progress in alternative energy and things like batteries. We've made a lot of progress from the depths of recession. we have a lot more work to do. And that's the question we're going to lay out for the American people is, the Romney path would be the wrong path for the middle class, the wrong path for this country. We've got to continue to recover not just from the recession, but

again, how do we build an economy from the middle out so that we have an economy, tax policy, all centered on how do we make the middle class more secure in this country.” (ABC’s [“This Week,”](#) 9/2/12)

## IT’S CLEAR: AMERICANS ARE NOT BETTER OFF

**Americans Of Every Demographic Earn Less Today Than They Did In June 2009.** “Across the country, in almost every demographic, Americans earn less today than they did in June 2009, when the recovery technically started. As of June, the median household income for all Americans was \$50,964, or 4.8 percent lower than its level three years earlier, when the inflation-adjusted median income was \$53,508.” (Catherine Rampell, “Big Income Losses For Those Near Retirement,” *The New York Times*’ [“Economix,”](#) 8/23/12)

**“The Idea That Living Standards Inevitably Improve From One Generation To The Next Is Under Threat.”** “For the first time since the Great Depression, middle-class families have been losing ground for more than a decade. They, and the poor, have struggled particularly badly since the financial crisis led to a global recession in 2008. The idea that living standards inevitably improve from one generation to the next is under threat.” (David Leonhardt, “A Closer Look At Middle-Class Decline,” *The New York Times*’ [“Economix,”](#) 7/23/12)

- **“Many Of The Bedrock Assumptions Of American Culture — About Work, Progress, Fairness And Optimism — Are Being Shaken.”** (David Leonhardt, “A Closer Look At Middle-Class Decline,” *The New York Times*’ [“Economix,”](#) 7/23/12)

## *Obama’s Policies Have Left Americans In Turmoil*

**Jobs:** Since President Obama Took Office, The Nation Has Lost 316,000 Jobs And The Unemployment Rate Has Remained Above Eight Percent For 42 Straight Months. ([Bureau Of Labor Statistics](#), Accessed 9/2/12)

- In July, 150,000 Workers Dropped Out Of The Labor Force. ([Bureau Of Labor Statistics](#), Accessed 9/2/12)
- The Real Unemployment Rate, Including Those That Are Working Part-Time Due To Economic Reasons, Increased To 15.0 Percent. ([Bureau Of Labor Statistics](#), Accessed 9/2/12)

**Unemployment:** 23.6 Million Americans Are Either Unemployed, Underemployed Or Have Given Up Looking For Work. ([Bureau Of Labor Statistics](#), Accessed 9/2/12)

- The Unemployment Rate Has Remained Above Eight Percent For A Record 42 Straight Months. ([Bureau Of Labor Statistics](#), Accessed 9/2/12)

**Long-Term Unemployment:** Since Obama Took Office, The Average Duration Of Unemployment Has Nearly Doubled From 19.8 Weeks To 38.8 Weeks. ([Bureau Of Labor Statistics](#), Accessed 9/2/12)

- **“The Long-Term Unemployed Account For 41 Percent Of The Jobless; The Highest Mark In The Other Recoveries Was 22 Percent.”** (Paul Wiseman, “Economic Recovery Is Weakest Since World War II,” [The Associated Press](#), 8/16/12)
- **CBS’S Scott Pelley: “Nearly Four Million People, Almost A Third Of The Unemployed, Have Been Out Of Work More Than A Year. They’ve Been Severed From The Workforce.”** (CBS’ [“60 Minutes,”](#) 8/12/12)
- **There Are Currently 852,000 Unemployed Workers That Have Given Up Looking For Work.** ([Bureau Of Labor Statistics](#), Accessed 9/2/12)

**Net Worth:** “The Net Worth Of The American Family Has Fallen To Its Lowest Level In Two

**Decades.”** (Ylan Q. Mui, “Fed: Americans’ Wealth Dropped 40 Percent,” [The Washington Post](#), 6/11/12)

**Median Household Income: “Real Median Household Income In March Was Down \$4,300 Since Obama Took Office In January 2009 ...”** (Mike Dorning, “Obama Fails To Stem Middle-Class Slide He Blamed On Bush,” [Bloomberg](#), 4/30/12)

- **John Coder, Previous Director Of The Census Bureau’s Income And Poverty Program, Says “Almost Every Group Is Worse Off Than It Was Three Years Ago.”** “‘Almost every group is worse off than it was three years ago, and some groups had very large declines in income,’ Green, who previously directed work on the Census Bureau’s income and poverty statistics program, said in a phone interview today.” (Jeff Kearns, “U.S. Incomes Fell More In Recovery, Sentier Says,” [Bloomberg](#), 8/23/12)

**Savings: 23.4 Percent Of Families Have No Savings At All, Up From 18.5 Percent In 2009.** (Christine Dugas, “Recession Added Debt, Drained Families’ Savings,” [USA Today](#), 5/12/12)

**Government Assistance: “49.1%: Percent Of The Population That Lives In A Household Where At Least One Member Received Some Type Of Government Benefit In The First Quarter Of 2011.”** (Phil Izzo, “Number Of The Week: Half Of U.S. Lives In Household Getting Benefits,” [The Wall Street Journal’s “Real Time Economics”](#), 5/26/12)

**Food Stamps: Since President Obama Took Office, The Number Of Americans Receiving Food Stamps Has Increased From 31.9 Million To 46.5 Million, A 45 Percent Increase.** ([Department Of Agriculture](#), 7/26/12)

**Poverty: 97.3 Million Americans Now Qualify As Low-Income And Another 49.1 Million Are In Poverty; Together, 146.4 Million Americans Or 48 Percent Of The Population.** (Hope Yen, “Census Shows 1 In 2 People Are Poor Or Low-Income,” [The Associated Press](#), 12/15/11)

- **“The Ranks Of America’s Poor Are On Track To Climb To Levels Unseen In Nearly Half A Century, Erasing Gains From The War On Poverty In The 1960s Amid A Weak Economy And Fraying Government Safety Net.”** (Hope Yen, “US Poverty On Track To Rise To Highest Since 1960s,” [The Associated Press](#), 7/22/12)
- **“Obama Hasn’t Made A Single Speech Devoted To Poverty As President, And If You Visit Barackobama.Com These Days, You Would Be Hard-Pressed To Find Any Reference To The Subject Whatsoever.”** “Obama hasn’t made a single speech devoted to poverty as president, and if you visit barackobama.com these days, you would be hard-pressed to find any reference to the subject whatsoever. As a result, he is missing — so far, at least — an important opportunity to change and elevate the national conversation on poverty.” (Paul Tough, “Obama Vs. Poverty,” [The New York Times](#), 8/15/12)

### ***While The Cost Of Living Has Increased***

**Health Care Premiums: Under Obama, The Average Cost Of Family Health Care Premiums Have Increased From \$12,680 To \$15,073.** (“Employer Health Benefits, 2011 Annual Survey, Exhibit 1.11” [Kaiser Family Foundation](#), 2011)

**Gas Prices: Since Obama Took Office, The Average Price Per Gallon Of Gas Has Increased From \$1.847 To \$3.776.** (“Gasoline And Diesel Fuel Update,” [U.S. Energy And Information Administration](#), Accessed 9/2/12)

**Food Prices: Since Obama Became President, The Monthly Price Of A Moderate-Cost Food Plan For A Family Of Four With Young Children Has Increased From \$819.40 To \$859.40.** (“Official USDA Food Plans: Cost Of Food At Home At Four Levels, U.S. Average, January 2009,” [USDA](#), 2/09; “Official USDA Food Plans: Cost Of Food At Home At Four Levels, U.S. Average, July 2012,” [USDA](#), 8/12)

**College Tuition: Since President Obama Took Office, The Average Cost Of In-State Tuition At A**

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**Four Year College Has Risen From \$6,585 To \$8,244, A 25 Percent Increase.** ("Trends In College Pricing 2009," College Board, 2008; "Trends In College Pricing 2011," [College Board](#), 2011)

- **The Cost Of College Is Currently At "An All-Time High."** "Nationally, the cost of a full credit load has passed \$8,000, an all-time high. Throw in room and board, and the average list price for a state school now runs more than \$17,000 a year, according to the twin annual reports on college costs and student aid published Wednesday by the College Board." (Justin Pope, "College Prices Up Again As States Slash Budgets," [The Associated Press](#), 10/26/11)