# Elections DA- ARS Lab

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#### Uniqueness: There’s multiple warants – Obama will win

The Hub 7/7/12 Why Obama Can't Lose in 2012http://robephiles.hubpages.com/hub/Why-Obama-Cant-Lose-in-2012

The media covers every Presidential Election like a horserace and part of the game for them is to manufacture the idea that the race is going to be a photo finish even when it is obvious what the outcome will be from the start. That is why even as the Republican primary looks more and more like a freak show every day they still beat the drum over how difficult it will be for Obama to get re-elected. Most Americans miss the fact that elections are childishly easy to predict when one makes a simple analysis of key factors. Political scientists have been able to predict the outcome of every two party race since the civil war using criteria that has absolutely nothing to do with the actual candidates or any of the issues. What follows is an analysis that shows that Barack Obama’s chances of losing the next election are almost non-existent.N THE REPUBLICANS FAVOR1. High Unemployment: You hear the media say over and over again how much this matters but the truth is it doesn’t. In November of 1980 unemployment was 7.9% and Jimmy Carter lost. In November of 1984 unemployment was 7.4% and Ronald Reagan won by a landslide. In November of 1992 unemployment was 7.4% and George H. W. Bush lost. Three incumbents with almost identical unemployment and different results. The point is that the factor was not how high unemployment was, but how high it was a year or two before the election. In Carter and Bush’s case unemployment was much lower a year before the election. In Reagan’s case it was much higher. The current unemployment rate as of June of 2011 is 9.1%. It is estimated that by November of next year unemployment will be around 8.5% or lower. This is not as big a growth as Reagan was able to get but it isn’t a loss like Bush and Carter either.2. Approval Ratings: This is another dubious claim about how Obama is going to lose. Obama’s approval ratings hover about even most of the time. His lowest approval rating while in office has been 41%. His highest has been 69%. His highest disapproval has been 52%. This isn’t exactly an abysmal approval record. The last president to not have their approval rating drop below 41% was JFK and he was assassinated three years into his term. Also, even Clinton and Reagan had higher disapproval ratings their first four years in office and both were re-elected. It seems nobody is thrilled with Obama, but with the exception of the Tea Party and Republican faithful nobody is terribly upset with him either. By contrast congress has an 18% approval rating which should tell you something.IN OBAMA’s FAVOR **1. National Security**: While he may seem vulnerable on the economy one place he isn’t is on national security. Republicans can’t appeal to the voters who think that Obama is too much of a hawk because they have a base full of hawks. Their only option is to try to appear tougher than he is which will be pretty hard since he got Bin Laden and hasn’t wavered much on the foreign policies of the Bush administration. **2. Weak GOP line-up:** It says something when the frontrunner for the nomination is probably the third best candidate from last time. Mitt Romney has no charisma and when you look at Pawlenty, Cain, Gingrich and Huntsman you have some of the most boring candidates you could imagine. The one current candidate who you can’t take your eyes off of and doesn’t put you to sleep is Michelle Bachman but part of the reason that she is so compelling is because of the crazy stuff that comes out of her mouth and she and Ron Paul would be the least electable in the general election for the same reasons they are the two most interesting in the primary. Incumbent presidents who have lost in recent history, particularly Carter and Bush Sr., had opponents who oozed charisma. There is a reason Ronald Reagan was a movie star and Bill Clinton banged all those chicks behind Hillary’s back and they are the same factors that got them elected. Reagan had no problem from Walter Mondale , Bill Clinton rolled right through Bob Dole and John Kerry couldn’t seem anything but out of touch when he campaigned against George W. Bush. Obama would beat any of the Republican hopefuls according to polls and that is before they even get the chance to debate or campaign. **3. No third party candidate**: There are other reasons that Carter and Bush Sr. both lost re-election. Both of them had to contend with a third party candidate. Carter won his first term by beating Gerald Ford by less than 2 million votes. When he ran for the second time he lost to Reagan by a little over 8 million votes. If he had been able to get the nearly 6 million votes that John B. Anderson took as a third party candidate things would have been a lot closer. Another reason Reagan was able to win was because he energized the youth vote that made the difference. (sound like anybody else we know?) Bush had it even worse. He lost to Bill Clinton by about 5 million votes but Ross Perot took almost 20 million votes away. Most political scientists think that without Perot the race would have favored Bush over Clinton. By contrast, Obama beat McCain by just under 10 million votes and this was a much larger number of voters than Carter, Reagan, Bush sr., Clinton or Bush Jr. got over their opponents for their first terms. This means to win the popular vote the Republicans will have to convince 10 million people to vote for them or hope they stay home or vote for Nader instead. When you consider that Nader got less than a million votes last time that seems like a tall order. But presidential elections aren’t decided by popular vote so that moves us onto our next point. **The Electoral College** In the last election Barack Obama won 24 states and the District of Columbia by more than 5% of the vote and these would give him 285 electoral votes. McCain won 20 states by more than 5% of the vote and these would give the Republican nominee 167 electoral votes. That leaves us with six states that there was less than five percent difference in the vote and those states are Ohio (4.58% Obama), Florida (2.81% Obama), Indiana (1.03% Obama), Missouri (0.13% McCain), North Carolina (0.33% Obama) and Montana (2.25% McCain) and they have a total of 86 electoral votes in the next election. Let’s be generous. Let’s say the Republican nominee wins Indiana, Missouri, Montana and North Carolina. That gives them 206 electoral votes to Obama’s 285. Now if the GOP nominee wants to get even closer their best chance to do it is to win Florida and Ohio but neither one will come easy. Obama will almost certainly have more money to spend and he won’t have to spend any of it trying to win red states because he already has the advantage. He will be able to spend most of it here on Florida and Ohio. Let’s say the Republican nominee gets lucky and wins Florida. Now they have 235 votes to Obama’s 285. But Ohio went for Obama by almost five percent last time and that is tough enough to deal with since Ohio went for Bush in 2004 even though it was a much closer race there. Add to that the fact that Ohio’s Republican Governor, John Kasich , has a 30 percent approval rating and could be facing a recall, plus a referendum of his controversial union busting bill in 2012, then you see that a Republican has their hands full trying to win Ohio. But let’s be generous again. Miracles happen, so let’s give the Republicans Ohio. Now our Republican nominee has 253 votes and Obama has 285 votes. So even if the Republicans win all six key swing states next election, guess what, they still lose! And if you take the chance of the winning each state at 50/50 the chance of either Obama or the Republican winning all six is 0.78125% But maybe you think that they could win all six states. Fine, we’ll go with it. Now in order to win, and this is after having to run expensive campaigns in all those swing states, the Republicans have to get another 17 electoral votes and they need to go to blue states to do it. How about if Romney is your guy? He was governor of Massachusetts and if he wins that state you can add 11 more votes. Except that Massachusetts went to Obama by over 25%. What if Bachman wins the nomination? She can deliver Minnesota and its 10 votes right? Minnesota hasn’t gone Republican since Nixon in 1972, so good luck with that one. How about Michigan (16.44%), Pennsylvania (10.31%), New Hampshire (9.61%) or Nevada (12.49%)? Maybe the Republicans have a chance in Colorado (8.5%) or Virginia (6.30%). The idea that the GOP is going to win Michigan or Pennsylvania is just a pipe dream. While both states have lost a lot of jobs they certainly don’t think the Republicans will get them back. Both states are reliably blue. The Republicans have an outside chance of taking Nevada, Colorado, Virginia and New Hampshire but the thing is that this is after we have given them a pass on winning all six “purple states” from last election and they only have a less than 1% chance of even pulling that off. The Republicans could get the votes if they won Virginia and any of the other states or lost Virginia and won all three of the others. This makes the chances of you seeing a Republican in the White House in 2013 astronomically improbable. So if you lean left the next time you hear someone talking about how Obama’s days are numbered you can just let it roll off your back. If you lean right and you still believe Obama is going to get booted next election you better buy a lottery ticket. You must be feeling lucky. **UPDATE OCTOBER 2011**A lot of this hub had assumed that Obama would win all the states that he won by over ten percent of the vote in 2008. It was pointed out to me that this was not true of Carter and George H. W. Bush. I insisted that they both had a third party candidate and this made all the difference but people keep objecting. So here are the numbers. Carter won 9 states plus DC with more than ten percent of the vote. This is much less than the 17 plus DC that Obama won. Of those 9 states, Carter won 6 of them when he ran for re-election and lost all of the others. of the three he lost, two were incredibly close, by less then 1% of the vote. Anderson received over 2% of the vote in both of these states, more than enough to swing it to Reagan. In the third case, Massachusetts, Anderson received 12% of the vote, more than enough to swing it to Reagan. Carter also had a lot less support from the Democratic party than Obama has, and was running against a stronger opponent than Obama will. George Bush won 26 states with over ten percent of the vote his first time. Of those 26, he won 14 of them. Of the 12 he lost Ross Perot got between 10-30 percent of the vote. That was more than enough to swing the vote to Clinton. What we learn from this, even with a third party running, an incumbent can still win more than half of the states that they got more than 10% over their opponent the first time. Without an alternative, Obama will likely win all of them because all these states have voted Democrat in the last three elections at least. giving him 242 electoral votes. If we give the Republicans every single state they won last time, regardless of by what margin, they only get 179. This means all Obama has to do is win between one and five of the 11 states left (all of which he won last time) and he wins. This makes him the heavy favorite. Can he be defeated? It is possible, but not very likely.UPDATE JULY 2012There are a number of things that are different currently than what is portrayed in this article. The most significant is that Romney will have more money in the election thanks to the Super PACs. This gives him a much better chance than he would have without the Super PACs. However, the basic premise of this article still holds true in terms of the electoral map, and the other factors mentioned. My estimate of the unemployment rate at the time of the election, was higher than the unemployment rate we currently have, so this point still stands, as well as some others. It would be hard for Romney to win this election with the way the map is right now. Nearly everything would have to go in his favor.

#### Link: We are running out of money for transportation spending, more spending unpopular

**Goff and Fraser 6-28-11** (Emily J. Goff is a Research Associate in, and Alison Acosta Fraser is Director of, the Thomas A. Roe Institute for Economic Policy Studies at The Heritage Foundation., Transportation Conference Bill: Some Good Reforms, but Too Much Spending, The Heritage Foundation, Founded in 1973, The Heritage Foundation is a research and educational institution—a think tank—whose mission is to formulate and promote conservative public policies based on the principles of free enterprise, limited government, individual freedom, traditional American values, and a strong national defense. We believe the principles and ideas of the American Founding are worth conserving and renewing. As policy entrepreneurs, we believe the most effective solutions are consistent with those ideas and principles. Our vision is to build an America where freedom, opportunity, prosperity, and civil society flourish. Heritage’s staff pursues this mission by performing timely, accurate research on key policy issues and effectively marketing these findings to our primary audiences: members of Congress, key congressional staff members, policymakers in the executive branch, the nation’s news media, and the academic and policy communities. Governed by an independent Board of Trustees, The Heritage Foundation is an independent, tax-exempt institution. Heritage relies on the private financial support of the general public—individuals, foundations, and corporations—for its income, and accepts no government funds and performs no contract work. Heritage is one of the nation’s largest public policy research organizations. More than 710,000 individual members make it the most broadly supported think tank in America. Heritage's policy centers include: Asian Studies Center, B. Kenneth Simon Center for Principles and Politics, Center for Data Analysis, Center for Health Policy Studies, Center for International Trade and Economics, Center for Legal and Judicial Studies, Center for Media and Public Policy, Center for Policy Innovation, DeVos Center for Religion and Civil Society, Domestic Policy Studies, Douglas and Sarah Allison Center for Foreign Policy Studies, The Kathryn and Shelby Collum Davis Institute for International Studies, The Margaret Thatcher Center for Freedom, and Thomas A. Roe Institute for Economic Policy Studies.) **To fund transportation programs through 2014, the bill would spend $120 billion,** or $60 billion per year. Though consistent with current spending levels**, it is well above what the HTF will collect:** According to the Congressional Budget Office, the trust fund will run out of money in 2013, meaning **spending is clearly outpacing revenues.[3] Keeping spending within the limit of the trust fund puts pressure on lawmakers to return control of transportation programs and their funding to the states**. Transfers from the general fund to pay for the bill would be offset mostly by pension and flood insurance changes. One pension-related reform would allow private businesses to invest less money in their employees’ defined-benefit pension plans. **This is terrible policy that would harm the position of many under-funded plans.** It also increases taxpayer risk of a pension bailout through the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC).[4] The other increases the premiums that an employer must pay to the PBGC for insurance. This change is good policy, but revenues should shore up PBGC instead of paying for additional spending. Similarly, revenue gained from higher premiums to the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) should begin to repay the $17.5 billion the program owes to taxpayers—not to pay for more spending.[5] A different change to the NFIP would require that homes located near a levee or similar structure must have NFIP coverage. This would protect both homeowners and taxpayers. However**, new revenues generated by sound policy reforms should go toward reducing the country’s unsustainable deficits—not new spending**.

#### Impact: Russia doesn’t like Romney, election leads to full scale crisis, turns case

**Morrissey 7/3** [JULY 3, 2012, ED MORRISSEY, Hot air “Bad News, Russia Not Terribly Fond of Romney” http://hotair.com/archives/2012/07/03/bad-news-russia-not-terribly-fond-of-romney/]

Okay, okay, I admit it: I led with the bad news. The good news? Alexey Pushkov, a key ally of Vladimir Putin and chair of the Duma’s foreign-policy committee, pronounces Barack Obama to be an “acceptable” partner for Russia. Admit it … this makes you feel better about Mitt Romney: **Alexey Pushkov, chairman of the international affairs committee of the State Duma, said in a recent interview that Russian leaders have noted Romney’s comments with concern**, and are watching with interest as neoconservative and “realist” advisers maneuver for influence within the campaign. “**We don’t think that for us Romney will be an easy partner**,” said Pushkov, an ally of President Vladimir Putin. “We think that **Romney will be**, on the rhetorical side, **a replay of the Bush administration.” He also noted Romney’s statements that the U**nited **St**ates **should assert its dominance** in the 21st century. “If he is serious about this, I’m afraid he may choose the neocon-type people…In the first year of his presidency, **we may have a full-scale crisis,**” he said. The catalyst for this attitude was **Romney’s statement that Russia is the “number one geopolitical foe” of the U**S, which I believe is incorrect — but not because the Russians are great friends of the US, either. **Our primary geopolitical foe at the moment is Iran**, and it has been for some time. Russia ranges from economic competitor to diffident anti-proliferation partner, occasionally flipping to antagonist in central Asia and far-eastern Europe. But Iran clearly wants to damage if not destroy the US along with Israel, and has conducted a low-level hot war against us since the 1979 sacking of our embassy in Tehran. The problem here is that Russia has been an obstacle rather than a friend in dealing with the mullahs. Putin has fallen back into the Great Game, when the stakes now are no longer empire but nuclear terrorism. China is equally a problem in the same regard, and **Romney hasn’t had kind words to say about Beijing either in this campaign**, although usually in the form of trade issues. Even Obama doesn’t get terribly high marks from Pushkov. He’s not been impressed with the “reset” pronounced by Hillary Clinton and Sergei Lavrov, and insists “it needs another reset.” Don’t worry, Alexey; Obama will have “more flexibility” after the election. Didn’t Dmitri Medvedev transmit that to you?

#### US Russia crisis leads to extinction

**Philips 2012** [Alan Philips 2012 “Consequences of a Large Nuclear War” http://www.nucleardarkness.org/warconsequences/hundredfiftytonessmoke/]

2600 U.S. and Russian strategic nuclear weapons on high-alert are launched (in 2 to 3 minutes) at targets in the U.S., Europe and Russia (and perhaps at other targets which are considered to have strategic value). Some fraction of the remaining 7600 deployed and operational U.S. and Russian strategic nuclear warheads/weapons are also launched and detonated in retaliation for the initial attacks. **Hundreds of large cities in the U.S., Europe and Russia are engulfed in massive firestorms** which burn urban areas of tens or hundreds of thousands of square miles/kilometers. **150 million tons of smoke from nuclear fires rises above cloud level, into the stratosphere, where** it quickly spreads around the world and **forms a dense stratospheric cloud layer.** The smoke will remain there for many years to block and absorb sunlight. The smoke blocks up to 70% of the sunlight from reaching the Earth's surface in the Northern Hemisphere, and up to 35% of the sunlight is also blocked in the Southern Hemisphere. **In the absence of warming sunlight, surface temperatures on Earth become as cold or colder than they were 18,000 years ago** at the height of the last Ice Age There would be rapid cooling of more than 20°C over large areas of North America and of more than 30°C over much of Eurasia, including all agricultural regions **150 million tons of smoke in the stratosphere would cause minimum daily temperatures in the largest agricultural regions of the Northern Hemisphere to drop below freezing for 1 to 3 years. Nightly killing frosts would occur and prevent food from being grown**. Average global precipitation would be reduced by 45% due to the prolonged cold. Growing seasons would be virtually eliminated for many years. Massive destruction of the protective ozone layer would also occur, allowing intense levels of dangerous UV light to penetrate the atmosphere and reach the surface of the Earth. Massive amounts of radioactive fallout would be generated and spread both locally and globally. The targeting of nuclear reactors would significantly increase fallout of long-lived isotopes. Gigantic ground-hugging clouds of toxic smoke would be released from the fires; enormous quantities of industrial chemicals would also enter the environment. **It would be impossible for many living things to survive the extreme rapidity and degree of changes in temperature** and precipitation, combined with drastic increases in UV light, massive radioactive fallout, and massive releases of toxins and industrial chemicals. Already stressed land and marine ecosystems would collapse. Unable to grow food, **most humans would starve to death. A mass extinction event would occur**, similar to what happened 65 million years ago, when the dinosaurs were wiped out following a large asteroid impact with Earth (70% of species became extinct, including all animals greater than 25 kilograms in weight). Even humans living in shelters equipped with many years worth of food, water, energy, and medical supplies would probably not survive in the hostile post-war environment.

# UNIQUENESS

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His highest has been 69%. His highest disapproval has been 52%. This isn’t exactly an abysmal approval record. The last president to not have their approval rating drop below 41% was JFK and he was assassinated three years into his term. Also, even Clinton and Reagan had higher disapproval ratings their first four years in office and both were re-elected. It seems nobody is thrilled with Obama, but with the exception of the Tea Party and Republican faithful nobody is terribly upset with him either. By contrast congress has an 18% approval rating which should tell you something.IN OBAMA’s FAVOR **1. National Security**: While he may seem vulnerable on the economy one place he isn’t is on national security. Republicans can’t appeal to the voters who think that Obama is too much of a hawk because they have a base full of hawks. 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#### The race is Obama’s to win

Schoen, 5/8/12 political strategist, pollster, author & commentator The 2012 Election Is Obama's To Win -- Just Look At The RCP Electoral Map

It all comes down to the Electoral College map. With President Obama now leading Mitt Romney 253-170  in  the Real Clear Politics Electoral Map,  it appears that the 2012 presidential race is Obama’s to win — notwithstanding the fact that two candidates are currently neck-and-neck among the electorate overall, and in key battleground swing states. To be sure, the latest swing state polling show President Obama virtually tied with Mitt Romney – who has significantly improved his standing among swing state voters since becoming the presumptive Republican nominee. On Monday,   USA Today/Gallup released a poll of voters in  12 battleground states ( Colorado, Florida, Iowa, Michigan, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Wisconsin)  – the first USA Today/Gallup swing-state poll since the March survey which found [Obama leading by nine percentage points](http://www.gallup.com/poll/153668/Obama-Romney-Among-Registered-Voters-Nationwide.aspx) among swing-state voters. The latest USA Today/Gallup swing-state poll shows the President and Romney virtually tied (47%-45%) – with the President’s two point lead over Mr. Romney falling within the margin of error. Similarly,  last week’s Quinnipiac University Swing State Poll  found  the two candidates in a statistical tie in key toss-up states Ohio and Florida — with Romney leading 44 percent to 43 percent in Florida and Obama leading 44 percent-42 percent in Ohio. But all one needs to do is look at the Electoral Map to see that the President is a mere 18 electoral votes shy of the 271 needed to win. Put simply, all President Obama needs to do is win either Ohio (18 Electoral College votes)  or Florida(29 Electoral College votes)  – or a combination of two or more states including [Virginia (13)](http://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2012/president/va/virginia_romney_vs_obama-1774.html), [New Hampshire (4)](http://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2012/president/nh/new_hampshire_romney_vs_obama-2030.html) [Iowa (6)](http://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2012/president/ia/iowa_romney_vs_obama-1922.html) [Missouri (10)](http://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2012/president/mo/missouri_romney_vs_obama-1800.html) [Colorado (9)](http://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2012/president/co/colorado_romney_vs_obama-2023.html) [North Carolina (15)](http://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2012/president/nc/north_carolina_romney_vs_obama-1784.html) or Arizona (11). Bottom line:   no matter how you do the math, President Obama’s  path to electoral victory seems clear.

#### Obama’s likeability will win him the election

Beinart 7/13/12 Obama Does Not Always Get Good Job Ratings but His Likeability May Be the Key to a Win <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2012/07/13/obama-does-not-always-get-good-job-ratings-but-his-likeability-may-be-the-key-to-a-win.html>

Back in 2004, I debated Jonah Goldberg about the presidential election. [Bush](http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2012/05/31/mark-mckinnon-at-the-george-w-bush-portrait-ceremony.html) will win, Jonah said, because after sniffing both of these guys for a while, Americans have simply decided they don’t like Kerry very much. Nonsense, I said. Likeability is in the eye of the beholder. Most Americans think the country is on the wrong track. Democrats have the demographic advantage. But I was too clever by half. Jonah was basically right. ght years later, something similar may be happening. Conventional wisdom suggests that an incumbent presiding over a people this unhappy should lose. According to a June [poll](http://www.people-press.org/2012/06/21/section-4-views-of-the-national-economy-2/6-21-12-37/) by the Pew Research Center, only 11 percent of Americans think the economy is “excellent” or “good.” Only 28 percent ([PDF](http://www.people-press.org/files/legacy-questionnaires/06-21-2012%20topline%20for%20release.pdf)) are “satisfied with the way things are going in the country.” Americans think ([PDF](http://msnbcmedia.msn.com/i/MSNBC/Sections/A_Politics/_Today_Stories_Teases/12336%20APRIL%20NBC-WSJ%20Poll%20Release%20%284-19%29.pdf)) the country is on the “wrong track” by a margin of almost two to one. And to a significant degree, they blame Barack Obama. A January Pew [poll](http://www.people-press.org/2012/01/19/obama-begins-year-four-with-weak-job-ratings-but-positive-personal-image/) found that only 38 percent approve of the way he’s handling the economy. On the budget deficit, only 34 percent approve. On energy, it’s 36 percent. When asked in June which candidate is best capable of “improving economic conditions”—clearly the election’s dominant issue—Pew [found](http://www.people-press.org/2012/06/21/section-3-candidate-traits-and-images/) that Mitt Romney bests Obama by eight points. Yet despite all this, about as many Americans [approve](http://www.gallup.com/poll/116479/barack-obama-presidential-job-approval.aspx) of the job Obama’s doing as disapprove. And he leads slightly in the polls. Which is to say, there’s a yawning gap between how Americans feel the country is doing and how they feel Obama is doing. There’s even a significant gap between the way they feel about Obama’s performance on key issues and the way they feel about his performance overall. The most plausible explanation is that a lot of Americans just simply like the guy. When Obama took office in 2009, Americans held wildly positive views of his personal characteristics. According to [Pew](http://www.people-press.org/2012/01/19/obama-begins-year-four-with-weak-job-ratings-but-positive-personal-image/), 92 percent considered him a “good communicator,” 87 percent deemed him “warm and friendly,” 81 percent said he “cares about people like me,” 79 percent thought him “well-informed,” and 76 percent judged him “trustworthy.” Since then, each of those numbers has declined between 10 and 20 points. But they began at such stratospherically high levels that even with the drop, the public’s perception of Obama as a person remains remarkably cheery. Perhaps it’s because compared to past presidencies, Obama’s has been less plagued by scandal. Perhaps it’s because Obama’s personal story still makes people proud of America. Perhaps it’s because Obama is widely considered intelligent and well-spoken. Perhaps it’s because, like Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, but unlike John Kerry and Al Gore, he has that intangible quality: authenticity. He seems comfortable in his own skin. For whatever reason, Americans seem to give Obama the benefit of the doubt. When Pew [asked](http://www.people-press.org/2012/01/19/obama-begins-year-four-with-weak-job-ratings-but-positive-personal-image/) them to describe him in a word earlier this year, the second most popular answer was “incompetent.” “Socialist” came in fourth. But the first, third, fifth and sixth most popular adjectives were “good,” “intelligent,” “honest,” and “trying.” he contrast with Mitt Romney could not be starker. According to the [June Pew](http://www.people-press.org/2012/06/21/section-3-candidate-traits-and-images/), while Romney leads on the economy, Obama enjoys a 31 point advantage on “connect[ing] to ordinary Americans.” He leads by 19 points on being “willing to take [an] unpopular stand.” By a 14 point margin, Americans consider him more “honest and truthful.” According to [Gallup](http://www.people-press.org/2012/06/21/section-3-candidate-traits-and-images/), Americans deem him more “likeable” by a whopping 17 points. This 2012 election may, in fact, be the most personality-driven in recent memory. For several presidential election cycles now, Pew has been asking voters why they support their favored candidate: “Leadership,” “Experience,” “Stand on Issues,” or “Personality.” Among Romney supporters, 4 percent cite personality, the same percentage as cited it for Al Gore in 2000. For John McCain in 2008, the figure was 3 percent. For George W. Bush and John Kerry in 2004, it was 8 percent each. For Obama this year, it’s 18 percent. In recent weeks, Democrats have been fretting that it’s too late to change people’s opinion about the economy. That’s true. But it may also be too late to change their opinions about what Obama and Romney are like as people. And for better or worse, that may matter more.

#### Polls show that even Republicans believe Obama will win

Blow 5/16/12 Charles B.os Believing in Obama http://campaignstops.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/05/16/believing-in-obama

Democrats have it. Republicans don’t. That is the finding of [a USA Today/Gallup poll](http://www.gallup.com/poll/154670/Americans-See-Obama-Solid-Favorite-Win-Election.aspx) that was released on Tuesday. The poll found that: Fifty-six percent of Americans think Barack Obama will win the 2012 presidential election, compared with 36 percent who think Mitt Romney will win. Democrats are more likely to believe that Obama will win than Republicans are to believe Romney will. Independents are nearly twice as likely to think that Obama, rather than Romney, will prevail. This comes at a time when voter preference between the two candidates is roughly even. It highlights the ever-present Republican anxiety and unease with the candidate they have. How skewed is this difference in confidence? The poll found that Republicans are twice as likely to believe that Obama will win than Democrats are likely to believe that Romney will win. This no doubt has something to do with the power of the incumbency and Obama’s still rather high likability numbers. But it’s probably also because Republicans still don’t love Romney. A [different USA Today/Gallup poll](http://www.gallup.com/poll/154655/Dems-Happier-Obama-Republicans-Romney.aspx), released on Monday, found that more than a third of Republicans and Republican-leaning independents still say that they are not satisfied with Romney as the nominee and would have preferred another candidate. By contrast, 80 percent of Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents said that they were happy with Obama. This is utterly unsurprising. Romney is the most awkward, clumsy Republican nominee since Bob Dole in 1996. For the record, Gallup points out that “in an August 1996 poll, Americans overwhelmingly believed incumbent Bill Clinton (69 percent) would defeat Bob Dole (24 percent).” What’s past is prologue. Furthermore, a Washington Times/JZ Analytics poll released Sunday found a sizeable enthusiasm gap favoring the president. As [the Washington Times reported](http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2012/may/13/obamas-chief-edge-is-enthusiasm-factor/): Of those backing Mr. Obama, 64 percent said it is because they feel he deserves to be re-elected, while only 11 percent said they are trying to deny Mr. Romney the spot, another 11 percent said they are supporting the nominated Democrat, and 9 percent said the president is the ”lesser of two evils.” For Romney, the news was not so good: Less than half of his backers said they are supporting him because they think he is the best candidate. Nearly 20 percent said they are voting to deny Mr. Obama another term, and an additional 19 percent said Mr. Romney is the “lesser of two evils.” A final 10 percent said they are backing whomever the G.O.P. offered up. Why does all this matter? Because, as Gallup points out, “Americans’ predictions of the four prior presidential elections were also generally accurate.” Rather surprisingly, “Americans are a bit more likely now to say Obama has a better chance of winning than they were at a similar point in 2008.” Now this certainly does not guarantee an Obama victory. Polls check present sentiments. They can’t predict the future. The farther you are away from Election Day, the more time voters have to change their minds. Also, believing that your candidate has the race in the bag can have a dulling effect on the importance of showing up to vote. But these numbers do point to a real problem for Romney. Many of Obama’s supporters are devout believers. Romney can’t claim the same. And that imbalance tends to have a real effect on Election Day.

# LINKS

### SPENDING LINKS

**Election comes down to the economy, new spending crushes Obama**

**Medved 6/3/12** (Michael Medved, Michael Medved hosts a nationally syndicated daily radio talk show heard by more than 4 million listeners. He is also the author of 12 nonfiction books, most recently The 5 Big Lies About American Business.; The Daily Beast, A smart, speedy take on the news from around the world, combined with the depth and investigative power of Newsweek Magazine; Numbers Reveal Truth About Obama Economic Success Claims—and GOP Condemnation, http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2012/06/03/numbers-reveal-truth-about-obama-economic-success-claims-and-gop-condemnation.html)

Raw data show **Obama can’t honestly claim a good record as a job creator**, but they also suggest that the wild spending growth Romney and company decry has already begun to subside under the influence of the Republican House. The **outcome of the upcoming electoral battle between Barack Obama and Mitt Romney will depend on public perceptions of the president’s economic stewardship, with particular emphasis on his performance on the all-important issue of jobs.** At a May 24th campaign rally in Des Moines, Iowa the president declared that “federal spending since I took office has risen at the slowest pace of any president in almost sixty years.” **Has the White House compiled an impressive record of “putting Americans back to work” as the Democrats proudly boast, or did administration policies actually delay normal processes of recovery, taking a bad situation and “making it worse” as the Romney campaign insists**? Leaving aside the dubious nature of the proposition that any president actually creates jobs (other than new hires for the White House), there’s an easy way to cut through the dizzying flurry of conflicting statistics that partisans on both sides passionately promote: checking the raw, readily available data from the Department of Labor on how many Americans are working today compared with the number who held jobs at the end of the Bush administration. By that standard**, the nation unequivocally lost jobs** in the first 39 months of the Obama presidency: with 142,287,000 working in May, 2012 (the most recent statistics available) compared with 143,338,000 at the end of December, 2008—the last employment numbers announced under President George W. Bush. Moreover, these job losses occurred at a time of rapid population growth, with more than 8,100,000 new American residents (through both birth and immigration) over the same period. This explains the more dramatic increase of those listed by the government as “unemployed” (from 11,108,000 to 12,720,000) and the even more notable rise among those “not in the labor force” (from 80,588,000 all the way to 87,958,000). With 342,000 Americans in April alone giving up on the search for a job, the overall percentage of work-age population either employed or looking for work dropped in April to 63.6 percent—the lowest level since December, 1981, in the darkest days of the disastrous Carter-Reagan recession. The slight uptick in labor force participation in May—0.2 percent—hardly removed the sting from disastrous numbers for the overall job market. In other words, statistics strongly support the common perception that jobs remain fiendishly difficult to find, despite the administration’s happy talk about a burgeoning recovery. The president may not qualify as the catastrophic job killer of GOP caricature, but he can hardly claim the gleaming mantle of a robust job creator. Statistics show the dramatic difference in fiscal performance between Congresses controlled by Republicans and those dominated by Democrats. **Nor can he plausibly pass himself off as a champion of tight-fisted spending restraint while throwing down a challenge to skeptical Republicans in another crucial issue of the campaign.** At a May 24 campaign rally in Des Moines, Iowa, the president declared that “federal spending since I took office has risen at the slowest pace of any president in almost 60 years.” The Washington Post’s Glenn Kessler fact-checked this claim and bestowed on the commander-in-chief the coveted “Three Pinocchios” designation. Again, a quick check of numbers at the White House’s own website gives the lie to Obama claims of cutting deficits and bringing the budget under control: the last budget signed by George W. Bush and passed by the Democratic Congress (for fiscal year 2008) amounted to $2.77 trillion with a deficit of $459 billion. The next year’s budget (signed by Obama and again authorized by the Pelosi-Reid Congress) included a great deal of “emergency spending” for the Obama Stimulus Package and reached $3.52 trillion with a deficit of 1.4 trillion. In other words**, deficit spending more than tripled in Obama’s first year as president, and it’s remained at comparably crippling levels ever since**. As Andrew Taylor fact-checks the White House claims for the Associated Press, the president “measures up” with a 9.7 percent spending increase in 2009 “much of which is attributable to Obama” and “a 7.8 percent increase in 2010, followed by slower spending growth over 2011-13. Much of the slower growth reflects the influence of Republicans retaking control of the House and their budget and debt deal last summer with Obama.” This summary raises one more crucial point indisputably indicated by universally accepted statistics: the dramatic difference in fiscal performance between Congresses controlled by Republicans and those dominated by Democrats. In fact, partisan majorities in the House of Representatives (where the Constitution stipulates that spending bills must originate) seem to matter more to the scope of deficit spending than whether a donkey or an elephant occupies the Oval Office. President Obama rightly chides his Republican presidential predecessors for disappointing records of fiscal management, but fails to note that for all 12 years of the Reagan and first Bush administrations, and for the last two difficult years of the second Bush administration, Democrats wielded big majorities in the House. It’s no accident that Bill Clinton enjoyed a vastly better record of economic management in the six years (1996-2001) he hammered out budgets with a Republican House (and averaged a surplus of more than 1 percent of GDP) than the two years he collaborated with his fellow Democrats (and racked up deficits of 2.5 percent). By the same token, George W. Bush averaged deficits at a typical level of 2.5 percent of GDP during the six years he worked with Denny Hastert and fellow Republicans, but when Nancy Pelosi took over the House during his last two years, the numbers exploded to a disastrous rate of 6.7 percent. In raw dollar terms, the last “all-Republican budget” of 2007 (devised entirely by a GOP president and approved by a Republican House) brought a modest deficit of $160.7 billion, while the first “all-Democratic budget” of the Obama era in 2010 (wholly attributable to President Obama, and passed by the Pelosi House) amounted to deficit spending of $1.293 trillion—or eight times more than the bad old days of Bush. The bottom line of any honest, uninflected examination of readily available budgetary and employment numbers provides both bad news and good news for President Obama’s reelection efforts. The bad news: while he hardly qualifies as the devastating, prosperity-wrecking destroyer depicted in conservative propaganda, **he certainly can’t claim a good record as a job creator with fewer people working today than when he took office, and vastly more having left the labor force altogether. But the good news for Obama from the raw numbers also suggests that the wild spending growth that Romney and company regularly (and rightly) decry has already begun to subside under the influence of the Republican House.** Based on historical patterns, the deficit might well continue to decline in a second Obama term—as long as the GOP maintains control of Congress and exercises stern supervision of the administration’s credit card

**Increased spending loses the election for Obama**

**Goodman 7/1** [Peter S. Goodman 07/01/2012 “How Loss Of Enthusiasm Among Youth Voters Could Cost Obama The Presidency” http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/07/01/how-loss-of-enthusiasm-could-cost-obama-election\_n\_1620253.html]

As he drove around in his 1999 Taurus, the exuberance of his student years yielding to the grim reality of low-wage service-sector life, Matt listened to audio books about the economy, many offering a libertarian perspective. He had previously supported Obama's economic policies, and particularly his efforts to stimulate growth through **increased** government **spending**, but he began to view those measures as **exacerbating the problem – by forcing the government to become just as dependent on borrowing as an overzealous credit card-holder. "He was doing exactly the opposite of what I thought would be best**," Matt says. He was particularly put off by Obama's continuation of the taxpayer bailouts of Wall Street begun President Bush. "Virtually everyone hired by the Obama administration was brought in from the upper echelons of business, and they brought enormous conflicts of interest," Matt says. "It's cronyism. I just became very disillusioned with the entire system." Matt's reading and thinking influenced Meghan, for whom economic concerns were about to become paramount: Last month, she graduated from UNC with about $15,000 in debt and deep worries about her own job prospects. By then, Meghan was also souring on Obama, whom she once embraced because of his unequivocal stance against the Iraq War – a war that was personal for her. A close friend who had served as a Marine in Iraq, and who was someone she remembered as "a really good guy,” had been transformed by combat. “He was just very, very angry about everything," she says. "He cursed constantly. He wouldn’t really talk about his experience, but he was talking about people in the Middle East, like they were all the enemy. He was really into playing violent video games. It was uncomfortable and tense.” As Obama expanded the war in Afghanistan, she found herself questioning his integrity. As he declined to shut down the Guantanamo Bay military prison in the face of Congressional opposition, she felt betrayed. "The whole situation is completely disgusting and frightening," she says. "I definitely knew hope and change was not really happening. I've had to ask myself, 'And I voted for this?' I felt kind of hoodwinked, but he was our anti-war choice in '08. Maybe I was just naive." By the time Obama endorsed same-sex marriage last month – a step that should win favor among many young voters -- Meghan was unimpressed. "**Too little, too late**," she says.

#### We are running out of money for transportation spending, more spending unpopular

**Goff and Fraser 6-28-11** (Emily J. Goff is a Research Associate in, and Alison Acosta Fraser is Director of, the Thomas A. Roe Institute for Economic Policy Studies at The Heritage Foundation., Transportation Conference Bill: Some Good Reforms, but Too Much Spending, The Heritage Foundation, Founded in 1973, The Heritage Foundation is a research and educational institution—a think tank—whose mission is to formulate and promote conservative public policies based on the principles of free enterprise, limited government, individual freedom, traditional American values, and a strong national defense. We believe the principles and ideas of the American Founding are worth conserving and renewing. As policy entrepreneurs, we believe the most effective solutions are consistent with those ideas and principles. Our vision is to build an America where freedom, opportunity, prosperity, and civil society flourish. Heritage’s staff pursues this mission by performing timely, accurate research on key policy issues and effectively marketing these findings to our primary audiences: members of Congress, key congressional staff members, policymakers in the executive branch, the nation’s news media, and the academic and policy communities. Governed by an independent Board of Trustees, The Heritage Foundation is an independent, tax-exempt institution. Heritage relies on the private financial support of the general public—individuals, foundations, and corporations—for its income, and accepts no government funds and performs no contract work. Heritage is one of the nation’s largest public policy research organizations. More than 710,000 individual members make it the most broadly supported think tank in America. Heritage's policy centers include: Asian Studies Center, B. Kenneth Simon Center for Principles and Politics, Center for Data Analysis, Center for Health Policy Studies, Center for International Trade and Economics, Center for Legal and Judicial Studies, Center for Media and Public Policy, Center for Policy Innovation, DeVos Center for Religion and Civil Society, Domestic Policy Studies, Douglas and Sarah Allison Center for Foreign Policy Studies, The Kathryn and Shelby Collum Davis Institute for International Studies, The Margaret Thatcher Center for Freedom, and Thomas A. Roe Institute for Economic Policy Studies.) **To fund transportation programs through 2014, the bill would spend $120 billion,** or $60 billion per year. Though consistent with current spending levels**, it is well above what the HTF will collect:** According to the Congressional Budget Office, the trust fund will run out of money in 2013, meaning **spending is clearly outpacing revenues.[3] Keeping spending within the limit of the trust fund puts pressure on lawmakers to return control of transportation programs and their funding to the states**. Transfers from the general fund to pay for the bill would be offset mostly by pension and flood insurance changes. One pension-related reform would allow private businesses to invest less money in their employees’ defined-benefit pension plans. **This is terrible policy that would harm the position of many under-funded plans.** It also increases taxpayer risk of a pension bailout through the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC).[4] The other increases the premiums that an employer must pay to the PBGC for insurance. This change is good policy, but revenues should shore up PBGC instead of paying for additional spending. Similarly, revenue gained from higher premiums to the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) should begin to repay the $17.5 billion the program owes to taxpayers—not to pay for more spending.[5] A different change to the NFIP would require that homes located near a levee or similar structure must have NFIP coverage. This would protect both homeowners and taxpayers. However**, new revenues generated by sound policy reforms should go toward reducing the country’s unsustainable deficits—not new spending**.

#### Overspending is bad, Congress needs to break the habit

**Goff and Fraser 6-28-11** (Emily J. Goff is a Research Associate in, and Alison Acosta Fraser is Director of, the Thomas A. Roe Institute for Economic Policy Studies at The Heritage Foundation., Transportation Conference Bill: Some Good Reforms, but Too Much Spending, The Heritage Foundation, Founded in 1973, The Heritage Foundation is a research and educational institution—a think tank—whose mission is to formulate and promote conservative public policies based on the principles of free enterprise, limited government, individual freedom, traditional American values, and a strong national defense. We believe the principles and ideas of the American Founding are worth conserving and renewing. As policy entrepreneurs, we believe the most effective solutions are consistent with those ideas and principles. Our vision is to build an America where freedom, opportunity, prosperity, and civil society flourish. Heritage’s staff pursues this mission by performing timely, accurate research on key policy issues and effectively marketing these findings to our primary audiences: members of Congress, key congressional staff members, policymakers in the executive branch, the nation’s news media, and the academic and policy communities. Governed by an independent Board of Trustees, The Heritage Foundation is an independent, tax-exempt institution. Heritage relies on the private financial support of the general public—individuals, foundations, and corporations—for its income, and accepts no government funds and performs no contract work. Heritage is one of the nation’s largest public policy research organizations. More than 710,000 individual members make it the most broadly supported think tank in America. Heritage's policy centers include: Asian Studies Center, B. Kenneth Simon Center for Principles and Politics, Center for Data Analysis, Center for Health Policy Studies, Center for International Trade and Economics, Center for Legal and Judicial Studies, Center for Media and Public Policy, Center for Policy Innovation, DeVos Center for Religion and Civil Society, Domestic Policy Studies, Douglas and Sarah Allison Center for Foreign Policy Studies, The Kathryn and Shelby Collum Davis Institute for International Studies, The Margaret Thatcher Center for Freedom, and Thomas A. Roe Institute for Economic Policy Studies.)**The federal government’s overreach into transportation program and funding decisions has increased, fueled by the misguided premise that Washington must have a say in how every transportation dollar is spent.** With this has come more regulation—as well as funds being spent on programs that have little to do with general purpose roads. Some of the reforms in this bill that give states more flexibility over their money and reduce the burden of red tape are positive steps toward reversing those trends. Lawmakers are responsible for changing course, and that means cutting spending to live within the federal government’s means—in this case, within the limits of the HTF. This bill does not meet that goal. The **use of new revenues—from both good and bad policy changes—to pay for the overspending is particularly unacceptable. Congress should demonstrate that it is serious about curbing its overspending habit.**

### ECON KEY TO ELECTION

**Economy will be the center of the election**

**Kennedy 12** (Stephanie Kennedy, ABC Senior Reporter Sydney/Canberra/Washington.; Abc news, Get breaking national and world news, broadcast video coverage, and exclusive interviews. Find the top news online at ABC news.; Economy key to Obama election fight, http://www.abc.net.au/am/content/2012/s3496775.htm)

In the United States, it's exactly six months until the presidential election and over the weekend Barack Obama kicked off his official re-election campaign. And the theme of the president's bid to win in November will be familiar to many Australians. Some may remember Julia Gillard's 2010 election slogan 'Moving Forward'. Well, this year Barack Obama is using 'Forward' as his campaign slogan. The backdrop to the 2012 presidential election is the slow recovery and the number of people still out of work. Stephanie Kennedy reports from Washington. STEPHANIE KENNEDY: The president's re-election slogan is 'Forward', but at his official campaign launch in the key battleground state of Ohio, Barack Obama was looking backwards to his 2008 election slogans. BARACK OBAMA: If people ask what this campaign is about, you tell them it's still about hope. (applause and cheers) You tell them it's still about change. (applause and cheers) You tell them it is still about ordinary people who believe that in the face of great odds we can make a difference in the life of this country. (applause and cheers) STEPHANIE KENNEDY: But the Republican's are now arguing that the president's hope and change has turned into hype and blame. Reince Priebus is the chairman of the Republican National Committee. REINCE PRIEBUS: What this president has done is he went from a candidate or hope and change and now he is the president of hype and blame. He blamed everybody**, he blames earthquakes,he blames ATMs, tsunamis, Europe, the Congress, Republicans. Everyone is to blame except Barack Obama. And we are going to focus in on what Barack Obama promised and what Barack Obama delivered because we think it is going to be a referendum on him in November. STEPHANIE KENNEDY: Both sides are fighting this election on the economy and the latest data shows the unemployment rate ticking down a fraction to 8.1 per cent** and less people looking for work. Alice Rivlin is an economist and former vice chair of the Federal Reserve. ALICE RIVLIN: There is good reason to think that this was an unusually poor report. No way to make it a great report but **the economy is chugging along. It's not doing well**. It depends what you expected. No one should have expected a roaring boom after this kind of a recession. STEPHANIE KENNEDY: David Axelrod is the president's chief campaign strategist and he's defended the president's economic track record. DAVID AXELROD: We've come a long way from where we were. **We are in the middle of recovering from this recession, but there is a larger project which is how do we rebuild this economy in the long term so the middle class is growing and not shrinking and people who work hard can get ahead**, people who act responsibly are rewarded for that responsibility. That is what we are working on. STEPHANIE KENNEDY: This presidential election campaign will be won by the candidate voters perceive offers the best hope for a speedier recovery that creates more jobs and economic growth. In Washington this is Stephanie Kennedy reporting for AM.

**Economy could get Obama over the hump**

**Thomasson 7-8** (Dan K. Thomasson, Dan K. Thomasson is former editor of the Scripps Howard News Service.;The Daily Journal, The Kankakee area's number one local news, sports, weather, entertainment and business source.; Economy key election issue, no matter how you spin it, http://www.dailyjournal.net/view/local\_story/Economy-key-election-issue-no-\_1341787725/)

Does being a successful businessman in this anti-Wall Street atmosphere disqualify one from being president of the United States, even when one’s experience includes the governorship of a major state? And, if so, does a background of community organizing, two years in the U.S. Senate and failure to fulfill a promise of massive change in four years deserve a second term in the Oval Office? President **Barack Obama’s re-election campaign seems to be based at least at the moment on persuading voters that both do: That Republican Mitt Romney’s claims of turning around the unemployment rate are hollow because of his management of Bain Capital, which was instrumental in outsourcing huge numbers of American jobs**. At the same time, Romney retorts that Bain didn’t do the outsourcing but only represented companies that did. It seems to me that Obama’s charges overlook the fact that, for the past two decades, the downsizing by American business executives to produce more efficient, streamlined companies has been a way of life enhanced by technology and often a necessity to survive**. A key factor, obviously, is the need to find the lowest worker costs.**

**Economy key to the election**

**Kelley 7-18** (Jeremy Kelley, Jeremy Kelley covers Dayton city government and its effect on city residents. Jeremy has lived in the Dayton area for more than 20 years; The Republic, The Republic: Columbus Indiana newspaper providing news, sports, weather and information for the cities and towns of Columbus, Hope, Taylorsville, ...; Romney, Obama turn focus to economy, Ohio, http://www.therepublic.com/view/story/ROMNEY-8491930/ROMNEY-8491930)

BOWLING GREEN, Ohio — **Aware that jobs and the economy are key issues in the election, both presidential campaigns Wednesday pointed to jobs studies that they said bolstered their candidates.**  And as always, Ohio was a focal point for their messages. Republican presidential hopeful Mitt Romney focused on the economy during a campaign stop in Bowling Green, touting himself as much friendlier to small business than President Barack Obama and continuing to push his five-point economic plan. Romney called attention to a report from the National Federation of Independent Business, which said that higher tax rates proposed for high-income individuals would result in “a smaller economy, fewer jobs, less investment and lower wages.” The study estimated that Obama’s proposed tax policies for high-income Americans would cost 710,000 jobs nationwide and 27,500 in Ohio “over the long run,” but did not specify what that time period was. Romney said the tax policies would especially hurt small business. Meanwhile, Obama’s campaign released a report that said Ohio added 44,700 manufacturing jobs since the economic recovery began. **Obama has frequently cited his support for the auto bailout as a key to the rebound of manufacturing in Ohio**. The president’s campaign on Wednesday began a “Made in Ohio” manufacturing tour, where supporters will spotlight how Obama’s policies have helped Ohio business. Vice President Joe Biden will visit Columbus Thursday as part of that tour. “There is a choice in this election between President Obama’s vision for growing our economy from the middle out and Mitt Romney’s vision for an economy built from the top down,” said Obama campaign “truth team” member Wade Kapszukiewicz. He said Romney led Bain Capital in sending jobs overseas, helping wealthy shareholders at the expense of the middle class. Wednesday marked a repeating theme in this election cycle. Both the Obama campaign and Ohio Republican Gov. John Kasich, who introduced Romney in Bowling Green, pointed to an ongoing recovery in the Ohio economy. They disagreed, of course, about who deserves the credit. While Obama touted his support for manufacturing, Kasich pointed to Republican-led efforts to overcome a 2010 budget deficit and make Ohio a great job-creation state in spite of “wind in my face from Washington, D.C.” Kasich, who has been absent from recent Romney campaign events in Ohio, immediately brought up Obama’s comments last week in Virginia about government help for business. In the speech touting the value of government and business working together, Obama uttered the phrase, “If you’ve got a business, you didn’t build that.” Romney supporters have jumped on the quote, saying the president insulted small-business owners by giving government credit for their success. Romney was somewhat measured in his response, first agreeing that everyone who succeeds gets a helping hand somewhere along the way. But he also called it “the height of foolishness” for Obama to say people didn’t build their businesses themselves. Romney also focused on his five-point plan to re-energize the economy**. The points are, taking advantage of national energy resources like oil and coal; catching up to China and Europe with more trade deals; passing a balanced budget; improving schools so students develop job skills; and reducing taxes and regulation,** including killing the Dodd-Frank banking regulation bill, which was pushed by the Democratic Congress and signed by Obama after the 2008 financial crisis. Despite rumors that Romney might announce his vice presidential pick this week, he said Wednesday that he has not made a decision. When he mentioned Florida Sen. Marco Rubio, a VP possibility, during another part of his speech, the crowd roared its approval. Questions from a very anti-Obama crowd gave Romney several opportunities to attack the president, but again, Romney was often measured in his responses. When one woman called Obama a monster, Romney was quick to say he wouldn’t use that word. **When it came to jobs and the economy, however, Romney didn’t hold back, criticizing the president for not meeting with his jobs council for six months.** “His priority is not creating jobs for you, his priority is keeping his own job, and that’s why he’s going to lose it,” Romney said.

**Economy is a key issue, the slow rise now is good for Obama, anything else turns the progress**

**Elliott 5/6** (Larry Elliott, Guardian's economics editor and has been with the paper since 1988.; The Guardian, Latest news, sport, business, comment, analysis and reviews from the Guardian, the world's leading liberal voice; US economy is key to re-election of Barack Obama, http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/2012/may/06/us-economy-key-obama-re-election)

**The worst of the recession is over. Unemployment is high but heading in the right direction. The president can boast that he has taken decisive action on a foreign field to defeat the US's enemy.** Yet still he lost, for this is not Barack Obama in six months' time but George HW Bush in 1992. Obama's team know their history and they can read the opinion polls. These suggest that **the race for the White House will be a close-run thing and that a stuttering economy between now and November could see Obama leave Washington as the first one-term president since Bush Snr. The case for Obama, who kicked off his re-election campaign in Ohio last weekend, is the one succinctly put by the vice-president: Osama bin Laden is dead; General Motors is alive. The administration can boast success on two fronts: eliminating public enemy number one while at the same time intervening to ensure that the Great Recession of the past five years has been less severe in the US than in Europe.**  That's not saying all that much, however. As the International Monetary Fund has noted, housing busts that result from an excessive build-up in personal debt tend to be long and painful. Governments can help to ease the pain but there are no quick fixes. Falling house prices mean household wealth shrinks, and rising unemployment makes it harder to keep up mortgage payments. Consumer confidence falls and spending dries up. The US over the past decade fits this pattern perfectly. In the bubble phase, low interest rates resulted in both a house-buying spree and a residential construction boom. In the past five years, house prices fell by a third, the number of foreclosures rose fivefold and unemployment peaked at 10% of the workforce. More detailed work at a local level showed that those counties that saw the biggest increase in household debt between 2002 and 2006 saw the biggest drop in consumption once the crisis began. US policymakers have pulled every available lever in an attempt to get the economy moving. As in the UK, the central bank has slashed interest rates and cranked up the electronic printing presses. The White House did its bit with a fiscal stimulus package, and – in a move that draws admiring glances from the Labour party in Britain – has delayed taking decisive action to tackle a rising budget deficit. A study conducted by the Fitch ratings agency and Oxford Economics has estimated that the stimulus package boosted US GDP by 4% of national output over the past two years. This, the report says, has prevented the recession in the US from being deeper and longer but raises doubts about the sustainability of the recovery. The point of the pump-priming is that the state acts as a substitute for consumers unwilling to spend and businesses unwilling to invest until such time as private confidence returns. In the US, as elsewhere in the developed world, this is taking a long time, although the IMF says that historically this tends to be the case. Obama's strategy has come under fire from both left and right. The leftwing argument is that the stimulus has failed to provide the necessary boost because it was not big enough. The president paid too much heed to advisers such as Larry Summers when he should have listened to Paul Krugman. A bigger fiscal boost would have meant faster growth, a more rapid decline in unemployment and a rosier outlook both for the president's re-election chances and the public finances. Not so, say Obama's critics on the right. What the president has done is throw good money after bad, borrowing money he doesn't have to fund an expansion of inefficient government. The public have become so alarmed at the explosion in the national debt that they fear taxes will have to rise and this is stopping them spending. The answer is to shrink the size of the state, which will allow taxes to be cut. There are many in the US who believe one or other of these stories. Obama's problem is that few Americans seem to be convinced by his narrative, which is that things have improved a bit since his inauguration in 2009 and will carry on improving if he gets a second term. "It could have been worse" is not exactly the most exciting of campaign slogans. It is certainly less gripping than "Are you better off than you were four years ago?", which is the one Americans will hear from Mitt Romney. Obama has made falling unemployment the key benchmark of his performance, but this may prove unwise**. For one thing, unemployment is coming down only very gradually and could start to rise again between now and the election, either because the economy stalls or because the improved chance of finding a job encourages people back into the labour market. A second potential weak spot is that, with the exception of those at the top, real incomes have been squeezed hard over the past four years. Obama has done next to nothing to ensure that ordinary Americans share in the growth of the economy**, with work by John Schmitt at the Centre for Economic Policy Research showing that the minimum wage would today be $21.72 an hour if it had been raised in line with productivity since 1968. Its actual rate is $7.25 an hour. So while Obama and his team will no doubt scoff at the idea that a man who made his money out of private equity should be expressing concern at the living standards of blue-collar America, Romney's "are you better off now" question still has the potential to damage Obama. So here's how things stand. Most studies suggest that the performance of the US economy under Obama has been pretty much par for the course. A study of 24 major housing busts in rich developed countries carried out by Goldman Sachs found that they tended to have a more sluggish than usual recovery in growth, exhibit persistently high levels of unemployment, and be prone to relapses. The countries examined also had a long period in which the private sector gradually reduced its indebtedness, with this process matched by a sharp deterioration in the public finances. This describes the US today, even down to the unusually low levels of bond yields for an extended period. It would, therefore, be unwise of Democrats to imagine that a rapidly improving economy will make Obama a shoo-in come November. Recovery will remain tepid at best, with Europe and oil prices representing sizeable downside risks. Any signs of the economy faltering will be exploited by Romney, who will tack to the centre now the Republican nomination is in the bag in the hope that he can exploit the strong anti-incumbency political tide evident around the world since the start of the financial crisis.

### INFRASTRUCTURE SPENDING UNPOPULAR

**Spending is bad for Obama’s popularity**

**Porter 6/5/12** (Eduardo Porter, duardo Porter writes the Economic Scene column for The New York Times. Formerly he was a member of The Times’ editorial board, where he wrote about business, economics, and a mix of other matters. Mr. Porter began his career in journalism over two decades ago as a financial reporter for Notimex, a Mexican news agency, in Mexico City. He was deployed as a correspondent to Tokyo and London, and in 1996 he moved to São Paulo, Brazil, as editor of América Economía, a business magazine. In 2000, Mr. Porter went to work at The Wall Street Journal in Los Angeles to cover the growing Hispanic population. He joined The New York Times in 2004 to cover economics. Mr. Porter was born in Phoenix and grew up in the United States, Mexico and Belgium. He graduated with a degree in physics from the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México and has an M.Sc. in quantum fields and fundamental forces from the Imperial College of Science and Technology in London. He has a son, Mateo, and lives in New York.; The New York Times, Obama’s Fate May Depend on Europe, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/06/business/obama-presidency-may-depend-on-europe.html?pagewanted=all)

**The recent downshift in the economy has dealt a powerful blow to President Obama’s chances of re-election** in November. But perhaps **most worrying for the president is just how little sway he retains over where the economy goes from here**. Related Times Topics: United States Economy | European Debt Crisis J. Scott Applewhite/Associated Press John A. Boehner, the speaker of the House. His attempts to convince voters as he stumps around the country that Europe’s financial mess and Republican obstruction are largely to blame for the faltering economy only underscore how his destiny hinges on decisions by other people, notably the German chancellor, Angela Merkel, and the Republican speaker of the House, John A. Boehner. At home, the **president’s plans to stimulate the economy with tax cuts and spending programs have invariably crashed against solid Republican opposition in Congress.** As a result the government is becoming a big drag on the economy, cutting more than half a million jobs at the federal, state and municipal level since national employment bottomed out in February 2010. In Europe, the political constraints are the same. Most economists, including those in the Obama administration, say they believe that for the euro to survive, weak European countries must grow. But this means curbing the harsh austerity policies imposed in return for aid from European institutions and the International Monetary Fund — policies that have only deepened the countries’ recessions. Germany, the only country in Europe with the wherewithal to backstop its poorer neighbors’ finances, has so far said no. To many economists, the policy gridlock makes no sense. Historical precedent and recent evidence suggest that cutting public spending in the middle of a slump only worsens the downturn — damaging public finances because it reduces tax revenue even as unemployment and unemployment benefit costs are rising. In some countries — notably the United States and Germany — interest rates are so low that governments could essentially borrow free, using funds to blunt the impact of the economic slump on the most vulnerable. For the United States this could mean building roads and hiring teachers. For Germany, it could mean providing a financial backstop to prevent Spain from going bankrupt. When the crisis struck in 2009, most industrial countries and big developing nations followed this script, ramping up public spending to keep their economies from floundering as the private sector shrank.

**Romney controls the economy for the election**

**USA Today 5/26** (USA Today, Breaking news on weather, sports, world, science, financial, technology, travel, national, economy, and entertainment news provided by USATODAY.com; Obama campaign goes on the defensive on spending, debt, http://www.usatoday.com/news/politics/story/2012-05-26/obama-romney-debt-spending/55221120/1)

WASHINGTON (AP) – **Government spending and debt are emerging as a campaign tug-of-war, with Mitt Romney blaming President Obama for a "prairie fire of debt" and Obama calling the charge a "cowpie of distortion**." House Speaker John Boehner is talking about a debt ceiling that is still more than eight months away. By Pablo Martinez Monsivais, AP President Obama speaks to supporters May 23 at a campaign fundraiser in Denver. Enlarge By Pablo Martinez Monsivais, AP President Obama speaks to supporters May 23 at a campaign fundraiser in Denver. Sponsored Links What gives? In a word, polling**. The American public is growing increasingly distressed about government spending and high budgets. The issue now ranks as high on the worry scale as lack of jobs.** And it worked well for Republicans in 2010, who galvanized voters with ads and flyers that drew attention to government red ink and took back control of the U.S. House after four years of Democratic rule**. Republicans are looking for that magic again. Romney has maintained a drumbeat of criticism over Obama's handling of federal spending and the national debt in recent weeks**, forcing the president on the defensive on an issue where public opinion is stacked against him. In Iowa earlier this month, Romney said a "prairie fire of debt" was sweeping across the nation, threatening the country's future. He accused Obama of inflating the debt that he had pledged to reduce and ballooning the federal budget deficit with the 2009 economic stimulus and 2010 health care bill after saying he would cut it sharply. Obama, in campaign events in Colorado, California and Iowa this week, argued that federal spending had slowed to rates not seen in decades after he inherited a $1 trillion large debt and later pushed for $2 trillion in spending cuts. The president pointed to Romney's tax proposal, saying it would give millionaires tax cuts at the expense of the debt. By Scott Olson, Getty Images Mitt Romney holds a business roundtable on the economy. Obama called Romney's claims a "cowpie of distortion" and would saddle the debt with $5 trillion in new tax cuts, likening it to trying to put out "a prairie fire with some gasoline." "What happens is, the Republicans run up the tab, and then we're sitting there and they've left the restaurant," Obama said at a campaign event in Des Moines. "And then they point and (say), 'Why did you order all those steaks and martinis?'"’

**Spending unpopular, election shifting to GOP**

**USA Today 5/26** (USA Today, Breaking news on weather, sports, world, science, financial, technology, travel, national, economy, and entertainment news provided by USATODAY.com; Obama campaign goes on the defensive on spending, debt, http://www.usatoday.com/news/politics/story/2012-05-26/obama-romney-debt-spending/55221120/1)

**Obama's defensive crouch on debt and spending reflect a hard reality: Polls consistently show voters, including sought-after independents, placing more trust in Romney to handle the massive debt. The nation's economy remains a focal point for voters but many remain concerned that years of heavy federal spending on guns and butter could leave the U.S. in a similar position as Greece and other European nations** grappling with massive debt. A Gallup/USA Today poll conducted May 10-13 found that overall, 82% of Americans called the "federal budget deficit and debt" extremely or very important, a level of interest comparable to unemployment. The same poll found Romney with a broad advantage on handling the budget deficit and debt, with 54% saying he would do a better job handling it compared with 39% who chose Obama. The results mirrored an April Washington Post/ABC News poll, which found 51% of Americans sided with Romney on handling the federal budget deficit, compared with 38% for Obama. Among independents, 60% preferred Romney while 29% thought Obama would do a better job handling it. The White House has tried to respond. Traveling to Colorado Springs, Colo., White House press secretary Jay Carney cited an analysis by MarketWatch that said spending under Obama had grown more slowly than any president since Dwight Eisenhower. A few hours later, Obama picked up on the piece, telling donors in Denver that his work to pay down the federal debt in a "balanced and responsible" way was "starting to appear in places — real liberal outlets like the Wall Street Journal— since I've been president, federal spending has risen at the lowest pace in nearly 60 years." MarketWatch is published by Dow Jones & Co., which also publishes the Wall Street Journal. Yet, Obama's budget stewardship is open to interpretation. The debt now stands at $15.7 trillion, compared to $10.6 trillion on his inauguration day. On a dollar basis, that's the biggest ever jump in the debt. How much the debt has grown can also be measures as a percentage of what he inherited. By that measure, the debt has increased by half during the three-and-a-half year Obama administration. During President Ronald Reagan's eight-year administration, the debt nearly tripled, from about $910 billion to more than $2.6 trillion. Still, much of the increase during Obama's tenure has been a consequence of the recession. In a poor economy, government spending increases automatically because more Americans become eligible for food stamps, unemployment assistance and Medicaid. Also, a poor economy leads to unemployment which cuts into tax revenue. As a result, deficits are inevitable as more money goes out and less comes in. To be sure, Obama pushed through a stimulus package that cost more than $800 billion and he and President George Bush both approved spending of the $700 billion bank bailout in 2008 and 2009. But those costs are not recurrent. "It's important to understand the reason why the debt went up by so much," said Robert Bixby of the budget watchdog group The Concord Coalition. "We certainly do have a very serious long-term debt problem in the country. We have an underlying structural imbalance between what we are promising, mostly in entitlement benefits, and what we're willing to pay for in taxes. **But in the short-term there are a lot of factors that are pushing the debt up that aren't related to fiscal policy."**  Add to the mix Boehner, who has said when Congress is asked to raise the nation's borrowing cap after the election, he will insist on spending cuts to offset the increase. Democratic leaders call it an irresponsible course of action, noting that the gridlock over the debt ceiling last year caused a downgrading of the U.S. government's credit rating. All of this is aimed at unaligned, independent voters. In turning attention to debt, **Republicans are tapping a winning issue they deployed in congressional races two years ago**. In October of 2010, Republican pollster Wes Anderson said, congressional campaigns shifted "away from jobs and economy to government taking us over the cliff." The emphasis proved to be a success at the ballot box. These days, the economy remains the preeminent issue in voters' minds, but Anderson says middle-of-the-road votes are the targets of the big government message. "The middle is angry about where we are at and they really see two villains on this stage, this play has two antagonists. Both of them are big," said Anderson, who is working on congressional and statewide political campaigns in several states that are presidential battlegrounds. "One is big business, big Wall Street, big insurance, big oil, just big, abusing the middle class, abusing small businesses, abusing the taxpayer. The other is big government — big government wildly running up massive deficits and debt which abuse the taxpayer, the middle class and small business."

**Spending triggers election backlash - Public opposition growing and GOP base hates it**

William **Reinhardt** (Founder Public Works Financing) 2/27/**12** Engineering News Record, lexis

Peter Ruane, CEO of the American Road and Transportation Builders Association, calls Washington a «fact-free zone.» **The firewall that** for 56 years **has protected the federal Highway Trust Fund from being used for deficit reduction is in** grave **danger** of being breached. «We're going to be fighting for every penny,» he says. The **battle lines will be drawn next November**. If the «no compromise» wing of the Republican Party gains ground, then **the «starve the beast» option will be on the table**, and nothing is sacred. Certainly not **the Highway Trust Fund, which conservative** activist Grover Norquist **views as a deep barrel of pork**. If not direct federal investment, then what about tax credits and other leveraging tools? Advocates for these programs have been pulling their hair out for years over how tax credits are scored for infrastructure programs. There is no acknowledgement of the federal revenue upside created by public investment in mobility, safe water, etc. That's not going to change easily because those rules are embedded in the federal budget bureaucracy. Because so much is political, the members of the elite infrastructure technocracy in the U.S. too often are forced to bow to the politicians who dispense the subsidies. Compliance with unending regulations is seen as a cost of doing business, but taxpayers, not contractors, pay full price. U.S. construction companies are carrying a much heavier regulatory burden under the Obama administration than ever before. EPA is an untethered driver of regulations. Owners, public and private, are as likely to find themselves in court as under construction. Enforcement actions under federal set-aside programs are up by 10 times in the past three years, and U.S. Dept. of Labor audits are up by 25 times. «There is a huge new regulatory component to our work and more political impact,» says Bruce Grewcock, CEO of Kiewit Corp., whose managers generate 50 million man-hours of craft labor a year. «The Obama administration is listening to a different audience,» he says. **Powerful advocates for smaller government charge that the federal public-works budget is so skewed** toward social goals and political insiders **that any increase** in taxes or user fees s**hould be opposed as wasteful. They have a large and growing audience of believers** because they are partly correct. Consider this from the director of a major U.S. infrastructure investment fund: «Every big transportation project in America is political now. It has very little to do with delivering infrastructure projects when there's big money involved.» He continues, «Lobbyists have found out that the money is at the project level, not in Washington. They add a political tone to everything, and they've convinced local governments that they need political influence to get anything done.» Too little gets built because decisions are not made based on merit. Ever-growing competition for scarce public investment capital is embedded in our social contract. In a study last year, venture capitalist Mary Meeker noted that, since 1965, the GNP grew by 2.7 times and entitlements grew by 11 times. Frighteningly, Meeker identified an 82% correlation between rising entitlement spending and falling personal savings rates. Posterity is rarely mentioned these days. So, we are at a crossroads. **No amount of «needs» surveys will spur voters or politicians to support a major commitment to** meet future demands for **transportation**, water, public buildings and other critical infrastructure services. **The best hope is for** public and private **planners,** designers, builders and operators of these **facilities to convince a skeptical public that it is getting** the **services** it pays for **at a fair price and without political favoritism**. Build local support for good projects. **A good place to start is for** the **infrastructure technocracy to take back its industry from** the **political operatives** who promise subsidy but deliver mainly invoices. ?

**Public opposition to transportation spending – plan can only signal spending, not job creation**

Stephen **Kull** (Principal Investigator at the Program on International Policy Attitudes) March 5 **2005** http://www.pipa.org/OnlineReports/DefenseSpending/FedBudget\_Mar05/FedBudget\_Mar05\_rpt.pdf

**When presented** most of the major items in **the** discretionary **federal budget and given the opportunity to modify it, Americans make some dramatic changes**. The largest **cut** by far is to defense spending, which is reduced by nearly one-third, followed by **spending on** Iraq and Afghanistan, **transportation** and justice. The largest increases are to reductions in the deficit, various forms of social spending and spending on the environment. Nearly all respondents were able to complete the exercise. And overall, there were many changes made to the proposed budget. **The budget items that were most deeply cut were** defense spending, the Iraq supplemental, **transportation,** and federal administration of justice. The budget items that were increased the most were allocations to reduce the budget deficit and spending on education, conserving and developing renewable energy, job training and employment, and medical research. A more detailed analysis follows. There were also domestic spending items that **majorities chose to reduce. Transportation** was cut $12.6 billion, from $69.4 billion to $56.8 billion (**an 18% cut), with 58% making cuts**. The federal administration of justice went from $41.1 billion to $32.4 billion (a 21% cut), with 56% making cuts. Space science and research was reduced slightly from $24.7 billion to $23.5 billion (5%), with 53% making cuts. Partisan Variations For 16 out of 18 budget areas**, the average changes that were made by Republicans and Democrats went in the same direction** relative to the Administration’s proposed budget. **There were only slight differences in their allocations for** seven of the items: energy and renewable resources, homeland security, **transportation,** veterans’ benefits, space and science research, medical research, and the federal administration of justice. The remaining items, though, do show **noteworthy trends**. The category of job training and employmentrelated services has gotten increasingly sharp average increases over the last decade—96% in 1996, 128% in 2000, and a startling 263% in 2005. Perhaps this expresses a growing concern about the impact of globalization and international trade on the capacity of the US work force to adapt and retain its standard of living. For reasons that are unclear, willingness to fund the federal administration of justice has steadily dropped, shifting from an average 10% increase in 1996, to a 12% cut in 2000, to a 21% cut in the 2005 exercise. **Willingness to spend on transportation relative to other needs has shown a long-term decline. In 1996 it was increased 40% on average;** in 2000, it was kept nearly flat (2% increase); **and in 2005, it was cut by 18%.**

### MASS TRANSIT/HSR

#### High Speed rail unpopular- the public likes the idea better in theory than actuality.

**Wildermuth 7-9-12** (John Wildermuth, journalist and political commentator; Fox Hounds Daily, Fox&Hounds discusses the confluence of Politics and Business in California, and influences the political debate from a different perspective, Legislators Make the Right Vote for High-Speed Rail)

If legislators are paid to make the hard decisions, they earned their money last Friday. At a time when most politicians’ long-term view extends no farther than the next election, the Democrats in the Legislature looked to California’s future by approving construction of the first 130-mile segment of the state’s long-planned high-speed rail system. It wasn’t an easy call. The **price tag for the Los Angeles to San Francisco system had risen from the original $33 billion estimate to nearly $100 billion** before rail officials scaled back the plan to the current $68 billion. But you’d be hard-pressed to find anyone who doesn’t believe that number will grow before the project is completed in 2029. Polls show that the **high-speed rail plan is far less popular today than it was in 2008**, when voters (supported by two-thirds of the Legislature) approved nearly $10 billion in bonds for the project. Besides California’s shaky economy, **people** in many parts of the **state have found they prefer the concept of high-speed rail to the reality of a train roaring past their homes and farms**. But while opponents complain about the cost, the route, the economics and the problems construction will bring, they haven’t been able to touch the original rationale for the project. There’s still a need to link the far-flung regions of the state together, especially the fast-growing Central Valley, which will continue to be little more than fly-over territory without high-speed passenger rail. An alternative to air travel makes sense now and in the future. And for the people who complain that the time isn’t right, here’s one question: If not now, when? Gov. Jerry Brown, who put every bit of his clout behind the rail system, hailed the Legislature for its “bold action,” which actually highlights the problems the rail supporters faced. “Bold” isn’t typically a good thing for politicians. Bold implies controversy, opposition and unpopular decisions in the face of loud complaints and angry voters. **The way to stay popular — and in office — is to follow the crowd, not lead the parade, especially when there are plenty of people who don’t want to march.** But Brown and other rail supporters put on a full political press, tossing in transit goodies for Los Angeles and Bay Area legislators unhappy that the first tracks would link Madera and Bakersfield in the Central Valley. They also played the history card, warning legislators that they stood at a pivotal point in California’s future. Darrell Steinberg, the Democratic leader in the state Senate, scrambled to round up the needed votes, telling the Democratic members they had to look past “the challenges, the political point scoring and the controversies of today” and take a chance for the future. He got his votes, despite the Legislature’s Republicans playing their continuing role as “the party of no” and positioning themselves to say “I told you so” every time there’s a delay, a cost increase or some other hiccup with the rail plan. But the GOP and other naysayers might want to take a look back in transit history to the early 1960s, when plans to build the BART system were being discussed – loudly discussed – in the Bay Area. Two of the original members of the system, San Mateo and Marin counties, opted out because of the growing cost estimates. The $792 million construction bond in 1962, which needed 60 percent of the votes to pass, barely scraped by with 61.2 percent. And before construction started, there were lawsuits and redesigns that added millions to the cost. But now, 50 years later, it’s impossible to imagine the Bay Area without BART. The system has linked the far-flung suburbs with the core urban areas of Oakland and San Francisco, providing easy access in both directions to jobs, business and housing and guiding the effort for well-planned regional growth. Santa Clara County, which stayed out of the original system, has decided to pay billions to get back in and finance a new BART link into San Jose. There are going to be plenty more bumps, financial, legal and otherwise, on the way to a statewide high-speed rail system. There also will be plenty of concern about whether California is doing the right thing or even if it can afford to do the right thing. But California became the state it is by betting on the future and that’s what the majority in the Legislature has done. “While we acknowledge the risk in going forward, there would be even greater risk to do nothing,” Steinberg said after Friday’s vote. “In the end, my colleagues understood that what is difficult and unpopular in the short run often becomes a point of pride and progress years later.”

#### Mass Transit has too expensive fares to be popular

**Rodrigue 6-29** (Dr. Jean-Paul Rodrigue, Jean-Paul Rodrigue received a Ph.D. in Transport Geography from the Université de Montréal (1994) and has been at the Department of Economics & Geography at Hofstra University since 1999. In 2008, he became part of the Department of Global Studies and Geography., 1. Challenges Facing Urban Transportation, Hofstra University, http://people.hofstra.edu/geotrans/eng/ch6en/conc6en/ch6c4en.html)

Financing and fare structures. **Most public transit systems have abandoned a distance-based fare structure to a simpler flat fare system. This had the unintended consequence of discouraging short trips for which most transit systems are well suited for**, and encouraging longer trips that tend to be more costly per user than the fares they generate. Information systems offer the possibility for transit systems to move back to a more equitable distance based fare structure. Legacy costs. Most public transit systems employ unionized labor that have consistently used strikes (or the threat of a strike) and the acute disruptions they create as leverage to negotiate favorable contracts, including health and retirement benefits. Since public transit is subsidized these costs were not well reflected in the fare systems. **In many transit systems, additional subsidies went into compensation or to cover past debt, and not necessarily into performance improvements or additional infrastructure. As most governments are facing stringent budgetary constraints because of unsustainable social welfare commitments, public transit agencies are being forced to reassess their budgets through an unpopular mix of higher fares, deferred maintenance and the breaking of labor contracts.** The era of public transit as a welfare agency providing compensation and benefits well above the qualifications and the productivity of its labor may be drawing to an end.

#### Environmentalists hate HSR in California would reach a national stage

**Artz 7-16-12** (Kenneth Artz, freelance reporter for The Heartland Institute based in Dallas, Texas., Heartland Institute, Founded: Heartland was founded in Chicago in 1984. Mission: Its mission is to discover, develop, and promote free-market solutions to social and economic problems. Staff: A full-time staff of 35, including 25 working in the Chicago office. Joseph Bast directs the Chicago office. Herbert Walberg is chairman of the board. Policy Advisors: Approximately 150 academics and professional economists participate in its peer review process, and more than 200 elected officials serve on its Legislative Forum. Publications: Heartland sends six monthly public policy newspapers addressing the major domestic public policy issues to every national and state elected official in the U.S. plus 8,400 county and local officials and thousands of civic and business leaders. It also produces books, policy studies, and booklets. Communications: We appeared in print and on television or radio nearly 1,400 times in 2010. More than one million people visited our Web sites in the last 12 months. Our Facebook page registers nearly 53,000 fans and approximately 300,0000 post views every week. Government Relations: Our government relations staff made more than one million contacts with elected officials in 2010, 14,715 of those contacts were one-on-one either in person, by phone, or by one-to-one emails., <http://news.heartland.org/newspaper-article/2012/07/16/enviro-groups-rally-against-fast-tracking-california-high-speed-rail>) **Two prominent environmental activist groups, the Sierra Club and the Natural Resources Defense Council, are rallying against California Gov. Jerry Brown’s efforts to fast-track construction of high-speed rail in the state.** Special Environmental Exemptions Brown is asking the state legislature to give high-speed rail special exemptions from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Under Brown’s proposal, environmental objections to high-speed rail plans will be dismissed unless opponents convince a state judge that the environmental damages “substantially outweigh” the alleged statewide benefits of high-speed rail, such as job creation and billions of dollars in federal grants. ‘Dangerous Precedent’ “**We strongly oppose your administration’s proposal to eliminate certain California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements for the currently proposed high-speed rail program,”** Sierra Club California Director Kathryn Phillips said in a June 5 letter to the governor. “By removing a large-scale project such as high-speed rail from full CEQA coverage, the proposal grants the state a status that suggests it does not have to fully and seriously consider and mitigate environmental impacts,” Phillips added**. “This proposal creates a dangerous precedent that, if applied here and to other large-scale public works projects, will throw the state back to an era when bulldozers and engineers trumped clean air, clean water, wetlands and natural habitat, and the public interest with abandon** Brown is facing principled opposition from other groups as well. “A full CEQA review is absolutely vital,” said Ted Crocker, cofounder of the grassroots activist group High Speed Boondoggle. “One great thing about the California Environmental Quality Act is that it really makes a government agency stop and think before it takes final action, so the ‘perceived wisdom’ that high-speed rail is good for the environment can be put to the test of an honest analysis. Unfortunately, in his haste to grab a relatively small amount of federal funding, Gov. Brown is definitely not inclined to stop and think." Marc Scribner, the land-use and transportation policy analyst for the Competitive Enterprise Institute, agrees, saying, “It is interesting that Gov. Brown, who continues in the recent tradition of California walling off most of California for much-need development, believes that a train to nowhere through ecologically sensitive areas warrants a special exemption from his job-destroying environmental laws.”. Chasing Away Business "The high cost of high-speed rail and Gov. Brown's willingness to exempt it from environmental laws that apply to any other form of development both contribute to California being the worst state in which to do business,” said Randal O’Toole, a senior fellow at the libertarian Cato Institute. “Companies are leaving the state, the wealthy are leaving the state, and the middle class is leaving the state. Is California’s situation hopeless? Yes, so long as the state puts toys such as high-speed rail above the health of the economy as a whole," O’Toole explained.

### INFRASTRUCTURE BANK

#### Infrastructure bank is unpopular

**Progressiverailroading.com 11** (progressive railroading.com, Top rail news and reporting on the web with railroad industry articles, events, webcasts, jobs, product directories and more from Progressive Railroading; http://www.progressiverailroading.com/federal\_legislation\_regulation/news/Mica-reiterates-opposition-to-national-infrastructure-bank--28418#)

Yesterday, U.S. Rep. John Mica (R-Fla.), who chairs the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, said at a committee hearing that President **Obama’s proposal for a “national infrastructure bank” to help finance infrastructure maintenance and improvements is “dead on arrival in Congress.” “We do not need more federal bureaucracy,” said Mica in a prepared statement. “The federal government also has existing financing programs that serve the same purpose as a national infrastructure bank**, such as TIFIA, RRIF and others, that we can improve and strengthen.” Thirty-three state infrastructure banks already exist, “and we can ensure financing and build upon this foundation” without creating new levels of federal bureaucracy, he said. Also at yesterday’s meeting, **U.S. Rep. John Duncan (R-Tenn.), who chairs the House Highways and Transit Subcommittee, said he opposed a national infrastructure bank.** “Current [federal] law allows a state to use their federal-aid funding to capitalize a state infrastructure bank and provide loans and loan guarantees to appropriate transportation projects that the state deems most important,” he said in a prepared statement. However, the leader of a national bipartisan infrastructure coalition believes the creation of a national infrastructure bank would be the most effective way to leverage billions of private-sector dollars for infrastructure projects of national significance, including those that span state boundaries. Marcia Hale, president of Building America’s Future, called on Congress to establish the national financing mechanism as “an independent entity with strict guidelines” to ensure a transparent, streamlined process based on merit. “The European Investment Bank, a similar institution in operation since 1957, has enabled European countries to build high-speed rail and modernize their ports and motorways,” Hale said in a prepared statement. Building America’s Future recently released “Falling Apart and Falling Behind,” a report that details how U.S. transportation infrastructure systems are deteriorating and falling behind the infrastructure investments being made by other nations. For example, the report notes that U.S. infrastructure has fallen from first place in the World Economic Forum’s 2005 economic competitiveness ranking to 15th place.

**Infrastructure Bank**

**Infrastructure bank was dead on arrival last fall**

**Laing, ’11** (Keith, The Hill staff writer, 9/8/11, <http://thehill.com/blogs/transportation-report/highways-bridges-and-roads/180481-gop-chairman-opposes-obamas-call-for-national-infrastructure-bank>, JD)

The Republican chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee said Thursday evening that he is opposed to the call for a national infrastructure bank President Obama made in his speech to a joint session of Congress. Rep. John Mica (Fla.) said he thought Congress should encourage individual states to create their own infrastructure banks, arguing as he has in the past that it would give them more flexibility to design transportation projects that fit their own needs. “While the President reconfirmed that our highways are clogged and our skies are congested, his well delivered address provided only one specific recommendation for building our nation’s infrastructure,” Mica said in a news release. “Unfortunately, a National Infrastructure Bank run by Washington bureaucrats requiring Washington approval and Washington red tape is moving in the wrong direction. A better plan to improve infrastructure is to empower our states, 33 of which already have state infrastructure banks.” Obama called Thursday for Congress to approve a proposal for a federal infrastructure bank that has been pushed for by Sens. John Kerry (D-Mass.) and Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-Texas). “We’ll set up an independent fund to attract private dollars and issue loans based on two criteria: how badly a construction project is needed and how much good it would do for the economy,” Obama said.

**Election politics and GOP opposition would cause backlash**

**Laing, ’11** (Keith, The Hill staff writer, 10/9/11, <http://thehill.com/blogs/transportation-report/infrastructure/186371-obamas-infrastructure-bank-faces-hurdles-in-republican-led-house>, JD)

President Obama’s shifting sales pitch for transportation spending will be put to the test when the GOP-led House takes up his proposal for a national infrastructure bank next week. Advocates for reshaping the nation’s roads and bridges have criticized Obama for focusing his message on infrastructure. The president’s argument loses some effectiveness when it is focused on hard-to-visualize infrastructure rather than readily apparent crumbling roads and bridges, they say. Lately though, the president has talked about roads and bridges almost exclusively. In campaigning for his jobs package, he has even gone to a bridge that connects House Speaker John Boehner’s (R) home state of Ohio with Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell’s (R) home state of Kentucky. The Republican leadership is lukewarm at best about Obama’s proposal to spend $10 billion to create a national infrastructure bank to lure private investment for road projects. “While I support innovative financing to meet our nation’s infrastructure needs, the multibillion-dollar, Washington bureaucracy-based infrastructure bank President Obama is advocating raises many concerns,” House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Rep. John Mica (R-Fla.) said in a statement this week. Mica’s committee has scheduled a hearing Wednesday to consider the president’s proposal, a key part of Obama’s $447 billion jobs bill. But Mica has already made clear he is not inclined to follow Obama down the road to a national infrastructure bank. “A more positive approach would be to build on the 33 existing state infrastructure banks which lack financial backing but are in place, can get projects selected and moving and put people to work on an expedited basis,” Mica said. While Obama’s “pass this bill” mantra has drawn comparisons to former President Harry Truman's “give 'em hell” campaign in 1948, liberal commentators have pushed the normally-reserved Obama to also channel another former President, Franklin Roosevelt, and make the case for re-building the nation as literally as possible. “President Obama should identify construction projects…roads that need fixing, bridges that are in danger of collapsing, and dare the Republicans to vote against these projects and the jobs they create in their own areas,” MSNBC host Chris Matthews said on a recent broadcast of his show “Hardball.” Obama appears to have taken the advice. In addition to visiting the bridge that connects Kentucky and Ohio, he cited specific projects this week in an hour-long news conference to promote the Jobs Act. “Some of you were with me when we visited a bridge between Ohio and Kentucky that’s been classified as ‘functionally obsolete,’” Obama said this past Thursday. “That’s a fancy way of saying it’s old and breaking down. We’ve heard about bridges in both states that are falling apart, and that’s true all across the country.” If Obama’s message has changed, it hasn’t been enough to convince Republicans so far. They are not only cool to the idea of the bank; they also haven’t warmed to Obama’s plan to spend $50 billion on transportation projects. Mica gave little reason to believe the debate would change any this week. “This hearing will focus on questions relating to the estimated $270 million yearlong process of creating another federally backed agency designed to pick project winners and losers,” Mica said in comments that seemed to dismiss Obama’s proposals. The phrase “picking winners and losers” could foreshadow references in the forthcoming hearing on the Solyndra energy loan controversy, which some observers have worried could damper even further the GOP’s receptiveness to a loan-based program like the infrastructure bank. **Even without the Solyndra controversy, Obama this week acknowledged he may not be able to move the needle with Congress.**

**Senate proves**

**Orrick, ’11** (Sarah, editor of Congressional Digest, 11/4/11, <http://congressionaldigest.com/senate-blocks-infrastructure-bank-proposal/>, JD)

The Senate dealt the Obama Administration’s job package another blow on November 3 by refusing to consider the Rebuild America Jobs Act, a$60 billion measure to build and repair infrastructure and create an infrastructure bank to leverage private and public capital for long-term projects. The 51-to-49 vote fell short of the 60 needed to proceed to a debate and vote. All Republican senators, as well as Democrats Ben Nelson (NE) and Joe Lieberman (CT) opposed the bill. The concept of an infrastructure bank has been around for some time. As described in the January 2009 Congressional Digest on “Infrastructure Financing,” a 2006 report by the Commission on Public Infrastructure called for the creation of such an entity to issue bonds and raise funds for projects based on national significance, productivity, and economic benefit. In 2009, Senators Christopher Dodd (CT-D) and Chuck Hagel (NE-R) (both no longer in Congress) and Representative Keith Ellison (MN-D) introduced legislation to create an infrastructure bank. Earlier this year, Senator John Kerry (MA-D) sponsored a similar bill, along with Senators Kay Bailey Hutchison (TX-R), Lindsey Graham (R-SC), and Mark Warner (D-VA). On the Senate floor yesterday, supporters of the measure said that it would create much needed construction jobs while repairing deteriorating roads and bridges. “It is about increasing the Federal footprint in the infrastructure arena, Senator Chris Coons (DE-D) said of ban proposal. “This is smart spending. This is investing in the best tradition of Federal, State, local, and private partnerships to make America more competitive for the future.” Opponents objected to the bill on the basis that it would be financed by a tax surcharge on the wealthy and create a new government bureaucracy. “It is about increasing the Federal footprint in the infrastructure arena. It is about increasing taxes on those with incomes above $500,000, now creatively called millionaires, including incomes of many business owners who risk their own capital to create jobs,” said Senator Orrin Hatch (UT-R). The bill’s defeat was not a surprise, as Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (NV-D) continues to bring up pieces of the President’s job package in an effort to exert political pressure on the Republicans. The next stand-alone jobs bill that’s likely come to the Senate floor would provide tax incentives for the hiring of veterans.

**Larger spending fights would hurt Obama and help the GOP**

**Mitchell, ’11** (Josh, WSJ staff writer, “Plan for Highway Bank Faces Uphill Battle; White House Wants Extra Money for Transportation Projects, While GOP Questions How Funds Will Be Allocated, Spent”,

8/15/11, Proquest)

President Barack Obama is pressing Congress to create a new "infrastructure bank" to finance highway and rail construction, create jobs and jump-start the stalled economy, but the proposal faces hurdles on Capitol Hill. White House officials have described the bank as a new government entity that would make loans to support public-works projects of regional and national significance with private funding. That includes interstate highways, rail lines linking Midwest farmers to West Coast ports, and equipment for planes to link up to a new satellite-based air-traffic-control network. By luring more private capital to infrastructure projects with low-interest loans, the bank is designed to provide a long-term solution to more immediate problems. The law authorizing the gasoline tax that provides the bulk of federal transportation money expires Sept. 30, and the tax, currently at 18.4 cents a gallon, isn't generating enough funds to keep pace with the nation's infrastructure needs anyway. But the White House, House Republicans and some Senate Democrats differ on the best way to encourage more private investment in public infrastructure. **Those disagreements are likely to be swept into a broader debate over how to shrink the federal deficit that could stretch to the November 2012 elections**. Some lawmakers fear that once they return from their August recess, a political fight over spending could delay reauthorization of the law for weeks or even months. The government would lose up to $100 million a day in gas-tax revenue, payments to states would be halted and construction jobs would likely be lost if the law lapses, business groups warn. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce and others say they support the idea of an infrastructure bank but worry that the administration is giving short shrift to the more urgent problem. "They have not focused on the need to pass a highway and transit bill," said Janet Kavinoky, the Chamber's chief lobbyist on transportation policy, noting that several years could pass before large-scale projects supported by the bank would get under construction. "We are very frustrated that they continue to hold out the bank as a substitute for doing a highway and transit bill." A White House official said the administration has been in touch regularly with members of Congress to push for both a highway bill and a national infrastructure bank. The official said "no one is taking this for granted," referring to passage of the highway bill, and added that when the president talks about an infrastructure bank, he is referring to his long-term vision of how to reform transportation policies. In a time of dwindling public resources, said Jason Furman of the White House economic council, "you want to stretch the dollars you do have farther." Under the White House plan, the infrastructure bank would augment current highway and transit programs. The bank would receive $30 billion over six years and would issue grants, loans and other financial tools. The president's budget proposal in February suggested the bank reside in the Transportation Department and be controlled by an executive director and board of officials from various federal agencies. Projects would need to meet "rigorous" criteria to ensure they benefit the maximum number of people, preventing more "bridges to nowhere." Some Republicans say that such a bank would simply add a new bureaucracy in Washington and shift decision-making from Congress to the executive branch. "How this project would be funded, what it would fund and how those funds would be repaid are critical questions the Obama administration has not answered yet," said Kevin Smith, a spokesman for House Speaker John Boehner (R., Ohio). "If this is more of the same 'stimulus' spending, **we won't support it."** The White House didn't respond to a request for comment.

### INLAND WATERWAYS

#### Inland waterway system requires billions of unpopular tax dollars

**Izaak Walton Foundation, 12** (Izaak Walton Foundation, Founded in 1922, the Izaak Walton League is one of the nation's oldest and most respected conservation organizations. With a powerful grassroots network of more than 250 local chapters nationwide, the League takes a common-sense approach toward protecting our country's natural heritage and improving outdoor recreation opportunities for all Americans. We invite you to learn about our work and to join us in supporting important conservation initiatives in your community., Inland Waterways Bill a Bad Deal for Taxpayers and the Environment, http://www.eco-voice.org/node/13166)

**As the nation focuses on controlling federal spending and reducing our debt over the long term, the WAVE4 Act (HR 4342) would shift the burden for funding costly inland waterway infrastructure expenses onto taxpayers – possibly leaving taxpayers on the hook for more than $10 billion over the next 20 years. The WAVE4 Act will not fund necessary work to maintain existing locks and dams; instead, it will increase the backlog of needed infrastructure projects.**

### TRAINS

**Train funding causes backlash and bolsters GOP support**

**The Economist, ’11** (7/2/11, <http://www.economist.com/blogs/gulliver/2011/07/high-speed-rail>, JD)

AMERICA'S Republican party has succeeded in blocking many of the Obama administration's planned high-speed rail initiatives. (Some of them were bad ideas anyway.) Now Phillip Longman has taken to the Washington Monthly—a publication not exactly sympathetic to the ideals of the modern GOP—to argue that the death of Obama's high-speed dreams may be a good thing. His argument isn't what you might expect: Yes, bullet trains speeding at 180 mph [290 kph] or more from major city to major city are great for business execs in a hurry and on an expense account. But the more conventional, cheaper, "fast enough" high-speed rail lines like the West Rhine line are the real backbone of the German passenger rail system and that of most other industrialized nations. And it is from these examples that America has the most to learn, especially since it now looks as if the U.S. isn't going to build any real high-speed rail lines, except possibly in California, anytime soon. In an ironic twist, between the mounting concern over the state and federal deficits and growing Republican and NIMBY opposition to high-speed rail, the Obama administration is being forced to settle for incremental projects that will only bring passenger rail service up to the kind of standards found on the West Rhine line. And that's a good thing, provided Republicans don’t succeed in killing passenger trains in the United States altogether, as they are increasingly want to try. Mr Longman contends that America's passenger rail system is so bad that even simply upgrading to "fast-enough" trains would represent a vast improvement in service that would build ridership and political support for further upgrades. Right now, he argues, building true high-speed rail in America would be "so expensive, disruptive, contentious, and politically risky that it just might not be possible." The key tipping point, Mr Longman says, is when taking the train becomes faster than driving. And several factors are more important than speed. On-time performance is crucial, and perhaps Amtrak's biggest problem. Mr Longman thinks this can be fixed with "incremental investment in new sidings and track capacity to make sure freight trains don’t get in the way." Improving frequency of service could also help, Mr Longman argues. Blogger Matt Yglesias says he agrees with Mr Longman, but I don't think he actually does. Here's how he wraps up his post on the subject: I do find the whole conversation slightly frustrating. The United States is a really big country. You wouldn’t hear a debate in "Europe" about whether "Europe" should be building a train from Madrid to Barcelona "or" a train connecting the cities of the Rhineland. Nothing about [upgrading a slowish Portland-Seattle line to medium-speed] actually prevents you from building a brand new true HSR connection elsewhere in the country. The overall pot of infrastructure spending money in the United States is currently too low, which prompts a bunch of should-be-avoidable conversations about project priority. That last sentence is crucial. Mr Longman's article rests on the dubious idea that if we spend less on high-speed rail, politicians will for some reason feel compelled to take the money that would otherwise have been spent on high-speed rail and use it to upgrade slow-speed lines to "fast enough." But there's no evidence that is actually true. After all, the reason that the lines are so slow in the first place is that America has never spent the money to make them any faster. It's not as if building more sidings for freight trains and improving signalling are new ideas. Contra Mr Longman, there's not much for America to "learn" here: Europe invested in making its less-than-high-speed lines "fast enough." America didn't. It's a short story. One problem is that it's hard to get politicians to spend money on incremental improvements. The difference between an older service and the newer, incrementally improved service is only noticeable over long periods of time, if at all. Amtrak's Northeast corridor service has gotten incrementally faster over the past few decades. But that hasn't increased the political support for further improvements—in fact, Amtrak's continued failure to make dramatic improvements has been fodder for its critics. "Service between New York and DC is a few minutes faster" is not the kind of statement that fires up members of Congress. It's not the kind of thing you can put on a bumper sticker, either. When Rick Scott, the Republican governor of Florida, nixed a flagship Obama administration high-speed rail project there, I argued that the White House had paid the price for its lack of vision: Much of the blame for how all this turned out has to rest with the White House. The Obama administration's political team didn't seem to anticipate the danger that putting Mr Obama's name behind high-speed rail (or just about anything) would galvanise Republican opposition. If they did anticipate the GOP backlash, and embraced modest rail plans in order to soften a blow they knew would come, that's even worse. If the White House was going to take the political risk of putting its weight behind high-speed rail, it should have gone all-in. A Tampa-Orlando line and some track improvements in the upper Midwest weren't enough to inspire anyone.

**Train funding perceived as inefficient and costly in the current climate**

**Johnson, ’12** (Fawn, *National Journal* correspondent, 1/17/12, <http://transportation.nationaljournal.com/2012/01/highspeed-rail-in-a-coma.php>, JD)

Policymakers' appetite for high-speed rail seems to be dwindling to almost nothing. It is old news that congressional Republicans are not fans of President Obama's high-speed rail initiative. They view it as a waste of taxpayer dollars at a time when belt-tightening is of the highest order. The national conversation has not advanced much beyond that point, perhaps because the biggest fans of high-speed rail are distracted by other problems. Democrats in Congress raised only a faint protest when the fiscal 2012 appropriations bill cut funding for the Transportation Department's high-speed rail program. Republicans who ostensibly like high-speed rail said the cuts will allow rail enthusiasts to start over from scratch. The problems continue at the state level, particularly in California. The California High Speed Rail Peer Review Group recently refused to recommend that bond money be devoted to the state's high-speed rail plan. The review group said the state's business plan lacked "credible sources of adequate funding" that posed "an immense financial risk" to California. Democratic Gov. Jerry Brown proposed folding the California High-Speed Rail Authority into a broader transportation agency to save money. That move could potentially take some steam out of the state's high-speed rail initiatives as they get lumped in with other transportation priorities. Even so, more than $3.5 billion in federal funding could be at risk if the state Legislature doesn't approve funds for a high-speed rail line, according to Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif. High-speed rail investments aren't like economic stimulus programs, which are intended to jump start shovel-ready projects that can immediately inject money into a local economy while delivering jobs and paved roads. The initial costs of developing high-speed rail lines are high, and the yield time is years or decades. Is the country ready for long-term investments like that? Or would it make sense to take a break and allow the economy to recover before proposing big new rail projects? What would make policymakers more receptive to high-speed rail? What critiques of high-speed rail are the most in need of a response?

**Causes political backlash**

**Levy, ’12** (Alon, one of the best freelance writers on transit and public affairs, 4/1/12, http://pedestrianobservations.wordpress.com/2012/04/01/amtrak-expects-10-billion-passengers/)

Amtrak had initially proposed to spend $117 billion on implementing high-speed rail on the Northeast Corridor between Boston and Washington, but backlash due to the plan’s high cost led to a scaling back behind the scenes. After the regulatory reforms of 2013, a new team of planners, many hired away from agencies in Japan, France, and Switzerland, proposed a version leveraging existing track, achieving almost the same speed for only $5 billion in upfront investment. They explained that the full cost of the system would be higher, but service could open before construction concluded, and profits could be plugged into the system. To get the plans past Congress, President Barack Obama had to agree to limit the funds to a one-time extension of Amtrak’s funding in the transportation bill S 12, which would give it $13 billion for expansion as well as ordinary operating subsidies over six years. To defeat a Senate filibuster, the extension had a clause automatically dismantling Amtrak and selling its assets in case it ran out of money, leading to the first wave of resignations by longtime officials. Despite assurances that both the cost and the ridership estimates were conservative, the program was plagued with delays and mounting costs, and to conserve money Amtrak needed to cancel some of its money-losing long-distance routes and engage in a controversial lease-back program selling its rolling stock to banks. The modifications required to let the Shinkansen bullet trains decided for the system run in the Northeast pushed back the completion of the first run from the middle of 2015 to the beginning of 2017. The president and most of the board as well as the engineers resigned in 2014, and many of their replacements resigned in the subsequent two years. When the reformed system opened in 2017, it was still incomplete because some of the high-speed segments had no funding yet, travel time from Boston to Washington was four hours and a quarter, rather than the promised three and a half. 2017 was also the last year in which Amtrak lost money. Ridership on the Northeast Corridor intercity trains topped 20 million, and in 2018 it operationally broke even, allowing it to use $1.5 billion in unspent S 12 money on completing the full system by 2020. To simplify its temporary deals with track owners in Connecticut and Massachusetts, it made a complex deal with the Northeastern commuter railroads in which it took over operations, with existing amounts of state money lasting until 2022.

### HIGHWAYS

**Plan’s massively unpopular, sparks backlash over recent spending fights**

**Laing, ’12** (Keith, The Hill staff reporter, “Insiders pessimistic about highway bill talks”, 5/7/12, <http://thehill.com/business-a-lobbying/225927-pessimism-for-highway-talks>, JD)

The committee of lawmakers appointed to negotiate a new federal highway bill will meet for the first time Tuesday, beginning their talks amid low expectations for a deal in a charged election-year environment. Many observers, including Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood, have expressed doubt that Congress will pass a multiyear bill before the November election. But leaders of the 47-member panel from both House and Senate say they have a blueprint — hewing closely to their respective chamber’s approach — for the talks to defy the seemingly long odds. “For the conference to be successful, it must include significant transportation program reforms and ensure that needed jobs will be created,” a spokesman for House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman John Mica (R-Fla.) said in a statement provided to The Hill on Monday. “Now is the time to set aside our personal wish lists and focus on the issue at hand — the reauthorization of a bill that is absolutely essential to our economy,” Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.) agreed in a statement after conferees were first announced last month. “Controversy should not be part of the conference, and we should come together for the good of the country.” Boxer shepherded a two-year, $109 billion transportation bill through the Senate earlier this year. Mica tried to do the same in the House with a five-year, $260 billion version of the bill, but was ultimately unsuccessful. Members of the lawmakers’ respective committees will now begin negotiations based on the Senate transportation bill and a pair of House-passed short-term extensions of current law that kept funds flowing to road and transit projects. The talks are likely to center, at least at the outset, on a controversial cross-country pipeline that has emerged as an anti-Obama rallying cry for Republicans. The House version of the transportation and infrastructure bill approves the Keystone XL pipeline to bring Canadian oil sands to Gulf Coast refineries. The Senate’s plan omits the Keystone provision, and Democrats have decried its inclusion in the highway negotiations. White House press secretary Jay Carney has called the Keystone pipeline provision “noxious” to the highway negotiations. “What Congress is asking — in this highly politicized, highly partisan way, attaching a provision on the Keystone pipeline to a piece of legislation that has nothing to do with it ... in advance, blind, approve a pipeline, a proposal for which does not exist — but we’ll approve it anyway — a foreign pipeline built by a foreign company emanating from foreign territory to cross U.S. borders,” Carney said in a White House press briefing last month. A group of business leaders pressed lawmakers Monday to make sure the Keystone approval stays in the final highway bill, should one emerge from the conference committee. “As you commence your work on maintaining vital American transportation investments, Business Roundtable urges you to vote ‘Yes’ on the provision included in the House-passed version of the transportation bill that would expedite approval of the Keystone XL pipeline extension,” said the letter from the Business Roundtable. Even without the Keystone dramatics, transportation supporters say, the stakes for the congressional talks are high. “As House and Senate conferees begin negotiations on surface transportation legislation tomorrow, nearly 2 million current jobs, and up to 1 million new jobs, are at stake in what remains a slow economic recovery,” AFL-CIO Transportation Trades Department President Ed Wytkind said in a statement released Monday. “More stonewalling will not help families pay mortgages, college tuition or healthcare bills,” Wytkind continued. “Members of Congress have a choice to make. They can make a deal based upon the bipartisan Senate bill (MAP-21), or they can force a debate on controversial provisions — such as privatization giveaways to foreign interests — in the House bill (H.R. 7) that never even made it to the floor for a vote.”

**Gets dragged into polarized debates and opposition from both sides**

**Hunter, ’12** (Kathleen, Bloomberg staff reporter, 2/17/12, <http://www.businessweek.com/news/2012-02-27/former-highway-bill-foe-boehner-scavenging-for-votes.html>, JD)

Feb. 17 (Bloomberg) -- U.S. House Speaker John Boehner has never voted for highway-funding legislation, and he’s having trouble selling fellow Republicans on a plan written with them in mind. The bill he planned to push through the House this week is being delayed amid criticism from his Republican majority as well as Democrats. Although Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, a Democrat, this week called the House plan “a love note to the Tea Party,” Republicans who have made cutting the size of government their chief goal say they are bothered by the $260 billion price tag. “We’re dipping deep, deep into the general fund for what has traditionally been limited to the highway trust fund, and that’s a level of expenditure that’s not wise,” Representative Jeff Flake, an Arizona Republican who opposes the bill, said in an interview. The plan would reauthorize the 18.4-cent federal gasoline tax and set maximum spending levels for roads, bridges and mass transit for five years. The current highway law, which expires March 31, is the eighth temporary extension since a $244 billion, four-year plan ended in 2009. “This is a much more difficult process than we’ve seen in the past,” Boehner of Ohio told reporters yesterday. “There is clearly angst on both sides of the aisle over a number of issues.” Earmarked Funds One reason, the speaker said, is that the plan lacks earmarked funds for lawmakers’ pet projects, which he has previously said numbered more than 6,000 in the last highway measure. The Republican approach to the transportation bill is aimed at appealing to a “new breed” of lawmaker with “little understanding, little appreciation for bill history, who just wants to wipe out what was,” said Jim Oberstar, a former Minnesota representative who served as the top Democrat on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee for 16 years before he was defeated in the 2010 election. Oberstar noted that during his time on the panel, he and the top Republican would -- with their staffs -- write highway bills from scratch, regardless of which party was in the majority. Natural Republican constituencies, such as the investment and contracting sectors, have been alienated by the Republican bill, Oberstar said. ‘Uncomfortable, Miserable’ “Why would you make life so uncomfortable, miserable and uncertain on an issue like this just to make a political point?” Oberstar said. “I don’t understand it.” “In the past people were bought off with earmarks or some special provisions,” Transportation and Infrastructure Chairman John Mica, a Florida Republican, told reporters this week. “We don’t have that luxury. What we have to do is to discuss policy; that takes longer.” The plan would eliminate a program to fund bicycle trails and other transportation-related improvements that anti-tax Republicans view as wasteful. It would expand offshore drilling to provide royalties for highway spending, and raise funds by requiring federal workers to contribute more to their pensions. It also would end the designated use of 2.86 cents of the gasoline tax for mass transit and other projects to improve air quality and reduce highway congestion. Instead, the measure would provide $40 billion in general funds for those purposes. Flake objects to funding such projects at all, saying the bill’s scope should be limited to surface transportation projects that can be funded through gasoline tax revenue. Mass Transit Support Conversely, at least 10 Republicans from urban and suburban districts said they oppose the bill because it would end the automatic funding for mass transit. “As long as that’s in there I can’t vote for it,” Representative Peter King, a New York Republican, said in an interview. “That’s the only program where New York gets more money back” than it pays in gas taxes. Factions of Republicans with objections, combined with opposition from almost all 192 House Democrats, mean “the math is more than tricky, but it can be fixed, and I’m committed the helping the speaker try and fix it,” said Steve LaTourette, an Ohio Republican. House Republicans’ chief vote-counter, Majority Whip Kevin McCarthy of California, told members during a Feb. 1 closed-door party meeting that the 218 votes needed for the highway bill will have to come from within the party’s ranks, said two lawmakers who were in the room and spoke on condition of anonymity. ‘Misplaced Priorities’ Boehner told reporters Feb. 9 that the House measure is the first infrastructure highway bill he has ever supported. Prior measures, he said, “represented everything that was wrong with Washington: earmarks, endless layers of bureaucracy, wasted tax dollars and misplaced priorities.” Even without earmarks, lawmakers can be swayed by parochial concerns. Representative Cory Gardner, a Colorado Republican, said in an interview that he was working to strip a provision that would prohibit horses from being transported in double- decker trailers. The provision has “farmers, ranchers in Colorado -- a huge rodeo industry -- up in arms,” he said. President Barack Obama’s administration on Feb. 14 said it would veto the House bill, saying it would reduce safety, weaken environmental and labor protection and wouldn’t do enough to improve roads and bridges. The Senate is working on its plan, S. 1813, which would authorize $109.8 billion in spending for fiscal 2012 and 2013. Three Bills Republican leaders have split the House plan into three bills, and lawmakers are offering more than 300 amendments. The House passed the first measure last night and is set to consider the other two parts after next week’s Presidents’ Day recess. Allowing votes on amendments to expand states’ responsibility to fund roads, bridges and mass transit and to limit spending on highways and mass transit will help Republicans get the 218 votes they need, even though the amendments probably won’t be adopted, said a Republican lawmaker who is helping rally votes for the measure and spoke on condition of anonymity. The lawmaker said leaders are counting on some Republican critics to come on board after they go on the record in favor of changes. New Jersey Republican Scott Garrett proposed an amendment to create pilot programs allowing states to receive federal transportation funds through block grants. Oklahoma Republican James Lankford is pushing to let states opt out of federal highway programs, either by keeping the funds they contribute to the Highway Trust Fund or by allowing them to increase state gas taxes to cover the loss in revenue. ‘Right Direction’ Although Lankford said the highway bill was a “step in the right direction,” it wouldn’t go as far as he wanted to trim the federal government’s role in funding transportation. In previous years, the highway bill “has always been something that’s attracted three-hundred-and-something votes,” LaTourette said. This year, every Democrat on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee voted against the bill on Feb. 6. A Democrat on the panel, Pennsylvania’s Jason Altmire, said he opposed the plan because of provisions he viewed as anti- labor and because it would eliminate automatic funding for mass transit. He predicted it will take far beyond March 31 for the House and Senate to work out a plan. “The likely outcome, everyone would agree, is we will not have a long-term highway bill by the end of the year,” Altmire said. “I just don’t see, this year, given the politics, how that’s possible.”

**Recent debates prove**

**Plungis, ’12** (Jeff, Bloomberg staff, 3/26/12, <http://www.businessweek.com/news/2012-03-26/road-work-halt-days-away-as-congress-argues-funding-bill>, JD)

Congress’s rhetoric ahead of the March 31 expiration of a law funding U.S. highway and transit projects resembles the dueling that led to last July’s impasse shutting down the Federal Aviation Administration for two weeks. About 4,000 government workers were furloughed. The agency lost $468 million, according to data compiled by Bloomberg, when airlines for 16 days pocketed a ticket tax that would have been used for airport construction. The consequences of a highway-program shutdown would start with construction workers being laid off after states stop getting U.S. reimbursements to pay them, said Pete Rahn, leader of HNTB Holdings Ltd.’s transportation practice in Kansas City, Missouri. As many as 1.87 million jobs may be at risk, according to a Senate fact sheet citing Transportation Department job- calculation models. The U.S. government couldn’t collect as much as $93 million a day in gasoline taxes, he said. “This is by an order of magnitude bigger than the FAA bill,” said Joshua Schank, president and chief executive officer of the Eno Center for Transportation in Washington. “If it lasts any more than a few weeks, there would be serious damage.” Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, a Nevada Democrat, last week urged the House to take up the bill his chamber passed March 14. He wouldn’t discuss what would be the ninth extension of highway legislation that expired in 2009. Representative Bill Shuster, a Pennsylvania Republican rounding up votes on the other side of the Capitol, said that stance may change by March 30. Vote Scheduled The House will vote on a 90-day extension today after 6:30 p.m. in Washington, according to the chamber’s daily schedule. The bill will be taken up under rules requiring a two-thirds majority to pass, meaning the 242 Republicans will need about 48 Democrats to advance the legislation. Representative Nick Rahall, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee’s senior Democrat, urged a “no” vote in an e-mailed statement. House leaders should schedule a vote on the Senate bill, he said. “Allowing Republicans another 12 weeks would do nothing but feed their dangerous addiction to serial extensions and damaging delays, which are causing uncertainty and chaos at the start of the construction season,” said Rahall, of West Virginia. Insolvency Potential Congress’s struggles to agree on a long-term bill have drawn out so long that the Highway Trust Fund, which pays for road and mass transit construction, is almost insolvent. Its highway account may be unable to meet its obligations as soon as October, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials said Jan. 31 in a report analyzing Congressional Budget Office data. The fund’s finances have declined as cars have become more efficient and Americans drive less because of higher gasoline prices, according to the U.S. Transportation Department. If a shutdown forces gas-tax collections to stop, “these funds would be gone forever,” Rahn said. “There would be no way to make it up.” The Senate’s two-year, $109 billion transportation plan passed March 14 includes about $14 billion from other accounts and general taxpayer money to shore up the trust fund. The trust fund collected $36.9 billion from all sources in 2011, according to the CBO. When House leaders tried to bring a different bill to the floor last month, majority Republicans were so divided over how to pay for projects and whether mass transit should keep getting gasoline-tax money that it didn’t progress to a vote. Jobs at Stake House Transportation and Infrastructure Chairman John Mica, a Florida Republican, introduced a bill March 22 to extend current programs through June 30. As with the FAA bill, a lapse in the government’s authority to collect gasoline taxes won’t necessarily lead to lower fuel prices for consumers, Schank said. Senator Barbara Boxer, a California Democrat, held several news conferences last week calling for a vote on the approved bill she sponsored. Among the jobs at stake if highway funding lapses are 177,500 highway and transit positions in California, 120,300 in Texas and 113,300 in New York, according to fact sheet prepared by Senate Democrats. The Senate bill may create another 1 million jobs by expanding private-sector financing for projects, according to the fact sheet. House Speaker John Boehner, an Ohio Republican, backed off a pledge to act on the Senate bill if House members wouldn’t back Mica’s five-year, $260 billion plan. House Republicans want to bolster the Highway Trust Fund with revenue from opening up more federal land to oil and gas production, Boehner told reporters March 22.

**Highway bill sparks opposition**

**Holtzman, ’12** (Geoff, Deputy Washington Bureau Chief/News Director, 2/12/12, <http://www.talkradionews.com/news/2012/02/14/highway-bill-generates-bipartisan-backlash.html>)

WASHINGTON — A series of interest groups rarely mentioned in the same breath have come together to oppose a massive transportation bill making its way through Congress. Earlier this week, the pro-environment National Resources Defense Council teamed with a coalition of conservatives — including the Competitive Enterprise Institute, the National Taxpayers Union, Taxpayers for Common Sense and the Reason Foundation — to urge House Republican leaders to scrap a reauthorization of the federal highway bill. The American Energy and Infrastructure Jobs Act (H.R. 7), which could see action as early as Wednesday, would merge a series of GOP domestic energy pet projects into the annual surface transportation legislation. The five-year measure is estimated to cost $260 billion. Meanwhile, the Senate is preparing a smaller two-year version of the bill that would total about $110 billion. In their letter, the groups urged leading lawmakers to reject using projected revenues generated by new oil drilling in areas like Alaska’s Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to aid the National Highway Trust Fund. “Further increasing the reliance of the Highway Trust Fund on revenue streams not connected to use would threaten the future health of America’s highways,” they wrote. The NRDC has on numerous occasions cited environmental health concerns as reasons for lobbying against attempts to open up ANWR. The organization and well as other like-minded groups are also opposed to a Senate GOP-led effort to attach the Keystone XL pipeline to the package. Republicans who support the bill say they have no problem with using royalty fees on the oil and gas industry to fuel new transportation infrastructure projects. “This will prevent the need for more of the same taxpayer bailouts for highway programs that occurred when Democrats ran Congress,” said House Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio). But the groups that are opposed want the authors of the bill to stick to the traditional pay-for-use model, whereby only gas taxes are used to cover the cost of surface transportation projects, rather than tapping into unrelated revenue streams. A new Congressional Budget Office report out this week suggests that the 18.4 percent gas tax might have to increase in order for the trust fund to stay solvent. House GOP’ers are downplaying that study, arguing that it underestimates the amount of revenue that would be created by new energy expansion. Another group, the conservative Heritage Foundation, argues that while boosting domestic energy production is “sound policy,” using the potential dollars to refill the Highway Trust Fund does, in fact, amount to a bailout. “Congress should live within its means,” the group wrote, and use the drilling revenues to instead pay down the nation’s deficit. Boehner’s office, however, pushed back on that claim, saying that the energy provisions in the bill would negate the need for the Treasury Department to direct general dollars to highway projects. Meanwhile, other conservatives say the reauthorization proposal simply includes too much spending. “Instead of opening up American land to energy production and using that energy production to pay down the national debt, we will instead jack up highway spending, bankrupt the highway trust fund as a result, and then use the energy taxes to offset the project funding,” wrote conservative commentator Erick Erickson. One area where conservatives are giving Republicans credit is removing earmarks from the bill. In the past, pork dollars have been used to create tourist attractions, fund gardening projects and even build a National Corvette Museum. GOP leaders say this year’s bill contains only “pro-growth” items, as well as language to consolidate duplicative surface transportation projects. Not surprisingly, some progressives are unhappy with the decision to to cancel or cut back funding for non-highway needs. According to the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, the bill would “cripple transit systems around the country and hurt millions of people who depend on public transportation to reach jobs, doctor appointments, schools, and other necessities of everyday life.” Given such widespread opposition, it appears highly unlikely that the bill in its current form will make its way to President Obama’s desk. Yet, because Congress has not passed a full reauthorization of the highway program since 2007, lawmakers may be willing to creatively deal this time around just so they can put the issue in their rearview mirror.

### NEXT-GEN/AIRPLANES

#### Next-gen is unpopular

**Perera 11** (David Perera, David Perera is executive editor of the FierceMarkets Government Group, which includes FierceGovernment, FierceGovernmentIT, FierceHomelandSecurity, and FierceMobileGovernment. He has reported on all things federal since January 2004. In addition to his Fierce work, he is also at work on a book to be published in September 2012 on the federal information technology market. Based in greater metro Washington, D.C., Dave can be reached here and can be found on LinkedIn or here., Fierce GovernmentIT, Read the latest government technology news on cybersecurity, open government, defense IT, cloud computing, and more government IT news.; http://www.fiercegovernmentit.com/story/faa-must-chose-nextgen-flight-prioritization-soon-says-report/2011-02-08)

**If air traffic controllers are to make use of advanced flight prioritization methods made possible by satellite tracking of aircraft positions, then Federal Aviation Administration faces some urgency in choosing a prioritization methodology**, says a report commissioned by the FAA-led NextGen Joint Planning and Development Organization. Under today's radar-based air traffic control system, controllers can estimate the future position of aircraft based on their position and speed, but planned changes to air traffic control that include requiring aircraft to transmit their position using Global Positioning System signals should make trajectory data far more accurate. The FAA is requiring aircraft to carry GPS transmitters by 2020 as part of a multi-billion collection of efforts to modernize air traffic control known as NextGen. NextGen projects and NextGen-enabling technologies such as ERAM will need to incorporate flight prioritization algorithms, meaning that the FAA must decide soon what that future flight prioritization methodology will be, says the Jan. 31 report. The methodology will affect which NextGen projects need support the algorithm. Sign up for our FREE newsletter for more news like this sent to your inbox! For example, if flight prioritization changes en route, the System Wide Information Management effort to deliver network-enabled information access will need to be reviewed to ensure that the data pathways and latency are consistent with the requirements of the prioritization methodology, the report states. The report, based on the work of JPDO-empaneled private sector and academic aviation experts, examines a number of prioritization methodologies, selecting four as worthy of additional investigation while appearing to favor a methodology that would have aircraft operators bid for prioritization. Market-based prioritization mechanisms "offer the best opportunity to achieve the many objectives of NextGen," the report states. The Government Accountability Office has said (.pdf) that the **FAA lacks the authority to auction landing slots for money and market-based approaches to air traffic control is hugely unpopular in the private sector. The report attributes that unpopularity most to "reluctance to pay directly for resources that are now being supported indirectly through taxes and fees paid into the Aviation Trust Fund." The FAA might have to seek congressional authorization to implement such a mechanism,** the report adds. Other possible methodologies include assigning priority points according to some objective criteria and allowing operators to bid points against each other to win priority; prioritization according to published air flight schedule or estimated time of arrival for those operators that don't publish schedules; or a system under which the best-NextGen equipped aircraft gain priority, although that last option couldn't be rolled out across the entire United States, the report states

**Airport funding unpopular and cause political infighting to get passage – recent bill proves**

**Barrett, ’12** (Ted, Senior Congressional Producer, 2/6/12, <http://articles.cnn.com/2012-02-06/travel/travel_faa-funding_1_faa-funding-measure-senate-committee?_s=PM:TRAVEL>, JD)

After passing 23 temporary extensions, the Senate voted 75 to 20 Monday to approve a long-term funding bill for the FAA and sent it to the president for his expected signature. The measure provides about $16 billion a year for FAA operations, airport construction and modernization. It includes safety measures, such as a new satellite-based system for air traffic control, as well as other aviation programs, like one that subsidizes air travel to rural areas. Negotiations over the bill repeatedly stalled over contentious labor issues that congressional leaders finally compromised on in January. Last summer, airport construction projects were halted abruptly when funding temporarily lapsed after Congress couldn't agree on a new extension. "Compromises in the current atmosphere are not easy," said Sen. Jay Rockefeller, D-West Virginia, who chairs the senate committee that handled the measure. "This has been a long process," agreed Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison of Texas, the top Republican on the committee. Hutchison said she was pleased to get a four-year funding measure finalized because it will provide stability to the industry. "Now our airports are going to be able to start their building projects. They're going to be able to increase their runway space or repair whatever their priorities are that are decided by the FAA," she said. The House approved the bill Friday.

**Causes political infighting**

**Gruenberg, ’12** (Mark, editor of Press Associates Inc. (PAI), a union news service, 1/20/12, <http://peoplesworld.org/labor-maps-legislative-battle-for-201/>, JD)

In a Jan. 17 interview with Press Associates Union News Service, Samuel said the list includes fighting for a two-year transportation (highway-mass transit) funding bill, pushing for final resolution of a long-running war over airport construction and airways modernization - and union rights for airline workers - and extension of jobless benefits. It also includes legislation to curb Internet piracy of intellectual property, since the piracy robs dollars from royalty-based wages for musicians, actors, screenwriters, and other unionized creative professionals. And the agenda includes a longer extension of emergency federal jobless benefits for the long-term unemployed. **But the outlook is cloudy for all**. Even the jobless benefits bill, which both parties agree upon, is hung up by a partisan dispute over how to pay for the $150 billion measure. Congress returned to town Jan. 17 to start this year's session, after a first year characterized by Senate GOP filibusters on just about everything and by a tea party-dominated House GOP attacking spending and workers. Samuel expects those attacks to continue. He forecasts congressional Republicans will use the Congressional Review Act - a Gingrich-era GOP law - to try to overturn new federal rules streamlining union recognition election procedures. The big fights will be over job creation. Samuel expects the Obama administration to again support the infrastructure bill, jobless benefits, and other measures, though he concedes that aid to state and local governments may be iffy. Obama will outline his agenda in the Jan. 24 State of the Union address. Labor may have, finally, won one battle with the House GOP, Samuel said, over recognition elections for airline and railroad workers. "The Chamber of Commerce has finally dropped its opposition" to new rules for those elections, contained in the airport construction and modernization bill. That legislation would create 80,000-100,000 jobs. House Transportation Committee Chairman John Mica, R-Fla., has insisted that rules governing union recognition elections at airlines and railroads should force unions to win an absolute majority of all eligible voters at a worksite, with non-voters counted as "no" votes. That was the rule until last year when, after pressure from the labor movement and its allies, the government changed it. The requirement in union elections now is the same as in any other election - the winner is determined by the majority of those who actually cast ballots. Business and Mica fought the change, but with the 23rd temporary extension of the airport and airspace construction bill set to expire at the end of January, business seems to have given up. The question for congressional negotiators is if Mica will. As for extending jobless benefits, "we and the Democrats are hopeful" that Congress will OK an extension before the benefits expire Feb. 29, Samuel said. He also said the Democrats are holding fast against cutting any major programs to pay for the cost - even though in the past, Congress did not require cuts elsewhere to pay for aiding the unemployed. The House GOP is insisting on cuts, at least so far. If the GOP holds fast to its no-taxes-on-millionaires stand and the Democrats protect major programs, there could be a stalemate on jobless benefits, Samuel concedes. "But the Republicans badly miscalculated" when the last benefits extension was debated in December that their no-taxes stand was a winner. Instead, they got a political black eye for protecting the rich at the expense of unemployed workers. The two-year highway-mass transit bill, worth $106 billion plus inflation, still needs some details: Its mass transit sections are incomplete and so is its financing, outside of the federal gasoline tax. The measure would create tens of thousands of construction jobs and its passage is a major goal of building trades unions. Once Senate panels finish drafting the measure, the Democratic-run Senate is expected to approve it, Samuel said. The problem is the GOP-run House, again. Mica earlier proposed a five-year bill with much less spending per year - so much less that Laborers President Terry O'Sullivan called Mica's legislation a "job killer."

### CLIMATE ADAPTATION

#### The attempt to adapt to the climate hurts humans more than it helps us making the plan unpopular

Marino and Ribot 3-12(Elizabeth Marino, Elizabeth Marino is the author of "Talking and Not Talking about Climate Change in Northwestern Alaska", a chapter in the anthology: Anthropology and Climate Change. Upcoming publications include an article in the multi-disciplinary journal Arctic and a future (in revisions) article in Human Organization., United States; Jesse Ribot, Jesse Ribot is an Associate Professor of Geography and Director of the Social Dimensions of Environmental Policy Initiative at the University of Illinois. Prior to joining UI, Ribot was a Senior Associate in the Institutions and Governance program at the World Resources Institute from 1999 to 08. He has been a fellow at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, a Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars Fellow, a MacArthur Fellow at the Harvard Center for Population and Development Studies, a fellow at the Yale Program in Agrarian Studies, lecturer in the Department of Urban Studies and Planning at MIT, and has worked for numerous development agencies. He conducts research on decentralization and democratic local government; natural resource tenure and access; distribution along natural resource commodity chains; and vulnerability in the face of climate and environmental changeUniversity of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, IL, United States; Volume 22, Issue 2, May 2012, Pages 323–328, Sciencedirect.com, Special Issue Introduction: Adding insult to injury: Climate change and the inequities of climate intervention) http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0959378012000258)

McEvoy and Wilder's **article raises the question of whether cures for a growing and technological society are bound to produce new injuries** (a la Beck, 1994)? Is maladaptation (Barnett and O’Neill, 2010) or malmitigation the exception or the rule? **Is the untenable eternal-growth logic of capitalism the culprit? Yes; but not the only one**. McEvoy and Wilder show how politics of domination and a technological agenda can produce centrally managed supply-side water solutions, despite the international push towards decentralized and participatory forms of water governance that emphasize demand-side management. They demonstrate how the uncomfortable politics of competition between urban and rural water users, and unpopular conservation measures, also favor technological options. In this context, **they show how capitalism's need for growth coupled with science's proclivity to ‘side’ effects** (Beck, 1994) **has left us with a spiral of fixes upon fixes; injuries upon injuries**.

## AT: Economy Link Turn

**No jobs will be created, making spending on transportation infrastructure unpopular**

**Lowry 3-5-12** (Joan Lowry, writer for USA Today; USA Today, http://www.usatoday.com/money/story/2012-03-05/transportation-job-creation/53365862/1)

WASHINGTON – **The lure of roads, bridges, buses and trains isn't enough anymore to drive an expensive transportation bill** through Congress. So **to round up votes, congressional leaders are pitching the bills as the hottest thing around these days: job generators.** By Rion Sanders, AP¶ The Northern Express Transport Authority in Shelby, Mont., secured an almost $10 million grant from the federal government to complete the third phase of an intermodal train facility for shipping containers to be transferred from truck to rail. Backers have lined up projects related to the facility that could bring hundreds of jobs to the Hi-Line town in 2012. EnlargeBy Rion Sanders, APThe Northern Express Transport Authority in Shelby, Mont., secured an almost $10 million grant from the federal government to complete the third phase of an intermodal train facility for shipping containers to be transferred from truck to rail. Backers have lined up projects related to the facility that could bring hundreds of jobs to the Hi-Line town in 2012.**But do they really create more jobs? Not really, is the answer from many economists. The bills would simply shift investment that was creating jobs elsewhere in the economy to transportation industries. That means different jobs, but not necessarily additional ones.**¶ "Investments in transportation infrastructure, if well designed, should be viewed as investments in future productivity growth," said Alice Rivlin, a former director of the White House Office of Management and Budget under President Bill Clinton. The dividends come over the long run"If they speed the delivery of goods and people, they will certainly do that," she added. **"They will also create jobs, but not necessarily more jobs than the same money spent in other ways**."

**Spending will be extremely heavy, will rely on loads of unpopular taxes**

**Economist 11** (Life in the slow lane

Americans are gloomy about their economy’s ability to produce. Are they right to be? We look at two areas of concern, transport infrastructure and innovation, The Economist Magazine, Authoritative weekly newspaper focusing on international politics and business news and opinion) **The rehabilitation of America’s transport network will be neither easy nor cheap. To make the necessary repairs and upgrades, America will need to spend a lot more. In a deficit-conscious environment, that will require new revenue. The most straightforward first step would be a rise in fuel-tax rates,** currently at 18.4 cents a gallon. But **petrol-tax increases are even more unpopular than deficits,** and rises may prove riskier as oil prices increase.¶ Some in Washington would rather take their cut further away from consumers. A tax on oil, rather than petrol, could be a little easier for consumers to stomach. America’s big oil producers signalled openness to a similar policy during negotiations over the ill-fated but bipartisan Kerry-Graham-Lieberman climate bill. It could return as a means to fund infrastructure.

# IMPACTS

### XT- RUSSIA

#### Obama currently working with Russia

**Madhani 3/12** [Aamer Madhani, Mar 26, 2012 “Obama tells Medvedev he'll have 'flexibility' after election Comments”, USA TODAY http://content.usatoday.com/communities/theoval/post/2012/03/obama-tells-russian-hell-have-flexibility-after-election-/1#.UARCEY5uHzI]

SEOUL — President **Obama told** outgoing **Russian President** Dmitry Medvedev **that he would have "more flexibility" after the November election** **to take on the sticky issue of building a missile defense system in Europe**. CAPTIONBy Pablo Martinez Monsivais, AP The exchange, which was first reported by Jake Tapper of ABC News, was picked up by microphones as reporters were let into the room where the two leaders had been holding a bilateral session ahead of the Nuclear Security Summit. The **Russians are adamantly opposed to the missile defense system**, which the administration has repeatedly said is not aimed at Russia. **Obama tells Medvedev: "This is my last election. After my election I have more flexibility." Medvedev** **replied: "I understand. I will transmit this information to Vladimir.**" The Vladimir, Medvedev refers to, is presumably incoming Russian president Vladimir Putin. Republicans, including House Speaker John Boehner, needled Obama about the incident. "When the president returns from S. Korea, **we look forward to hearing what he meant by having "more flexibility**" on missile defense," Boehner wrote on Twitter. Deputy national security adviser Ben Rhodes said the exchange reflects the reality of politics in both the U.S. and Russia and that a resolution on the issue won't happen immediately. "Since 2012 is an election year in both countries, with an election and leadership transition in Russia and an election in the United States, it is clearly not a year in which we are going to achieve a breakthrough," Rhodes said. "Therefore, President Obama and President Medvedev agreed that it was best to instruct our technical experts to do the work of better understanding our respective positions, providing space for continued discussions on missile defense cooperation going forward."

#### Russia doesn’t like Romney, election leads to full scale crisis, turns case

**Morrissey 7/3** [JULY 3, 2012, ED MORRISSEY, Hot air “Bad News, Russia Not Terribly Fond of Romney” http://hotair.com/archives/2012/07/03/bad-news-russia-not-terribly-fond-of-romney/]

Okay, okay, I admit it: I led with the bad news. The good news? Alexey Pushkov, a key ally of Vladimir Putin and chair of the Duma’s foreign-policy committee, pronounces Barack Obama to be an “acceptable” partner for Russia. Admit it … this makes you feel better about Mitt Romney: **Alexey Pushkov, chairman of the international affairs committee of the State Duma, said in a recent interview that Russian leaders have noted Romney’s comments with concern**, and are watching with interest as neoconservative and “realist” advisers maneuver for influence within the campaign. “**We don’t think that for us Romney will be an easy partner**,” said Pushkov, an ally of President Vladimir Putin. “We think that **Romney will be**, on the rhetorical side, **a replay of the Bush administration.” He also noted Romney’s statements that the U**nited **St**ates **should assert its dominance** in the 21st century. “If he is serious about this, I’m afraid he may choose the neocon-type people…In the first year of his presidency, **we may have a full-scale crisis,**” he said. The catalyst for this attitude was **Romney’s statement that Russia is the “number one geopolitical foe” of the U**S, which I believe is incorrect — but not because the Russians are great friends of the US, either. **Our primary geopolitical foe at the moment is Iran**, and it has been for some time. Russia ranges from economic competitor to diffident anti-proliferation partner, occasionally flipping to antagonist in central Asia and far-eastern Europe. But Iran clearly wants to damage if not destroy the US along with Israel, and has conducted a low-level hot war against us since the 1979 sacking of our embassy in Tehran. The problem here is that Russia has been an obstacle rather than a friend in dealing with the mullahs. Putin has fallen back into the Great Game, when the stakes now are no longer empire but nuclear terrorism. China is equally a problem in the same regard, and **Romney hasn’t had kind words to say about Beijing either in this campaign**, although usually in the form of trade issues. Even Obama doesn’t get terribly high marks from Pushkov. He’s not been impressed with the “reset” pronounced by Hillary Clinton and Sergei Lavrov, and insists “it needs another reset.” Don’t worry, Alexey; Obama will have “more flexibility” after the election. Didn’t Dmitri Medvedev transmit that to you?

#### Ext Russia against Romney

Meir-Levi 5/11 [David Meir-Levi Bio May 11th, 2012 “Russia Wants Obama Re-Elected” http://frontpagemag.com/2012/david-meir-levi/russia-wants-obama-re-elected/]

The **Russians organized the Thursday conference in order to place their threat on the table, loud and clear**, and make public their demand that they get a written agreement that the West will never use its missiles against Russia. Currently, the USA and NATO have refused to put such a promise in writing, although Russia-NATO agreements on missile defense cooperation date back to 2010. The timing of this meeting is important. It comes shortly before a NATO conference due to take place in Chicago later this month at which NATO will publicize its success in getting its missile-defense system up and running. **Russia’s pre-emptive threat of a missile war against the West if the West does not agree to its demands puts a big kink in the Chicago conference.**

**But according to the Wall Street Journal article, Russia’s alarming saber-rattling is really a façade to hide a “tacit agreement to put off serious talks until next year,” by which time Obama, if re-elected, could “clear the way for a deal” and work** on Russia’s behalf against NATO **to find ways to accommodate the Russian demands**. The Russian presenter on Thursday was direct and unambiguous that **Russia prefers to work with Obama as a second-term president**, and to cooperate with his vision of a “reset” **in the USA- Russia relationship, rather than to joust with Romney whose election they feel will make things “surely … more difficult.”**

So what the Russians have actually said is: **if you want to keep the Russian bear from getting aggressive, elect Obama, not Romney**. This is an unusually overt attempt by a foreign power to influence American elections, but it is not surprising since Romney has been harshly critical of Obama’s “reset” vision.

#### Romney would hurt relations, draws in China

Larison 6/27/12 (Daniel Larison, Daniel Larison is a columnist and contributing editor at The American Conservative and blogs at Eunomia. He recently completed his doctorate in Byzantine history at the University of Chicago.; The American Conservative, U.S.-Russian Relations Would Get Much Worse Under Romney, http://www.theamericanconservative.com/larison/u-s-russian-relations-would-get-much-worse-under-romney/)

Ognyan Minchev offers an unpersuasive interpretation of Putin’s thinking:¶ Putin might share some of that same distrust of liberal partners and be more apt to deal with a hard-line conservative in the White House.¶ Yet, there would almost certainly be tradeoffs. A conservative president would likely engage in more assertive policies toward Moscow. A more active U.S. policy toward the Middle East, the South Caucasus, or Central Europe would risk clashing more openly with Russia’s positions. Why would Putin want this, given the fragility of Russian power today? Threats have been a key driver of Russian power politics throughout the history of the Empire. Putin’s calculations could take many forms. A more active U.S. policy on disputed issues might demonstrate not only American power but also reveal American weaknesses. A more assertive U.S. presence in the spheres of Russian interest might also provoke more active opposition by China, and Russia may benefit from greater competition between Beijing and Washington. Or Putin might prefer an immediate, open rivalry with what he perceives to be a weakened United States across a range of issues.¶ The easier (and more accurate) answer is that Putin doesn’t actually want a “hard-line conservative in the White House.” Putin distrusts the U.S. because he believes that the Bush administration behaved in an ungrateful and untrustworthy fashion in the previous decade, and U.S.-Russian relations improved as much as they did because the current administration seemed to be more reliable. U.S.-Russian relations reached their lowest point in the last twenty years in no small part because of a “more active U.S. policy” toward the Middle East, the South Caucasus, and central Europe. Putin might be willing to deal with a more hard-line American President, but only so long as it this translated into tangible gains for Russia. Provided that the hard-liner was willing to live up to his end of the bargain, there could be some room for agreement, but there isn’t any. Since Romney’s Russia policy is essentially to never make any deals with the current Russian government, Putin doesn’t have much of an incentive to cooperate. That will guarantee that U.S.-Russian relations will deteriorate much more than they have in the last year.

#### Ext Obama solves relations after elections

Hattman 3/27 [Patrick Hattman, Mar 27, 2012 Yahoo! Contributor Network “President Obama Promises 'Flexibility' on Missile Defense to Russian President Medvedev After Re-Election” http://voices.yahoo.com/president-obama-promises-flexibility-missile-defense-11159960.html]

President **Obama told** President **Medvedev that he just needed "space" on the missile defense issue until the U.S. presidential election is concluded** later this year. **He continued that he would have extra "flexibility" in working with the Russians to find common ground on disagreements once he no longer has to focus on his "last election."** President **Medvedev appeared to casually absorb the remarks and gave his support to the notion** of Obama requiring "space" for the time being. President Medvedev also confirmed that he would "transmit this information to Vladimir" -- as in Vladimir Putin, who will once again assume Russia's presidency following a March 4 election victory.

### AT: Relations Low Now

#### Ext US Russia relations good now

France-Presse 7/18 [Agence France-Presse Wednesday, July 18, 2012 “Putin agrees to work with Obama on Syria” http://www.rawstory.com/rs/2012/07/18/putin-agrees-to-work-with-obama-on-syria/]

WASHINGTON — Russian President Vladimir **Putin agreed** Wednesday in a phone call **with** President Barack Obama **to work with the U**nited **S**tates **to find a solution to the crisis in Syria**, the White House said. But the Kremlin stressed that “differences” remain ahead of a UN Security Council vote in which Russia is expected to veto a Western-drafted resolution calling for sanctions against Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. Putin and Obama spoke after a bomb attack Wednesday killed at least three members of Assad’s inner circle, upping the stakes of Thursday’s vote as predictions rained in that Syria was spinning out of control into chaos. “The two presidents noted the growing violence in Syria and agreed on the need to support a political transition as soon as possible that achieves our shared goal of ending the violence and avoiding a further deterioration of the situation,” the White House said. “They noted the differences our governments have had on Syria, but agreed to have **their teams continue to work toward a solution.**” Russia has proposed its own draft UN resolution that does not provide for punitive measures against its Soviet-era ally Damascus while extending a current UN monitoring mission there by another three months. Western powers have refused to back Russia’s initial proposal or an amended version submitted by Moscow at the United Nations on Tuesday. “Differences in approaches remain that concern practical steps in achieving a settlement,” Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov was quoted as saying by Russian news agencies after the Putin-Obama call. The Kremlin spokesman provided few details of the phone call except to say that it was initiated by Obama and included a “detailed discussion of Syria in which the recent escalation was noted.” **Peskov said the conversation showed that the two leaders “have a coinciding view of the general situation in Syria (and agree) on the end goal of reaching a settlement**.” But the spokesman made no mention of Russia’s refusal to back firmer action against Assad or of Obama’s insistence of imposing sanctions against his regime should it fail to comply with the most urgent points of a peace plan drafted by international mediator Kofi Annan. “**President Obama also took the opportunity to express condolences on the tragic loss of life resulting from flooding** in southern Russia **earlier this month and reiterated the US readiness to provide assistance if needed**,” the White House statement said.

### CHINA RELATIONS 2NC

#### Obama and China working together now

**Kissinger 2012** [Henry A. Kissinger March/April 2012 The Future of U.S.-Chinese Relations “Conflict Is a Choice, Not a Necessity” http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/137245/henry-a-kissinger/the-future-of-us-chinese-relations]

On January 19, 2011, U.S. President Barack **Obama and Chinese President Hu Jintao issued a joint statement** at the end of Hu’s visit to Washington. **It proclaimed their shared commitment to a “positive, cooperative, and comprehensive U.S.-China relationship**.” Each party reassured the other regarding his principal concern, announcing, “**The U**nited **S**tates **reiterated that it welcomes a strong, prosperous, and successful China** that plays a greater role in world affairs. **China welcomes the** **U**nited **S**tates as an Asia-Pacific nation that contributes to peace, stability and prosperity in the region.Since then, the two governments have set about implementing the stated objectives. Top American and Chinese officials have exchanged visits and institutionalized their exchanges on major strategic and economic issues. Military-to-military contacts have been restarted, opening an important channel of communication. And at the unofficial level, so-called track-**two groups have explored possible evolutions of the U.S.-Chinese relationship.**

#### Romney hostile towards China- thwarts development

THE ECONOMIST 7/14 [Jul 14th 2012 “The China-bashing syndrome”, “Both parties are cranking up their rhetoric against the world’s second-largest economy” http://www.economist.com/node/21558581]

Mr **Romney**, as befits the author of a book called “No Apology: The Case for American Greatness”, **says that if elected he would not hesitate to put China in its place**. On his first day in office, no less, he has pledged to declare it a currency manipulator, a step that could lead to across-the-board tariff increases on Chinese imports. More broadly, he says **he will force China to play by the rules** of international trade and investment: no more theft of intellectual property, no more unfair subsidies for state-owned firms, no more predatory pricing. And economics is not his only concern: **he promises to chastise China more loudly** for its human-rights **abuses and to bolster America’s armed forces to counteract China’s growing military clout**. As in most things, Mr Romney’s China-bashing seems studied and methodical. He would like rich countries to impose “intellectual-property sanctions” on China, to prevent it from acquiring the advanced technology behind such things as passenger jets until it stops pilfering foreign know-how. Under the heading “Confront China Directly”, his website pledges to end government procurement from China until China provides reciprocal access to American firms. Taiwan, he says, should be allowed to buy whatever weapons it wants. Meanwhile America’s navy, he calculates, needs to build an extra six ships a year to handle all the challenges it faces, including an uppity China. Mr **Romney mocks the suggestion that he is gunning for a trade war** (let alone a conventional one). **An undeclared conflict is already under way**, he suggests, and China is winning. Moreover, if America imposed punitive tariffs on Chinese goods, he argues, China would not dare to retaliate in kind because it has more to lose from an escalation in hostilities. China is selling America, he notes, $273 billion more per year than America is selling to China. “If you’re not willing to stand up to China, you’ll get run over by China,” he insists. The obvious response to all this is to shrug. Candidates may rage about China on the campaign trail, but when in office they become more temperate. Four years ago Mr Obama promised to do just as Mr Romney now demands, and label China a currency manipulator. Twice a year since then he has passed up the opportunity to do so. In part, that is because China’s currency has been appreciating in recent years, and its global trade surplus shrinking. But mainly it is because **picking a fight with an all-important trading partner, and the biggest foreign holder of American public debt, does not seem a bright idea** when you are the one who will be blamed for the economic consequences. If even a former community organiser shies away from a showdown with China, the assumption runs, then a pin-striped man of finance certainly will. There are plenty of ways out of the hole Mr Romney has dug for himself. He could say that as a result of the pressure he has brought to bear, China has made such great strides that the penalties he envisaged are no longer warranted. Or he could keep his pledge, and brand it a manipulator, while making sure that the bureaucratic procedure that would then follow did not lead to any actual retribution. So far, there does not seem to be much sense of alarm emanating from Beijing. Even as Mr Romney was cranking up his rhetoric earlier this year, the man who is expected to become **China’s next president, Xi Jinping, visited Washington and described ties between his country and America as “an unstoppable river that keeps surging ahead”**. **Words have consequences, too** In fact, **the risks could be a lot greater than that. China**, like America **is in the middle of a transition of leadership; and being branded as a manipulator could easily risk a nasty response**. For another thing, Mr Romney’s words set up a dynamic whereby candidates try to outdo one another with their China-bashing. Earlier this month, when the administration unveiled a complaint about Chinese car tariffs before the WTO, the president’s campaign proudly noted that he had initiated such proceedings twice as often as his predecessor. The Republican Party immediately retorted that Mr Obama was nonetheless a late convert to the cause, and should have been challenging China more often. Indeed, fewer and fewer Republicans are letting their supposed belief in free trade interfere with an easy shot at the president. Mr Romney is actually among the milder ones. Donald Trump, while flirting with a run for the Republican nomination last year, said, “China is raping this country.” Newt Gingrich, who did run, argued at a debate among candidates that it was important “to dramatically raise the pain level for the Chinese cheating”. Michele Bachmann, another candidate, quipped that China’s purchases of American Treasury bills brought a whole new meaning to the phrase “Hu’s your daddy?” **The trouble with such talk is that it reinforces the feeling among China’s leaders that America is out to thwart their country’s “peaceful rise**”. The fact that both parties are happy to portray China as the bogeyman of globalisation **creates an impression of uniform hostility. That, in turn, undermines America’s message that China is unduly paranoid and defensive**. It also disenfranchises those American voters who would like to express a more optimistic view of the consequences of commerce.

#### US china conflict leads to nuke war

**Wittner 2011** [Lawence Wittner “Is a Nuclear War With China Possible?” 11/30/11 http://www.huffingtonpost.com/lawrence-wittner/nuclear-war-china\_b\_1116556.html]

Of course, the bottom line **for** those **Americans convinced** that **nuc**lear weapon**s** **safeguard them from a Chinese nuclear attack** might be that the U.S. nuclear arsenal is far greater than its Chinese counterpart. Today, it is estimated that the U.S. government [possesses](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/northamerica/usa/7674962/US-has-more-than-5000-nuclear-warheads.html) over 5,000 nuclear warheads, while the Chinese government has a total inventory of [roughly 300](http://www.nukestrat.com/china/Book-35-125.pdf). Moreover, only about 40 of these Chinese nuclear weapons [can reach](http://csis.org/blog/start-and-china-really) the United States. **Surely the United States would "win"** any nuclear war with China. **But what would** that "**victory" entail? An attack with** these Chinese **nuc**lear weapon**s** **would** immediately **slaughter at least 10 million Americans** in a great storm of blast and fire, **while leaving many more dying horribly of sickness and radiation poisoning. The Chinese death toll** in a nuclear war would be far higher. **Both nations would be reduced to smoldering, radioactive wastelands**. Also, **radioactive debris** sent aloft by the nuclear explosions **would blot out the sun and bring on a "nuclear winter" around the globe -- destroying agriculture, creating worldwide famine, and generating chaos and destruction**. Moreover, in another decade the extent of this catastrophe would be far worse. The Chinese government is currently expanding its nuclear arsenal, and by the year 2020 it is [expected](http://www.nukestrat.com/china/Book-35-125.pdf) to more than double its number of nuclear weapons that can hit the United States. The U.S. government, in turn, has [plans](http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/oct/30/nuclear-powers-weapons-spending-report) to spend hundreds of billions of dollars "modernizing" its nuclear weapons and nuclear production facilities over the next decade. **To avert the enormous disaster of a U.S.-China nuclear war, there are** two obvious **actions that can be taken.** The first is to get rid of nuclear weapons, as the nuclear powers have agreed to do but thus far have resisted doing. The second, conducted while the nuclear disarmament process is occurring, is **to improve U.S.-China relations.** If the American and Chinese people are interested in ensuring their survival and that of the world, they should be working to encourage these policies

### MIDDLE EAST POLICY 2NC

#### Romney middle east policy fails, turns case

**Jacobine 7/15** [Kenn Jacobine Sunday, July 15, 2012 “Romney Foreign Policy Would Make Americans Unsafe” http://www.nolanchart.com/article9732-romney-foreign-policy-would-make-americans-unsafe.html]

Now, **on the surface, this all seem**s so **political.** After all, there are a lot of Jewish and Evangelical Christian voters in several swing states like Pennsylvania and Florida. Romney’s trip to Israel will be a positive for these groups. But, aren’t there a lot of Italian, Irish, and Polish voters in those states as well. Why not pay a visit to the ancestral homelands of those groups in an effort to endear yourself to them? It is because Mitt Romney knows the political payoff wouldn’t be as great in terms of fundraising and political activism. And because it is so great with the advocates for Israel, they will expect a lot from a Romney Administration.  If Romney’s junket to Jerusalem and his acceptance of Adelson’s largess aren’t bad enough, **at an elite gathering of Romney supporters** in Utah **recently he boasted that he receives** [**briefings**](http://www.jpost.com/USPresidentialrace/Article.aspx?id=275101) **from Israeli officials on Middle East developments**. And then there is **Romney’s extremely pro-Israel national security team**. It **includes hardliners** like [Walid Phares](http://www.nolanchart.com/article9069-romneys-foreign-policy-would-be-disastrous-for-america.html) and Dov Zakheim. Even **as more drone attacks** in Pakistan **have been launched** and been deadlier under Obama than Bush, **Zakheim recently penned an** [**article**](http://shadow.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/06/01/obamas_drone_war_has_actually_not_gone_far_enough) **entitled, "Obama’s Drone War has Actually Not Gone Far Enough**." Make no mistake about it, **Romney getting briefings** from the likes of Zakheim and Israeli officials **does not guarantee that he will be getting unbiased, balanced intelligence. How can we expect him to make good decisions?** Let’s not forget the last time a president got bad intelligence from biased advisors – we went to war for a decade looking for the allusive weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.  So, returning to the question, **why is it bad for America** if Mitt Romney gets elected president and is the most pro-Israel leader in our history**? It is because it makes us less safe as a people**. Whether Israel carries out a military mission with our blessing or even worse we carry it out on Israel’s behalf in the Middle East, our public image is damaged and groups like al Qaeda use the event to fanaticize young Muslims to commit Jihad.  Additionally, Israel and the United States have different priorities in the Middle East. Israel thrives on Arab disunity and instability for her own security. If Arabs are quibbling with each other than they are distracted from harming Israel.   On the other hand, **the U**nited **S**tates **is better off with peace and stability in the Middle East** due to our continued dependence on the region’s oil supplies.  This is by no means an endorsement of Obama for reelection. He has proven himself incapable of doing the right things with regards to the economy and foreign affairs. Instead it is calling attention to the disastrous foreign policy that Mitt Romney will bring with him to the White House if he is elected president. This all leaves Americans with no real choice when it comes to voting in November. But we should be used to that by now, given that our choices are always Establishment Front Man #1 and Establishment Front Man #2.

#### Middle east conflict goes nuclear

Datan 08 [Merav Datan 2008 “Nuclear futures for the Middle East: impact on the goal of a WMD-free zone” <http://unidir.org/pdf/articles/pdf-art2728.pdf>]

The Middle Eastern states may support the goal of a WMDFZ, but the fact remains that WMD, specifically chemical weapons, have been used in the region,10 and the majority of countries in the region have some form of WMD-related research, development or weaponization programme (see Table 1).11 Moreover, **the Middle East remains the region with the greatest concentration of states that are not party to one or more of the international treaties dealing with WMD** (see Table 2): the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC), the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the NPT, as well as the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). **Having already broken the WMD taboo**, and in light of deep-rooted political tensions and a frequent resort to the use of force, **the potential for nuclear conflict in the Middle East is all too real.**

### XT-Iran

#### Romney crashes and burns when it comes to Iran

**Kerry 3/7** [John Kerry, Washington post, a Democrat from Massachusetts, is chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. March 7, 2012 “Romney’s wrong-headed assertions about Iran” http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/romneys-wrong-headed-assertions-about-iran/2012/03/07/gIQAcKCvxR\_story.html]

I have little interest in inserting myself, as a former nominee of my party, into this presidential campaign season. But **as the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee,** which has a vital role in issues of national security**, I feel compelled to respond to the ways that**, in pursuit of the Republican nomination, former Massachusetts **governor Mitt Romney has put himself front and center in debates that have serious consequences**. In 2010, **Romney inserted** **himself into** Senate consideration of the New **START Treaty and** sharpened his newly minted conservative credentials [on this page](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/07/05/AR2010070502657.html) by authoring **a series of blisteringly inaccurate assertions about the treaty.** In so doing, he separated himself from former Republican secretaries of state James Baker, Henry Kissinger, Colin Powell and Condoleezza Rice; discarded the wisdom of former Republican defense secretaries such as Robert Gates; and pitted himself against former president George H.W. Bush. Fortunately, a third of Senate Republicans disagreed with him and voted to make America safer. Americans will ultimately decide whether 71 senators and so many Republican foreign policy hands were right — or whether Candidate Romney knew something they didn’t. Today **Romney’**s goal remains winning the acquiescence of his party’s base — but his **target is different: Iran. It is deja vu. While wise Republicans stress the perils of loose war talk and the value of engagement to isolate Iran, Romney seeks to create political division with an** [**attack on the Obama administration’s Iran policy**](http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/mitt-romney-how-i-would-check-irans-nuclear-ambition/2012/03/05/gIQAneYItR_story.html) **that is as inaccurate as it is aggressive**. I join this debate because **the nuclear issue with Iran is deadly serious busines**s. It should invite sobriety and thoughtfulness, not sloganeering and sound bites. The stakes are far too high for it to become just another applause line on the stump. Idle talk of war only helps Iran by spooking the tight oil market and increasing the price of the Iranian crude that pays for its nuclear program. **Creating false differences** with President Obama to score political points **does nothing to move Iran off a dangerous nuclear course.** Worse, Romney does not even do Americans the courtesy of describing how he would do anything different from what the Obama administration has already done. Case in point: **He calls for** ever-**tightening sanctions on Iran.** What exactly does he think we’ve been doing for the past three years? When Obama took office, Iran was in the ascendancy. Its reach through proxies such as Hezbollah threatened the United States, its allies and the region. The international community was divided; diplomacy was stalled.

### CTBT 2NC

#### Obama pushing CTBT- that’s key to prevent prolif

**National Journal 2/22** [National Journal Feb. 22, 2012 “Obama Administration Promotes CTBT Ratification” http://www.nti.org/gsn/article/white-house-again-lobby-congress-ctbt-ratification/]

The White House remains intent on persuading Congress to ratify an international pact that would prohibit nuclear-weapon testing, the State Department's top arms control official recently said (see GSN, July 20, 2011). The United States is one of eight nations that still must ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty before it can enter into force. **President Obama** early in his tenure **called for Senate passage of the pact**, which last came up for a vote in the upper chamber in 1999, Defense News reported on Tuesday. **"A lot has changed since 1999, and** people have not had a chance to really look at the **CTBT** and understand what it **can accomplish** for **U.S. national security**," acting Undersecretary of State Rose Gottemoeller said. "The International Monitoring System [for the treaty] was barely getting off the ground back then. Now, the International Monitoring System is over 80 percent complete in its deployment and we can see its effectiveness," she said of the worldwide complex of nuclear-test detection technologies (see GSN, Feb. 17). The system, comprised of more than 300 monitoring sites and laboratories spread across the globe, was able to successfully pinpoint the release of trace amounts of radiation into the atmosphere following the March 2011 disaster at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear energy site in Japan, Gottemoeller said. Additionally, the Energy Department's Stockpile Stewardship and Management Program has made significant advancements, the undersecretary said. The program, managed by the semiautonomous National Nuclear Security Administration, is focused on ensuring the reliability, safety, and effectiveness of the U.S. nuclear arsenal absent any new testing. "It has come a long way and it is developing quite a bit of capability," Gottemoeller said. **The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty has been ratified by 157 countries**. A total of 44 "Annex 2" nations must deliver legislative approval for its entry into force; the holdouts from that group are China, Egypt, India, Iran, Israel, North Korea, Pakistan and the United States. Advocates say **the treaty would help stem nuclear proliferation by preventing nations from conducting test explosions** required to develop new or more potent weapons. Opponents of the U.S. ratification argue the potential remains for countries to secretly detonate nuclear devices without being detected and that the United States might in the future need to end its two-decade voluntary moratorium on testing to ensure the viability of its strategic deterrent. Gottemoeller said she has been informing congressional lawmakers and their aides on issues related to the treaty. "I expect to be doing a lot more of that in 2012. "We're not going to set a deadline for ratification; we want to make sure the time is right. Believe me, I was at the [Energy Department] in 1999 and watched the treaty go down in flames. I don't want to see that happen again," said Gottemoeller, who played a leading role in negotiating the 2010 New START nuclear arms control accord with Russia. **In pursuing Senate ratification of New START, Gottemoeller said she was pleased to see a number of lawmakers give** considerable **focus to understanding the** technical **specifics of the treaty**. "I'm hoping that the same thing will happen with the CTBT and we won't have people rushing to judgment," she said (Kate Brannen, Defense News, Feb. 21).

#### Prolif kills millions and causes environmental catastrophe

London Times, 2009

[Scrapping nuclear arms is now real politik, April, Pro Quest,

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/columnists/guest_contributors/article6011286.ece> , June 23, LB]

In London, they should agree that the US and the Russian Federation will begin work immediately to achieve an accord for deep reductions in their arsenals and then lead a longer-term effort with other nuclear powers to eliminate all nuclear weapons worldwide through phased and verified reductions. **Today nine countries have more than 23,000 nuclear weapons**, many of which are programmed to launch in minutes. **A nuclear conflict - or accident - could cause millions to die in a flash and create an environmental catastrophe that would last for** generations. **Terrorist groups have been trying to buy, build or steal nuclear weapons, and in the last two decades there have been at least 25 instances of nuclear explosive materials being lost or stolen. If terrorists were to get their hands on a bomb and explode it in a big city, hundreds of thousands of people would die instantly. We believe that whatever stabilizing impact nuclear weapons may have had during the Cold War, in the new security environment of the 21st century any residual benefits of these arsenals are overshadowed by the growing risks of proliferation and terrorism.**

#### That turns your heg advs

**Kroenig 2009** [Matthew Kroenig November 2009 “Beyond Optimism and Pessimism: The Differential Effects of Nuclear Proliferation”

<http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/files/Beyond-Optimism-and-Pessimism.pdf>]

The **spread of nuc**lear **weapons threatens power-projecting states primarily because it constrains their conventional military power**. **The spread** of nuclear weapons to states against which states once had the option to use conventional military force **erodes a source of strategic advantage**. These strategic costs are not as catastrophic as nuclear war, but they are costs that power-projecting states can count on incurring with near certainty as nuclear weapons spread. **Power-projecting states also consider other high-impact, low-probability consequences** of nuclear proliferation, **such as nuclear war**, accidental nuclear detonation, or, in recent years, nuclear terrorism, but power-projecting states are threatened by nuclear proliferation in large part because **it constrains their conventional military freedom of action.**

To make this case, I will draw primarily on evidence from the U.S. experience with nuclear proliferation for two reasons. **First,** **the U**nited **S**tates **is a global-power-projecting** **state**andcanuseforceagainsteveryotherstateintheinternationalsystem.13 **Second**, abundant access to declassified and other archival materials provides excellent insight into how U.S. officials assess the threat posed by nuclear proliferation. To demonstrate that the constraining effects of nuclear proliferation extend beyond the United States, this section will also present available evidence from other power-projecting states. The Soviet Union, during the Cold War, was also a global-power-projecting state. I will also provide evidence from local-power-projecting states. Dyads of power-projecting states and potential target states considered here include: Egypt and Israel, India and Pakistan, Turkey and Iran, and South Korea and North Korea.

### XT- CTBT

#### Romney doesn’t push CTBT

Schneidmiller 6/15 [Chris Schneidmiller June 15, 2012 “National Academies Report is “Grist” for CTBT Debate: Gottemoeller” Global Security Newswire http://www.nti.org/gsn/article/national-academies-report-grist-ctbt-debate-gottemoeller/]

**Mitt Romney**, Obama’s Republican challenger, **appears unlikely to break with his GOP predecessors by supporting the accord. His election could mean** that **an informal moratorium on underground nuclear tests** set two decades ago will continue to stand, **or** perhaps **even could open the door to a resumption of trial blasts.** The response to the National Academies report from the administration has been affirmative but measured. “We welcome the release of the report by the [National Academies],” Gottemoeller said the following month. “The report, which is by a really esteemed group of experts, is valuable. I think it adds to the grist for informed debate and discussion.” At least one longtime foe of the treaty indicated after the study’s publication that his position had not changed. “I will do anything I can to defeat CTBT,” Senator Jon Kyl (R-Ariz.) said at an April 17 event in Washington. **Achieving a winning vote on the treaty would require strong leadership starting with** President **Obama** and his Cabinet, aggressive outreach, support from former government officials and military leaders informed on the issue, and open-minded Republicans, issue-watchers said.

### CLIMATE 2NC

#### Romney fails worse at the environment than the squo, turns your climate advs

Leber 4/12 [Rebecca Leber, Apr 19, 2012 “CHART: How Obama And Romney Compare On Energy Issues”, Climate Progress,

http://thinkprogress.org/climate/2012/04/19/466477/chart-how-obama-and-romney-compare-on-energy-issues/]

**Global Warming** **Obama:** “I know that there are those who disagree with the overwhelming scientific evidence on climate change. But here’s the thing — **even if you doubt the evidence, providing incentives for energy-efficiency and clean energy are the right thing to do for our futur**e -– because **the nation that leads the clean energy economy will be the nation that leads the global economy**.” [White House, [1/27/10]](http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-state-union-address) State Department is leading a group of countries in a program that cuts global warming pollutants like soot, methane and hydrofluorocarbons. [NYT, [2/16/2012](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/16/science/earth/us-pushes-to-cut-emissions-that-speed-climate-change.html)] **Issued the first ever carbon pollution rules for power plants**, affecting new coal-fired power plants. [NPR, [3/27/12](http://www.npr.org/2012/03/27/149480756/new-epa-plan-targets-new-coal-fired-plants)] **Romney: Doesn’t believe carbon pollution is a threat**, reversing his stance as governor: “I don’t think carbon is a pollutant in the sense of harming our bodies.” [Politico, [7/18/11](http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0711/59313.html)] “My view is that [**we don’t know what’s causing climate change**](http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-503544_162-20127273-503544/mitt-romneys-shifting-views-on-climate-change/) on this planet. And the idea of spending trillions and trillions of dollars to try to reduce CO2 emissions is not the right course for us.” [CBS, [10/28/2011](http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-503544_162-20127273-503544/mitt-romneys-shifting-views-on-climate-change/)] Says the Clean Air Act doesn’t apply to carbon emissions: “My view is that the EPA in getting into carbon and regulating carbon has gone beyond the original intent of that legislation, and I would not take it there,” [Politico, [7/18/11](http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0711/59313.html#ixzz1sEpB2VQj)] **Air Pollution** From Power Plants **Obama: Unveiled historic rules that limit harmful mercury** pollution from coal-fired power plants. The initiative prevents 11,000 premature deaths and 4,700 heart attacks a year, and 130,000 cases of childhood asthma symptoms [EPA, [12/21/11](http://www.epa.gov/airquality/powerplanttoxics/actions.html)] **Romney ‘Aggressively” develop all our coal sources**. “Coal is America’s most abundant energy source. **We have reserves** that—at current rates of uses—will last for the next 200 years of electricity production in an industry that directly employs perhaps 200,000 workers. [NYT, [4/3/12](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/03/us/politics/romney-faults-obama-for-rising-gas-prices.html?_r=1&ref=politics)] **Against new EPA regulations** of harmful mercury and air pollutants from coal: “I think **the EPA has gotten completely out of control** for a very simple reason. It is a tool in the hands of the president to crush the private enterprise system, to crush our ability to have energy, whether it’s oil, gas, coal, nuclear.” [The Hill, [12/5/11](http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/e2-wire/197091-oil-execs-to-romney-life-was-better-under-bush)] **Fuel efficient cars Obama:** New **modern standards require cars and some trucks to achieve an average 54.5 miles per gallon by 2025. This cuts U.S. oil consumption** by 2.2 million barrels of oil per day by 2025, **saving Americans $1.7 trillion and cuts carbon pollution.** [White House, [11/17/11](http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2011/11/16/we-can-t-wait-driving-forward-new-fuel-economy-standards)] Set a goal that by 2015 there would be 1 million electric vehicles on the road. [White House, [3/12/12](http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2012/03/12/blueprint-secure-energy-future-one-year-progress-report)] **Romney: Disparaged the Chevrolet Volt as “an idea whose time has not come” and** “I’m not sure America was ready for the Chevy Volt.” [Michigan Live, [12/23/11](http://www.mlive.com/politics/index.ssf/2011/12/presidential_hopeful_mitt_romn.html), MSNBC [4/5/12](http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/46966167/ns/msnbc_tv-the_ed_show/t/ed-show-wednesday-april/)] **Against fuel efficiency standards, calling it “disadvantageous for domestic manufacturers**.” [WJR Radio[, 2/23/12](http://www.mittromney.com/news/press/2012/02/mitt-romney-get-government-out-auto-industry)] Advocates ending federal loan program helping companies develop and produce efficient cars. [Orange Country Register, [10/24/11](http://www.ocregister.com/opinion/jobs-323475-obama-president.html)] **Clean energy Obama: “I will not walk away from the promise of clean energy**. I will not cede the wind or solar or battery industry to China or Germany because we refuse to make the same commitment here.” [State of the Union, 1/24/12] Transforming the Pentagon into a clean energy operation, **reducing the military’s dependence on fossil fuels that cost the Pentagon up to $20 billion annually**. Investing in hybrid batteries. [National Journal, [4/11/12](http://www.theatlanticwire.com/national/2012/04/how-pentagon-plans-wean-itself-fossil-fuels/50999/)] **Romney: “You can’t drive a car with a windmill on it**.” [ThinkProgress,[3/6/2012](http://thinkprogress.org/climate/2012/03/06/438121/romneys-latest-clean-energy-attack-you-cant-drive-a-car-with-a-windmill-on-it/)] Endorses the Ryan House Republican budget, which **gives a 60 percent funding increase to coal, oil, and natural gas**, while it decreases funding for research on vehicle batteries and solar projects, and loans for fuel-efficient cars. [Politico, [4/17/12](http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0412/75269.html)] Against the government promoting clean energy, though supports tax loopholes for oil: “Let’s pretend for a moment that [Solyndra] didn’t go bankrupt. Let’s just pretend it was successful … When he picks one [business] that the government gets behind with $500 million, the investments in all the others disappear, because no one wants to compete with the government.” [The Hill, [12/20/11](http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/e2-wire/200517-romney-solyndra-was-bad-policy-even-if-it-succeeded)] **Green Jobs Obama: Historic level of investment in clean energy, a sector now with 3.1 million Americans employed**. In 2008, **Obama promised to create 5 million green jobs**. [AP, [3/22/12](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/03/22/green-jobs-report-americans-employed_n_1373022.html)] **Romney:** Repeatedly **called green jobs fake**, for example calling them “illusory” in an op-ed. “[Obama] keeps talking about green jobs, where are they?” [OC Register, [10/11](http://www.ocregister.com/opinion/jobs-323475-obama-president.html), League of Conservation Voters, [9/15/11](http://www.lcv.org/media/press-releases/LCV-FACT-CHECK-Romney-Implies-Green-Jobs-are-Fake.html)] **Against renewable energy production credits, which risks the end of 37,000 jobs,** according to a figure from Navigant Consulting [Chicago Tribune, [2/17/12](http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2012-02-17/business/ct-biz-0217-wind-ptc--20120217_1_tax-credit-wind-power-wind-projects)]

Global warming threatens ¼ of populations with extinction by 2050

Handwerk 06 [Brian Handwerk April 12, 2006 “Global Warming Could Cause Mass Extinctions by 2050, Study Says” “National Geographic News” http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2006/04/0412\_060412\_global\_warming.html]

**A new study suggests that global warming could threaten one-fourth of the world's plant and vertebrate animal species with extinction by 2050**. The report's **authors reached their conclusion after estimating potential changes to habitats**—and the resulting loss of species—in 25 biodiversity "hot spots" around the world. The ecologically rich **hot spots include** South Africa's Cape Floristic Region, the Caribbean Basin, and the tropical regions of the Andes Mountains. These territories compose only **a small fraction of the planet's land area but contain large numbers of Earth's flora and fauna. "These** [hot spots] **are the crown jewels of the planet's biodiversity,**" lead author Jay Malcolm of the University of Toronto told the Canadian Press. "Unless we get our act together soon, we're looking at committing ourselves to this kind of thing." The report appears in the current issue of the journal Conservation Biology.

**That makes climate change much worse than predicted**

Carbon pollution makes climate impacts much worse than predicted

Al Gore no date[Al Gore “The Dangers of Carbon Pollution on the Environment” http://clinton4.nara.gov/WH/EOP/OVP/24hours/vpenv.html]

**Greenhouse gas concentrations are projected to increase** significantly **during the next century in the absence of policies** specifically designed to address the issue of climate change. For example, carbon dioxide emissions are projected to range from 6 to 36 billion tons of carbon per year in the year 2100: compared to current carbon dioxide emissions of 6 billion tons of carbon per year. Climate models project that the global mean surface temperature could increase another 1.5 to 6.5 oF by 2100: a rate significantly faster than observed changes over the last 10,000 years. Sea level is projected to increase by another 15 - 95 cm by 2100. While the incidence of extreme temperature events, floods, droughts, fires and pest outbreaks is expected to increase in some regions, it is unclear whether there will be changes in the frequency and intensity of tropical storms, cyclones, and tornadoes. The overwhelming majority of scientific experts believe that human-induced climate change is inevitable. **The question is not whether climate will change in response to human activities, but rather where (regional patterns), when (the rate of change) and by how much (magnitude).** It is also clear that **climate change will adversely affect human health** (especially increases in vector-borne diseases such as malaria, dengue and yellow fever); **ecological systems** (changes in the composition and geographic distribution of many ecosystems, **especially forests and coral reefs,** with likely reductions in biological diversity); **and socio-economic sectors, including agriculture** (regional disruptions in food production, especially in the tropics and sub-tropics**), and human settlements** (the loss of land and the displacement of tens of millions of people due to increases in sea level).

### ECONOMY 2NC

#### Obama’s approach solves the econ- Romney’s doesn’t

**Blodget 6/15** [Henry Blodget Jun. 15, 2012 “OBAMA vs ROMNEY: Here's Who's Right About The Economy”

http://www.businessinsider.com/obama-vs-romney-economy-2012-6]

The big issue in this year's election is the economy. And the candidates are already hammering each other over it. **Romney says we should immediately** [**cut taxes and cut government spending**](http://www.businessinsider.com/barack-obama-mitt-romney-firefighters-police-teachers)**, thus freeing the private sector to fix the economy. Obama says we should** [**continue to invest in education, infrastructure, research, and other programs**](http://www.businessinsider.com/obama-economy-speech-campaign-ohio-2012-6)**, thus helping the economy heal itself and improving the country's human and industrial capital.** So, **who's right**? It's impossible to answer this question without invoking the cheers and jeers that always accompany any question that has "gone political." But we'll answer it anyway. **If the goal is to heal the overall economy gradually while minimizing pain and disruption, Obama is right**. If the goal is to try to cure the problem by going "cold turkey"--without any regard for the (hopefully temporary) pain, unemployment, GDP shrinkage, and increased debt, deficits, and inequality that will result from this approach--Romney is right. Most Americans, presumably, would prefer the former approach. So, based on an objective (i.e., apolitical) view of our situation, most **Americans would** presumably **conclude that Obama is right**. Or, at least, that he's more right than Romney. Of course, given that this issue has gone political, it will be impossible for most Americans to view it objectively. Rather, they'll just root for their team and bash the other team regardless of what anyone says. But in the hope that some Americans, at least, care about the economy more than rooting for a particular team, I'll explain below why Obama's approach is right. (By the way, if Romney is elected, I think it's likely that he'll quickly change his approach to match Obama's. So, hopefully, the country will get to the right policies regardless of who wins). To understand what needs to be done to fix the economy, you need to understand what's wrong with it. And that means going back a few years... THE PROBLEM WITH THE US ECONOMY The main problem with the U.S. economy is that we have too much debt. Total US debt as a percent of GDP We accumulated this debt over a 25-year binge from 1982-2007 (see the debt-to-GDP chart at right). Our unfettered borrowing and spending beyond our means--all of us, not just the government--fueled a quarter-century-long boom that, unfortunately, was partly an illusion. It's easy to seem prosperous when you're spending more than you make. That 25-year debt-fueled boom of 1982-2007 has ended, and it has left the country with [a stagnant economy, massive debts, high unemployment, huge wealth inequality](http://www.businessinsider.com/dear-america-you-should-be-mad-as-hell-about-this-charts-2012-6), an enormous budget deficit, and a sense of entitlement engendered by a half-century of prosperity. After decades of instant gratification, Americans have also come to believe that all problems can be solved instantly, if only the right leaders are put in charge and the right decisions are made. And so our government has devolved into a permanent election campaign, in which incumbents blame each other for the current mess, and challengers promise change. The trouble is that **our current problems cannot be solved with a simple fix. They also cannot be solved quickly.** It took 25 years for us to get to this point, and it will likely take us at least a decade or two to work our way out of it, even if we make the right decisions. So **it is time that we began to face reality**. **THAT RECESSION WE JUST HAD WASN'T A NORMAL RECESSION** Four years ago, when the debt-fueled boom ended and the economy plunged into recession, most economists and politicians misdiagnosed the problem. They thought we were having just another post-War recession—a serious recession, yes, but a cyclical one, a recession that easy money, government stimulus, and a return of "confidence" could fix. A handful of economists, meanwhile, argued that the [recession was actually fundamentally different—a "balance sheet" recession](http://www.businessinsider.com/richard-koo-recession-2010-4) resulting from a quarter-century-long debt-binge, one that would take a decade or more to fix. In the past four years, it has become increasingly clear that the latter diagnosis was correct: The U.S. economy is behaving exactly the way other economies have behaved after piling up mountains of debt and eventually going through a financial crisis. It is bumping along with disappointing growth, high unemployment, and, increasingly (and understandably) social unrest. Total US debt, including government, corporate, and household debt. So **how do you get out of a "balance sheet" recession triggered by too much debt? You reduce the debt**. **More specifica**lly—and here's the critical point—**you reduce the debt that is crippling the productive part of the economy. This is the part that creates most of the jobs, prosperity, and wealth**. It is also the part that pays for the rest of the economy. That part is the private sector. What debt is crippling the private sector? Consumer debt; the household mortgages, credit cards, student loans, and other obligations that are forcing consumers to save and pay down debts instead of spend. Consumers still account for about 70% of the spending in the U.S. economy, and that spending is now constrained. (See chart below—click for larger). (Consumer spending was also artificially boosted for 25 years by the debt binge, so there's no way we're going back to that era. And we shouldn't strive to.)

#### Economic collapse causes nuclear war- extinction

Broward 9 [(Member of Triond) http://newsflavor.com/opinions/will-an-economic-collapse-kill-you/]

**Now its time to look at the consequences of a failing world economy. With five offical nations having nuclear weapons, and four more likely to have them there could be major consequences of another world war. The first thing that will happen after an economic collapse will be war over resources**. The United States currency will become useless and will have no way of securing reserves. The United States has little to no capacity to produce oil, it is totatlly dependent on foreign oil. **If the United States stopped getting foreign oil, the government would go to no ends to secure more, if there were a war with any other major power over oil, like Russia or China, these wars would most likely involve nuclear weapons. Once one nation launches a nuclear weapon, there would of course be retaliation, and with five or more countries with nuclear weapons there would most likely be a world nuclear war. The risk is so high that acting to save the economy is the most important issue facing us in the 21st century.**

### IMMIGRATION REFORM

#### Obama solves immigration reform

**The associated press 6/12** [ The associated press, June 22, 2012 “Obama says he will fight for immigration reform” NBC politics

<http://nbcpolitics.msnbc.msn.com/_news/2012/06/22/12360877-obama-says-he-will-fight-for-immigration-reform?lite> ]

Appealing to Hispanic voters, President Barack **Obama** on Friday **defended his decision to lift the threat of deportation** for hundreds of thousands of illegal immigrants, saying it gave them an overdue "sense of hope." **He challenged Republicans in Congress to join him finally on a big, broad fix of the U.S. immigration laws.** Obama tailored his re-election message of economic fairness and opportunity to his audience of Latino officials, addressing the group one day after Republican rival Mitt Romney did the same. Hispanic voters are a vital constituency in states that could swing the election, from Florida to Nevada to Virginia. The president said **the nation needs ideas and policies that build up the middle class and "our current immigration system doesn't reflect those values**." **The system punishes immigrants who play by the rules and drives away entrepreneurs who can get an education in America but cannot stay here legally**, he said. Obama spoke to the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials near Orlando, his first speech to a Hispanic group since he decreed that many young illegal immigrants brought to the United States as children would be exempted from deportation and granted work permits valid for two years **"It was the right thing to do,"** Obama declared. Romney has attacked Obama's new plan to ease deportation rules as little more than a "stopgap measure." The president sought to seize on that criticism from Romney and Republicans in Congress by putting the onus on them. "For those who are saying Congress should be the one to fix this, absolutely," Obama said. "**For those who say we should do this in a bipartisan fashion, absolutely. My door's been open for three-and-a-half years. They know where to find me."**

#### Immigration reform key to DREAM, the economy, and jobs

**Santiago 6/16** [Marci Santiago June 16, 2012, Obama Immigration Reform: 3 Reasons to Support His New Policy

http://www.policymic.com/articles/9948/obama-immigration-reform-3-reasons-to-support-his-new-policy]

Even if you don’t support President Obama, there are three good reasons to support his decision to end the deportation of some illegal immigrants brought to the United States as children. And according to a recent [Bloomberg poll](http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-06-19/obama-immigration-policy-favored-2-to-1-by-likely-voters.html), likely voters support President Obama in this more than two to one. According to the poll, 64% of likely voters agreed with the policy while only 30% disagreed. Here’s why you should agree too: First, **support of this policy will serve as the political catalyst needed to force passage of the DREAM Act, which will provide benefits to undocumented immigrants and Americans alike**. President Obama’s announcement last week was simply a memo outlining a temporary relaxation in prosecutorial discretion. It was not an Executive Order and it was not the passage of law. This temporary solution means that **approximately 800,000 unauthorized immigrants could gain temporary work permits**, but only a fraction of the economic benefits that could be had under the proposed DREAM Act will be reaped by the policy change. If the maximum amount of undocumented immigrants are legalized under the DREAM Act, **the U.S. economy could stand to gain an estimated $200 billion** in added production over the next decade. Second, **this new policy will serve as a pilot program for future legalization and open the doors for further immigration reform. Our current immigration policies are complicated and restrictive**. Most immigrants who want to come to the United States are unable to due to immigration regulations. And if they can’t get in legally, many are going to try to get in illegally. Immigrants are integral to our nation. **We are a nation born of immigrants** and we are a nation that grows by immigrants. Take these stats by the Immigrant Policy Center: **Immigrants increase the nation’s economic output**. A 2007 report from the White House Council of Economic Advisers concluded that **immigration as a whole increase the U.S. GDP by about $37 billion each year**. Immigrants do not compete with the majority of natives for the same job because they tend to have different levels of education and work in different occupations. In fact, according to a 2010 report from the Economic Policy Institute, immigration increased the number of wages of native-born workers by 0.4% According to the Pew Hispanic Center, households headed by unauthorized immigrants paid $11.2 billion in state and local taxes in 2010. With the U.S. economy struggling as it is, Americans could use a shot in the arm from productive immigrants who are only looking to invest in the country. **The U.S. needs to provide more visas** and fewer restrictions to those looking to further production in the United States. President Obama’s policy change and a possible Executive Order should be the first step to tougher Border Patrol and less restrictive immigration policies. Lastly, **supporting** President **Obama’s policy change is just the right thing to do**. No other law on the books punishes children for the crimes of their parents. They were brought to the United States by their parents; it was not their decision. Most of those eligible for deferment are very much a part of American society and do not even remember their home country. Obama's new directive has been issued under the auspices of the Department of Homeland Security, and seeks to suspend deportation of illegal immigrants under the age of 30 who came to the U.S. before age 16, and who have lived in the country for at least five years. They are eligible if they have no criminal records, are in school, are high school graduates or are military veterans. These young immigrants have no criminal records; they are educated or have served this country in our wars**. They are productive members of society** who are American in culture, language and spirit. The only things they are missing are a certificate printed on embossed paper and a nine digit number. How could you criminalize anyone for that?

#### Immigrants key to agricultural production

**Yglesias 6/22** [Matt Yglesias 06/22/2012 “Broad Immigration Reform Necessary To Bolster Economic Growth”

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/06/22/immigration-reform-economic-growth\_n\_1619451.html]

Last week, the Obama administration reignited the immigration debate with a modest effort to accomplish some of the goals of the DREAM legislation that’s languished in Congress for over a year. But while the administration’s decision to suspend deportations of certain young illegal immigrants is a huge deal for the people directly impacted, his order affects a very small number of people. It is more a political gesture than a game-changing economic policy, which is too bad, because **broader immigration reform**—aimed explicitly at allowing more people to come here voluntarily and work, rather than at “securing the border”—**remains one of the best things we can do to bolster economic growth in both the short and long terms**. Among those who recognize this, it’s become fashionable to focus on the narrow case for immigration of high-skilled workers. Adam Ozimek and Noah Smith recently wrote a wonky piece on this theme for the Atlantic, and Tim Fernholz delivered a more whimsical take for Reuters. But while the case for high-skilled immigrants is strong, and the desire to take the focus off the culturally freighted topic of migration from Latin America politically understandable, an excessive focus on the idea of importing supergeniuses and talented engineers tends to obscure the fact that essentially any able-bodied, hard-working migrant is good for the American economy. It’s not just the doctors and the Google co-founders. Those who mop floors and cook tacos also serve. That’s because **different “factors of production**”—including unskilled labor—**are largely complementary. This can be most clearly seen in agriculture**. Some land in America is farmed, most is not. Much of the land is only profitable to cultivate at a wage level that few American workers find appealing. **When we cut off the flow of migrant farm workers**, that doesn’t magically create high-paying jobs for Americans; **it leads in the short term to crops rotting in the fields and in the long term to less land being cultivated.** **The land and the unskilled labor**, in other words, **are complements. More unskilled labor would mean more cultivated land. That would mean more agricultural output and more jobs for people who manufacture farm equipment,** build food-processing facilities, or provide accounting or legal services to agricultural firms.

#### Failing agriculture infrastructure causes high food prices

**UN Committee on Transport 8** United Nations Economic and Social Council, “ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC,” TRANSPORT AND POVERTY: FROM FARM TO MARKET—EXTENDING THE REACH OF LOGISTICS, http://www.unescap.org/ttdw/ct2008/ctr\_2e.pdf

SUMMARY Recent increases in the price of food and concerns over its availability and access to it have focused attention on overcoming problems related to the transport of agricultural food products. **Rising transport costs can account for up to two thirds of food prices**. In addition, spoilage between farm and market as a result of inadequate transport, storage and processing render a large share of perishable food unusable, which is having a major impact on the poorer segment of communities in the region. While food trades are increasingly complex and some countries have put in place advanced logistics solutions, the majority of the countries in Asia and the Pacific have yet to establish the infrastructure and institutional frameworks needed to ensure the efficient, seamless transport of foods from farm to market. This document contains a preliminary investigation of the way transport and logistics impact the sustainable development of the food industry and identifies issues that need to be further addressed at the national and regional levels. Delegations may wish to share their experiences and progress and discuss challenges concerning food transport and logistics. The Committee may also wish to propose further research that could be presented to the Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport in 2009 as the basis of a regional exchange of experiences to enhance the availability of and access to food through improved transport and logistics. INTRODUCTION 1. Recent soaring food prices have brought the agricultural food industry into the international spotlight. Table 1 shows the dramatic increase in the cereal export prices of the main suppliers to the Asian region. While prices in major grain trades increased by some 50-70 per cent between mid-2007 and mid-2008, those for rice, the main staple food in Asia, nearly tripled over the same period of time. Although the food market situation differs from country to country and future development remains highly uncertain, a report by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations suggests that food prices are likely to remain high in the years to come. 2. **Transport and logistics account for a large part of final food prices and increasing oil and energy costs have made this topic even more relevant**. Despite the high share of transport costs and the increased incidence of food spoilage in the process of transport and storage, questions of food transport and logistics have not been addressed in a comprehensive and coherent manner at the international level. A report by the United States Government Accountability Office in April 2007 showed that transport and other overhead costs consumed 65 per cent of United States food aid dollars, mainly due to rising fuel prices. 2 3. Inadequate logistics systems not only increase costs but also impact the availability of food to consumers. According to a report by the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council, China’s cold storage capacity is estimated to cover only 20-30 per cent of demand. A lack of controlled atmosphere and refrigeration equipment leads to spoilage losses of up to 33 per cent of perishable food. 3 In India, various research studies by the Economic Times Intelligence Group and the Investment Information and Credit Rating Agency reveal that large quantities of grain are wasted due to improper handling and storage, pest infestation, poor logistics, inadequate storage and a lack of transport infrastructure. 4 4. Furthermore, **adequate infrastructure and access to transport services are prerequisites for the development of sustainable food trade**, and requirements are becoming increasingly complex in importing countries and regions as more countries move into sophisticated trading in fresh fruit and vegetables, meat or fish at the domestic or international levels.

#### Romney anti-immigration

**Quasius 1/30** [Bob Quasius, Sr Jan. 30, 2012 Is Mitt Romney Anti-Immigrant? http://tucsoncitizen.com/arizona-lincoln-republican/2012/01/30/is-mitt-romney-anti-immigrant/]

I can’t look into Mitt Romney’s heart to know whether he truly is anti-immigrant. Due to his flip-flops I think he’s just pandering to extremists. However, due to the perceptions **Romney** has fostered, he **might just as well be anti-immigrant due to his recent harsh ‘enforcement only’ positions, and praising and campaigning with immigration extremists. Romney actively sought the endorsement of** the infamous Joe Arpaio, sheriff of Maricopa County Arizona, where aggressive immigration enforcement has resulted in **severe racial profiling of Latinos**. Imagine what Obama’s billion dollar attack machine will do to reinforce this perception, to keep Latinos, who are critical swing voters, on the liberal hacienda! **A recent DOJ racial profiling study conducted by an outside expert found Latinos are up to 9 time more likely to be stopped by police**, and 20% of Latino traffic stops lacked any probable cause. In other words, ‘driving while brown’ will attract police attention ‘like flies to honey’ in Maricopa County, Arizona. Many Latinos nationwide have experienced unwarranted and pre-textual traffic stops, and it’s a constant source of complaints. According to a 2008 PEW Research study, almost 10% of adult Hispanic drivers had been stopped over the previous year and asked their legal status. Recently **Romney received the endorsement of Kris Kobach, a leader of a well known anti-immigrant hate group** whose founder has written extensively about eugenics (selective breeding of humans), and made many derogatory remarks about Latinos. Romney praised Kobach as the author of innumerable state and local immigration laws, which with great regularity are struck down by the courts because they are flagrantly unconstitutional, and fuel bigotry against immigrants and those perceived as immigrants. Usually the taxpayers are stuck with legal bills totaling millions of dollars, not just their own legal bills but the plaintiff’s too! I’ve often implore GOP politicians to distance themselves from immigration extremists and haters, but unfortunately Mitt Romney didn’t get the message. [Obama has already stated](http://content.usatoday.com/communities/theoval/post/2011/11/obama-well-use-gop-debates-against-them/1): “We may just run clips of the Republican debates verbatim. We won’t even comment on them, we’ll just run those in a loop on Univision and Telemundo, and people can make up their own minds.” In a November Latino Decisions poll, Romney’s support among Latinos was just 24%, and that was before his “self deportation” comment. **Only 14% of registered Latino voters believe deportation is the solution to illegal immigration**, according to a [recent Latino Decisions poll](http://latinodecisions.files.wordpress.com/2011/11/deck_univision_final.pdf), so it stands to reason that with the negative ad blitz we can expect from Obama, Romney’s Latino support will be capped at around 15%. Latinos are not single issue voters, but immigration runs a close second as an issue, and moreover how language about immigration is framed is important too. A recent tweet by Leslie Sanchez, a prominent Republican political consultant and author of Los Republicanos, reveals why Mitt Romney and Newt Gingrich are taking different approaches. Mitt Romney’s steering committee is heavily overweighted with 70% Cuban-Americans, who strongly tend to take a hard line on immigration reform, due to the fact that Cuban refugees almost always receive refugee status upon arrival in the U.S. (‘wet foot/dry foot’ policy), and don’t experience the same hardships as other immigrant groups. Puerto Ricans are automatically citizens, and for similar reasons immigration is a less pressing issue for Puerto Ricans. Of course many of our Cuban-American and Puerto Rican brothers support immigration reform, just not in the same percentages as other groups that are more directly impacted by immigration policy. According to [PEW Research](http://www.pewhispanic.org/2012/01/23/latinos-in-the-2012-election-florida/), 32% of Florida’s registered Latino voters are Cuban-American, and another 28% are Puerto Rican, as compared to 5% and 14% nationally. It stands to reason Romney will do better among Florida Latinos than among other groupings. However, nationwide Cuban-Americans are only 5% of the Latino population, and there is a similar percentage of Puerto Ricans. On the other hand, Mexican-Americans are 59% of the Latino population, and combined with the other 22% of Latinos who lack any special consideration, are heavily impacted by our broken immigration system. [Latino Decisions recently published a poll explaining the nuances.](http://latinodecisions.wordpress.com/2012/01/29/the-3-latino-electorates-within-florida-and-how-they-differ/) Nationally, the eventual GOP nominee will need to do much better than than 15%. According to [Matthew Dowd, former adviser to Bush](http://thecaucus.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/05/26/republicans-weigh-risks-of-a-supreme-court-battle/): Matthew Dowd, another one-time adviser to Mr. Bush, said that in 2000, he calculated that Republicans needed to win 35 percent of Hispanics to beat Democrats. He said that given the steady increase in the number of Hispanic voters, he now believed Republicans needed to win a minimum of 40 percent to be competitive with Democrats. I don’t think Mitt Romney himself has any personal animus against immigrants, but **his positions are readily perceived as both anti-immigrant and impractical. When you start talking about policies that will rip families apart, then you will be perceived as anti-immigrant, and anti-family too. Romney has taken such a hard line on this issue that it will be hard for him to soften his stance** during the general elections. George Soros says there’s not much difference between Obama and Romney. Obama’s failure to even offer immigration reform as promised, combined with record levels of deportations has made him unpopular among Latinos. It’s predictable that conservative and moderate Latinos and others will ‘hold their nose’ and vote for Obama as the lessor of two evils. Newt Gingrich, on the other hand, already has a much more pragmatic approach to fixing immigration. To be sure, his plan has room for improvement, but at least he has made an honest effort, and as former speaker of the house with a track record of accomplishment working across the aisle, there’s a much better chance that Gingrich can make immigration reform finally happen. Gingrich is also poised to appeal to far more Hispanic voters than Romney, after years of engagement and outreach.

### NUCLEAR ARSENAL

#### The Obama administration is currently cutting nuclear weapons- republican win means more nukes

**Burns 2/15** [ROBERT BURNS February 15, 2012 “Obama weighs big cuts in nuclear weapons stockpile” <http://www.stltoday.com/news/national/obama-weighs-big-cuts-in-nuclear-weapons-stockpile/article_a3f9b7f5-f92c-5adc-b813-53d71228356a.html>]

**WASHINGTON •** **The Obama administration is weighing options for sharp cuts to the U.S. nuclear force, including a reduction of up to 80 percent in the number of deployed weapons**, The Associated Press has learned. Even the most modest option now under consideration would be a historic and politically bold disarmament step in a presidential election year, although the plan is in line with President Barack Obama's 2009 pledge to pursue the elimination of nuclear weapons. No decision has been made, but the administration is considering at least three options for lower numbers of deployed strategic nuclear weapons, cutting to: 1,000 to 1,100; 700 to 800, and 300 to 400, according to a former government official and a congressional staffer. Both spoke on condition of anonymity in order to reveal internal administration deliberations. The potential cuts would be from a current treaty limit of 1,550 deployed strategic warheads. A level of 300 deployed strategic nuclear weapons would take the U.S. back to levels not seen since 1950 when the nation was ramping up production in an arms race with the Soviet Union. The U.S. numbers peaked at above 12,000 in the late 1980s and first dropped below 5,000 in 2003. **Obama has often cited his desire to seek lower levels of nuclear weapons**. **Republicans** seem unlikely to support a reduction. "These numbers represent another step by this administration blindly down the road to zero, all without a single reduction in arms from others around the world, or a thawing of the overall threat environment we live in today," Rep. Mike Turner, R-Ohio, the Strategic Forces subcommittee chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, told Fox News. "Furthermore, he's abandoning his promise to the Congress of modernizing our nuclear deterrent. The continued dismantlement of our armed forces, and abandonment of our allies by this administration, is dangerous to say the least." The Republican candidates for president have not shown support for reducing the nuclear warheads. For example, Mitt Romney, Rick Santorum and Newt Gingrich **have said they oppose the New START Treaty and its requirement that the U.S.** reduce its nuclear arsenal to 1,550 warheads. A spokesman for the White House's National Security Council, Tommy Vietor, said Tuesday that the options developed by the Pentagon have not yet been presented to Obama. **The Pentagon's press secretary**, George Little, declined to comment on specific force level options because they are classified. He **said Obama had asked the Pentagon to develop several "alternative approaches" to nuclear deterrence.** Stephen Young, senior analyst at the Union of Concerned Scientists, which favors nuclear arms reductions, said Tuesday: "The administration is absolutely correct to look at deep cuts like this. **The United States does not rely on nuclear weapons as a central part of our security."** The U.S. already is on track to reduce to 1,550 deployed strategic nuclear warheads by 2018, as required by New START. As of Sept. 1, the United States had 1,790 warheads and Russia had 1,566, according to treaty-mandated reports by each. The treaty does not bar either country from cutting below 1,550 on their own. Those who favor additional cuts argue that nuclear weapons have no role in major security threats in the 21st century, such as terrorism. The notion of a 300-weapon arsenal is featured prominently in a paper written for the Pentagon by a RAND National Defense Project Institute analyst in October, in the early stages of the administration's review of nuclear requirements. The author, Paul K. Davis, wrote that he was not advocating any particular course of action but sought to provide an analytic guide for how policymakers could think about the implications of various levels of nuclear reductions. Davis wrote that **an arsenal of 300 weapons might be considered adequate for deterrence** purposes if that force level was part of a treaty with sound anti-cheating provisions; if the U.S. deployed additional non-nuclear weapons with global reach, and if the U.S. had "hypothetically excellent," if limited, defenses against long- and medium-range nuclear missiles. In 2010, three Air Force analysts wrote in Strategic Studies Quarterly, an Air Force publication, that **the U.S. could get by with as few as 311 deployed nuclear weapons, and that it didn't matter whether Russia followed suit with its own cuts.** Nuclear stockpile numbers are closely guarded secrets in most states that possess them, but private nuclear policy experts say no countries other than the U.S. and Russia are thought to have more than 300. The Federation of American Scientists estimates that France has about 300, China about 240, Britain about 225, and Israel, India and Pakistan roughly 100 each.

#### Russia won’t appreciate that #noduh

**Brunton 5/11** [F. Brinley Bruton, May 11, 2012“US nuke upgrade to trigger new arms race with Russia?” msnbc.com <http://worldnews.nbcnews.com/_news/2012/05/11/11658159-us-nuke-upgrade-to-trigger-new-arms-race-with-russia?lite>]

LONDON - **Plans to upgrade** the estimated 180 American tactical **nuclear weapons** in western Europe are expensive, **dangerous and likely to trigger a dangerous reaction from Russia**, according to a new report.

"**Modernization ... will be a form of expensive nuclear escalation** by default **which can be expected to draw a hostile reaction from Moscow**," said the study by the European Leadership Network (ELN) think tank, which was released on Thursday.

#### US Russia crisis leads to extinction

**Philips 2012** [Alan Philips 2012 “Consequences of a Large Nuclear War” http://www.nucleardarkness.org/warconsequences/hundredfiftytonessmoke/]

2600 U.S. and Russian strategic nuclear weapons on high-alert are launched (in 2 to 3 minutes) at targets in the U.S., Europe and Russia (and perhaps at other targets which are considered to have strategic value). Some fraction of the remaining 7600 deployed and operational U.S. and Russian strategic nuclear warheads/weapons are also launched and detonated in retaliation for the initial attacks. **Hundreds of large cities in the U.S., Europe and Russia are engulfed in massive firestorms** which burn urban areas of tens or hundreds of thousands of square miles/kilometers. **150 million tons of smoke from nuclear fires rises above cloud level, into the stratosphere, where** it quickly spreads around the world and **forms a dense stratospheric cloud layer.** The smoke will remain there for many years to block and absorb sunlight. The smoke blocks up to 70% of the sunlight from reaching the Earth's surface in the Northern Hemisphere, and up to 35% of the sunlight is also blocked in the Southern Hemisphere. **In the absence of warming sunlight, surface temperatures on Earth become as cold or colder than they were 18,000 years ago** at the height of the last Ice Age There would be rapid cooling of more than 20°C over large areas of North America and of more than 30°C over much of Eurasia, including all agricultural regions **150 million tons of smoke in the stratosphere would cause minimum daily temperatures in the largest agricultural regions of the Northern Hemisphere to drop below freezing for 1 to 3 years. Nightly killing frosts would occur and prevent food from being grown**. Average global precipitation would be reduced by 45% due to the prolonged cold. Growing seasons would be virtually eliminated for many years. Massive destruction of the protective ozone layer would also occur, allowing intense levels of dangerous UV light to penetrate the atmosphere and reach the surface of the Earth. Massive amounts of radioactive fallout would be generated and spread both locally and globally. The targeting of nuclear reactors would significantly increase fallout of long-lived isotopes. Gigantic ground-hugging clouds of toxic smoke would be released from the fires; enormous quantities of industrial chemicals would also enter the environment. **It would be impossible for many living things to survive the extreme rapidity and degree of changes in temperature** and precipitation, combined with drastic increases in UV light, massive radioactive fallout, and massive releases of toxins and industrial chemicals. Already stressed land and marine ecosystems would collapse. Unable to grow food, **most humans would starve to death. A mass extinction event would occur**, similar to what happened 65 million years ago, when the dinosaurs were wiped out following a large asteroid impact with Earth (70% of species became extinct, including all animals greater than 25 kilograms in weight). Even humans living in shelters equipped with many years worth of food, water, energy, and medical supplies would probably not survive in the hostile post-war environment.

#### Romney to increase nukes

Ciao 1/31 [Ciao Susan “GOP Candidates on Nuclear Issues” “Nuclear Diner” Tuesday, 31 January 2012 http://nucleardiner.com/archive/item/gop-candidates-on-nuclear-issues]

**Romney: Opposed the New START Treaty**, which he criticized for (Boston.com) limiting U.S. missile defense options, contributing to Russia's "substantial nuclear advantage over the United States," and having an inadequate verification protocol. While, "ideally, **we would [like to] rid the planet of nuclear weapons**," Romney writes in his book, No Apology, "**we are unlikely to be successful in doing** so, at least within the coming decades," **and therefore "America's strategic defense relies on credible nuclear deterrence**." (2007) Romney has said little on the issue of reducing the U.S. nuclear arsenal, and has not indicated whether he favors a nuclear test ban. He has said enforcement of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty is “often lacking.” Romney says if elected he will appoint a senior “ambassador-at-large” to rally nations to prevent nuclear terrorism.

### TAXES

#### Romney increases taxes- pisses off business officials

**TAM 2011** [10/31/2011“The American Dream”, “16 Reasons Why Mitt Romney Would Be A Really, Really Bad President’ http://endoftheamericandream.com/archives/16-reasons-why-mitt-romney-would-be-a-really-really-bad-president]

**During his time as governor** of Massachusetts, Mitt **Romney significantly raised taxes.** The following is an excerpt from a CBS News article.... Mitt Romney's Harvard MBA and gold-plated resume convinced many business leaders he would follow in the tradition of corporate-friendly Republicans when he was elected governor of Massachusetts in 2002. Within three years, some had a vastly different opinion, after **Romney's efforts raised the tax bill on businesses by $300 million The same article also notes that Romney jacked up "fees and fines" on** Massachusetts **taxpayers substantially**.... Romney and **lawmakers also approved hundreds of millions in higher fees and fines during his four years in office. Many in the Massachusetts business community were quite disgusted** with Romney **by the end of his tenure**. Peter Nicholas, the chairman of Boston Science Corporation, says that "**tax rates on many corporations** almost doubled because of legislation supported by Romney."

# AFF ANSWERS

## UNIQUENESS

### Obama Lose- General

**Romeny win now – Obama’s base crumbling**

**Root** **5/30/12** [Wayne Allyn Root Political commentator and senior Economic Advisor to a global financial services company, “Why Obama Will Lose in a Landslide”, <http://townhall.com/columnists/wayneallynroot/2012/05/30/why_obama_will_lose_in_a_landslide>, S.O.]

**Most political predictions are made by biased pollsters, pundits, or prognosticators who are either rooting for Republicans or Democrats. I am neither. I am a former Libertarian Vice Presidential nominee, and a well-known Vegas oddsmaker with one of the most accurate records of predicting political races. Neither Obama nor Romney are my horses in the race. I believe both Republicans and Democrats have destroyed the U.S. economy and brought us to the edge of economic disaster. My vote will go to Libertarian Presidential candidate Gary Johnson in November, whom I believe has the most fiscally conservative track record of any Governor in modern U.S. political history. Without the bold spending cuts of a Gary Johnson or Ron Paul, I don’t believe it’s possible to turnaround America. But as an oddsmaker with a pretty remarkable track record of picking political races, I play no favorites. I simply use common sense to call them as I see them. Back in late December I released my New Years Predictions. I predicted back then- before a single GOP primary had been held, with Romney trailing for months to almost every GOP competitor from Rick Perry to Herman Cain to Newt- that Romney would easily rout his competition to win the GOP nomination by a landslide.** I also predicted that **the Presidential race between** Obama and Romney **would be very close until election day. But** that on election day **Romney would win** by a landslide similar to Reagan-Carter in 1980. **Understanding history**, today **I am even more convinced of a resounding Romney victory. 32 years ago at this moment in time, Reagan was losing by 9 points to Carter. Romney is right now running even in polls. So why do most pollsters give Obama the edge? First, most pollsters are missing one ingredient- common sense. Here is my gut instinct. Not one American who voted for McCain 4 years ago will switch to Obama. Not one in all the land. But many millions of people who voted for an unknown Obama 4 years ago are angry, disillusioned, turned off, or scared about the future. Voters know Obama now- and that is a bad harbinger. Now to an analysis of the voting blocks that matter in U.S. politics: \*Black voters. Obama has nowhere to go but down** among this group. His endorsement of gay marriage has alienated many black church-going Christians. **He may get 88% of their vote instead of the 96% he got in 2008. This is not good news for Obama. \*Hispanic voters. Obama has nowhere to go but down among this group.** If Romney picks Rubio as his VP running-mate the GOP may pick up an extra 10% to 15% of Hispanic voters (plus lock down Florida). **This is not good news for Obama. \*Jewish voters. Obama has been weak in his support of Israel. Many Jewish voters and big donors are angry and disappointed. I predict Obama's Jewish support drops from 78% in 2008 to the low 60’s. This is not good news for Obama. \*Youth voters. Obama’s biggest and most enthusiastic believers from 4 years ago have graduated into a job market from hell. Young people are disillusioned, frightened, and broke- a bad combination. The enthusiasm is** long **gone. Turnout will be much lower among young voters, as will actual voting percentages. This not good news for Obama. \*Catholic voters. Obama won a majority of Catholics in 2008. That won’t happen again. Out of desperation to please women, Obama went to war with the Catholic Church over contraception. Now he is being sued by the Catholic Church. Majority lost. This is not good news for Obama. \*Small Business owners. Because I ran for Vice President last time around, and I'm a small businessman myself, I know literally thousands of small business owners. At least 40% of them in my circle of friends, fans and supporters voted for Obama 4 years ago to “give someone different a chance.” I warned them that he would pursue a war on capitalism and demonize anyone who owned a business...that he’d support unions over the private sector in a big way...that he'd overwhelm the economy with spending and debt. My friends didn’t listen. Four years later, I can't find one person in my circle of small business owner friends voting for Obama. Not one. This is not good news for Obama. \*Blue collar working class whites. Do I need to say a thing? White working class voters are about as happy with Obama as Boston Red Sox fans feel about the New York Yankees. This is not good news for Obama. \*Suburban moms. The issue isn’t contraception…it’s having a job to pay for contraception. Obama’s economy frightens these moms. They are worried about putting food on the table. They fear for their children’s future. This is not good news for Obama. \*Military Veterans. McCain won this group by 10 points. Romney is winning by 24 points. The more our military vets got to see of Obama, the more they disliked him. This is not good news for Obama.** Add it up. **Is there one major group where Obama has gained since 2008? Will anyone in America wake up on election day saying “I didn’t vote for Obama 4 years ago. But he’s done such a fantastic job, I can’t wait to vote for him today.” Does anyone feel that a vote for Obama makes their job more secure? Forget the polls.** My gut instinctsas a Vegas oddsmaker and common sense small businessmantell me **this will be a** historic **landslide and a** world-class **repudiation of Obama’s** radical and risky socialist **agenda. It's Reagan-Carter all over again. But I’ll give Obama credit for one thing- he is living proof that familiarity breeds**

**Obama is losing**

**Podhoretz**, 5/1 [John, Political commentator for the New York Post and ex-presidential speechwriter, 5/1/12 “What is O’s case?”, <http://www.nypost.com/p/news/opinion/opedcolumnists/what_is_case_G2XmxRTEFv1ieifcFmAs3O>, S.O.]

**As June begins and the election inches closer, the question bedeviling the president and his advisers is this: What case will Barack Obama make on his own behalf to undecided voters over the next five months? That must have been on their minds yesterday, as they surveyed the cascade of disappointing data. “All the economic data was bad,”** wrote Joe Wiesenthal of Business Insider. The gross domestic product for the first quarter of 2012 was revised down to 1.9 percent from the original 2.2 percent. The previous quarter saw a respectable growth rate of 3 percent; the revision means an already worrisome slowdown just worsened by about 14 percent. **The anemic nature of the economic recovery, as the American Enterprise Institute’s James Pethokoukis notes, can be measured by the fact that GDP growth in the past five quarters has been 0.4 percent, 1.3 percent, 1.8 percent, 3 percent and now 1.9 percent. We also learned that initial jobless claims for the week rose to 388,000 — up from 370,000 the week before. The general consensus had been that it would remain around 370,000, so the higher number came as a troubling surprise. Meanwhile, job cuts rose** 53 percent from April to May, according to the firm Challenger, Gray and Christmas — the worst such monthly jump since September**. Nationally, reports the payroll firm ADP, “manufacturing employment dropped 2,000 jobs, the second consecutive monthly decline.” Manufacturing-sector growth is key to any serious recovery.** Maybe the unemployment numbers released this morning will show a reduction in the rate. But if so, that will almost surely be due to a decline in the overall size of the labor force**. In other words, it won’t be that more people have found jobs, but that more have joined the ranks of those not even looking for jobs. And it’s not just these data points that make the prospects for economic growth in the coming months mediocre. They are shadowed alarmingly by the deepening crisis in Europe: It** is increasingly likely that Greece will pull out of the euro and default on the billions put up for its bailout. Meanwhile, Europe’s fourth largest economy, Spain, may need a giant bailout of its own. The world is preparing itself for a general European recession. **Money is flooding into US Treasury bonds as a safe harbor. Demand is so high for Treasuries that the interest rate the US government must offer has dropped to an astonishing low. “You have no growth, no inflation, huge fear and a shortage of safe assets,” Wiesenthal writes. And this is the atmosphere in which Obama must now make the argument that he deserves a second term.** Every president who wins re-election has such an argument. Reagan 1984: “I’ve brought America back.” Clinton 1996: “I’ve turned the economy around while shrinking the deficit.” Bush 2004: “I’m keeping America safe.” The presidents who don’t win a second term seem to base their campaigns on an argument against the other guy. Carter 1980: “Reagan is a madman.” Bush 1992: “Clinton is personally unworthy of this high office.” **The Obama team must know that they can’t prevail solely with a negative assault on Mitt Romney, but really, what is the positive case? Ordering the mission to kill Osama bin Laden isn’t a case; it could be an important element of a larger argument about his stewardship if it connected to anything larger. But he hasn’t done that, and it’s hard to see where it fits in. There’s an element of bad political luck here for the president, especially when it comes to Europe. And he’s just not used to bad political luck. In 2004, running for US Senate in Illinois, he got an enormously lucky break when an unprecedented judicial ruling made public some ugliness from child-custody proceedings that caused his strong Republican rival, Jack Ryan, to withdraw and left Obama to face an absurd GOP challenger. In 2008, he enjoyed good fortune in the Democratic primaries in large measure due to the shocking incompetence of Hillary Clinton’s political team, which didn’t actually understand the rules governing delegate selection. Winning the presidency with three years of national political experience under his belt was probably the luckiest event in the history of American politics. He needs a lucky break of some kind between now and November. Hard to say what it could be, since it would by definition be unexpected. But without it, he’s not going to win a second term**

### Obama Lose- Economy

**Obama will lose – jobs and economy – BUT it can still change**

**Cass 6/2 [**Connie Cass, Business Week, <http://www.businessweek.com/ap/2012-06/D9V4SLHO1.htm>]

Nothing upsets a president's re-election groove like ugly economic numbers. **A** spring **slowdown in hiring and an uptick in the unemployment rate are weighing on** Barack **Obama, while enhancing** Republican challenger Mitt **Romney's argument that the president is in over his head**. Some questions and answers about how Friday's economic news may play in a close presidential race: Q: **How bad is this for Obama**? A: **Pretty awful. Polls show Obama's handling of the economy is his biggest weak spot. Americans overwhelmingly rate the economy as their biggest worry. And jobs are what they say matters most. But the president still has time** for the jobs outlook to improve. Five more monthly unemployment reports are due -- the last coming just four days before the Nov. 6 election. The fall numbers will mean more when voters head to the polls.

**Romney will win now – polls, turnout, economy**

**Ponnuru 6/25** [Ramesh Ponnuru, Senior Editor at the National Review National Review, lexis]

'We've gotta wake up," James Carville wrote in a May 31 fundraising e-mail. "Everywhere I go, people are telling me that 'Obama has it in the bag.' Newsflash: nothing is in the bag." He's right: **Democrats have been overconfident** about President Obama's chances this fall. Only slowly, if at all, is it dawning on them that Mitt Romney poses a serious challenge. **For months** now, the **polls have suggested that Obama, while not a sure loser, is in trouble.** In the Real Clear Politics average of polls, **the president has not cracked a 50 percent approval rating** so far **in 2012**. In both its average and Pollster.com's, the candidates have since the first week of May been consistently less than three points apart. There are several reasons Romney is giving Obama a tough race. The primary campaign distorted perceptions of the general-election campaign. It seemed to take forever for Romney to win the Republican nomination, and his poll numbers sank during the long slog. (Except for his "negatives": the percentage of people who told pollsters they had an unfavorable impression of him. That number rose.) Plenty of coverage suggested that Romney was going to have trouble unifying the party. Republicans grew pessimistic. But it should have been obvious that these perceptions were dependent on circumstances that were already changing. The primary highlighted Romney's deficiencies from the point of view of conservatives. In the general election, Republicans were never going to be choosing between Romney and Santorum or Gingrich. They were going to face a choice between Romney and a candidate who favors higher taxes, took health care farther down the road to government control, and will continue to appoint liberal judges as long as he can. On each of these issues **Republicans strongly prefer Romney's position**. That is why **they quickly consolidated behind him** once he wrapped up the nomination. While Romney has his weaknesses as a candidate, the arduousness of the primary campaign made them look more fatal than they are. The timing of the elections worked against him. Jay Cost, a writer for The Weekly Standard, points out that winning the Florida primary in 2008 gave John McCain the momentum to do well on Super Tuesday. This time around, Romney won Florida, his poll numbers improved, and then . . . and then the next actual primary was held four weeks later, and Super Tuesday a week after that. Momentum dissipated. Some of Romney's vulnerabilities in the primary won't matter much in the general election. His primary opponents had an incentive to use his record of flip-flops to portray him as unconservative and untrustworthy, but Obama can't simultaneously portray him as a right-wing extremist and a flip-flopper. All signs point to his deploying the right-wing-extremist attack, since it's scarier. The country is closely divided. After the 2006 and 2008 elections, some analysts decided that the country now had a natural Democratic majority. In retrospect -- and again, this should have been obvious at the time -- those seem like abnormally Democratic years (as 2010 seems like an abnormally Republican one). Even if 2008 had been a happy year for our nation, Republicans would have had to contend with the public's instinct that it was time for a change after eight years of their party in the White House. But there was also an economic crisis, which hit just weeks before the election. The Republican presidential nominee nonetheless won 46 percent of the vote. Republicans were always likely to do significantly better in 2012, simply because the odds of their facing similarly awful circumstances again were so low. You can't make history twice. There's another reason the Republicans' 2008 performance was likely to represent a floor for the next election. **Strong turnout** among voters who were young, black, or both **swelled Obama's totals. Both black** voters **and young** white **voters are likely to vote for Obama again, but** probably **not in the same numbers, because the excitement of voting in the first black president has faded.** Obama didn't change the map. Because his 2008 victory reached deep into "Republican territory" -- that is, he carried seven states that had gone for George W. Bush twice -- some analysts thought Obama had made assembling an Electoral College majority harder for the Republicans. But his sweep was a function of a national Democratic wave, not a permanent geographic realignment. As Sean Trende points out in his book, The Lost Majority, Obama's winning coalition was actually narrower geographically than Bill Clinton's. Missouri, which was very recently a swing state, seems now to be a lost cause for the Democrats. And Obama's hold on the states he carried in 2008 is weak. Florida seems to have become more Republican over the last decade, too. The Democrats have written off Indiana, and are surely ruing their decision to hold their national convention in North Carolina, not least because its state Democratic party is immersed in scandal. Even some states long in the Democratic fold look iffy. Wisconsin, which has not voted for a Republican presidential candidate since 1984, seems to be in play. Minnesota last voted for a Republican in 1972, but its Democratic tilt (compared with the national electorate) declined a little in the 2008 election, and a solid Romney victory nationally could well sweep it in. **The economy hasn't cooperated**. We haven't had a strong recovery, or one that most people trust will last. Democratic optimism about Obama has been tied not only to Romney's primary struggle but also to a few months of data suggesting the economy was picking up. But **we have now had a few months of more recent, ominous data** -- and the continuing crisis in Europe, or heightened tension in the Middle East, could tip us back into recession.

#### Obama will lose, the economy is too low

Pierson 6/22

[Was This the Day that Barack Obama Lost the Election?](http://spectator.org/blog/2012/06/22/was-this-the-day-that-barack-o) By [JAMES PIERESON](http://spectator.org/people/james-piereson) on 6.22.12 @ 9:14Ahttp://spectator.org/blog/2012/06/22/was-this-the-day-that-barack-o

June 21st was the first day of summer and the hottest day of the year so far, at least in the Northeast. It may also have been the day that Barack Obama lost the 2012 election. Why? This was the day that the stock markets finally folded the tent and acknowledged that the U.S. economy is in a stall and may be on the edge of a full-blown recession. The Dow Jones Industrial Average lost 250 points, the Nasdaq 71 points, and the S & P 500 about 30 points. The Federal Reserve on Wednesday affirmed that the economy is slowing and that the unemployment rate would remain above 8 percent for the rest of the year. Goldman Sachs & Co. recommended that investors short stocks in recognition of the worsening economic picture. New unemployment claims edged higher, confirming the lackluster May employment report. The Philadelphia Fed reported a further contraction in manufacturing activity in June. Oil slipped below $80 per barrel for the first time in a year, another sign of a slowing economy here and abroad. It is not impossible for an incumbent president to win re-election in the midst of a recession or a stalled economy, but it is extremely difficult to do so. No incumbent has won re-election under these kinds of economic circumstances since FDR was re-elected in 1936 in the midst of the Depression. On the other hand, Jimmy Carter and George H.W. Bush were defeated for re-election under conditions that were better than those Obama must deal with this year. The problem for the incumbent this year is that **he must confront the narrative that his policies of stimulus, more regulation, higher taxes, and health care reform have not turned the economy around as he promised.** Gov. Romney will paint him as a failure; the President's attacks on Romney's business background will not immunize him against that narrative. That narrative will become impossible to deflect as more bad economic news pours in over the next three or four months. Nevertheless, the election is likely to remain fairly close in the polls until mid-October, even if economic conditions continue to worsen, simply because many voters have not yet focused on the campaign. If the unemployment rate is still above 8 percent in mid-October, with no signs of immediate improvement, independent voters will at that point break for Gov. Romney, as they did for Ronald Reagan in 1980 and Bill Clinton in 1992. In that circumstance, Gov. Romney could easily walk away from the election with a margin of between five and seven points. If this is in fact what happens, then we might look back to June 21 as the day when the dynamics of the election changed for keeps.

#### The public is optimistic about Obama and the economy

Walsh 12 Improveshttp://www.usnews.com/news/blogs/Ken-Walshs-Washington/2012/02/23/obama-officials-optimistic-as-economy-public-opinion-improves

President Obama believes there is a reasonable chance that congressional Republicans [will feel enough public pressure](http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2012/02/14/improving-economy-driving-independents-back-to-obama) to compromise with him on key parts of his 2012 agenda, White House aides say. "They can be productive," a senior White House official told me. "Substantively, there can be accomplishments with Congress even though this is an election year." Among the initiatives that White House officials are considering for possible areas for compromise: more investment in infrastructure projects such as roads and bridges, tax breaks for small businesses, tax breaks for businesses that relocate jobs from overseas to the United States and making it easier for some homeowners to refinance their mortgages at lower interest rates. All of these initiatives are popular with voters, Obama strategists say. The president and his senior advisers were happy that Congress approved an extension of a payroll tax cut and longer-term unemployment benefits last week. They consider this a sign that progress can be made on other issues this year. Overall, administration officials say that [Americans seem to be more optimistic](http://www.usatoday.com/news/politics/story/2012-02-21/poll-obama-republicans/53211198/1) about where the economy is headed as unemployment slowly decreases, more private sector jobs are created month-to-month, and the Dow Jones industrial average rises. Americans seem to feel that "things are getting better," a top Obama aide told me, but the president believes "we are not near to being out of the woods."

#### Public approves of Obama’s progress with the economy – polls prove

Sidoti and Agiesta 5/11/12 Obama approval hits 60 percent: poll http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/05/11/obama-approv-rating-\_n\_860409.html

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama's approval rating has hit its highest point in two years – 60 percent – and more than half of Americans now say he deserves to be re-elected, according to an Associated Press-GfK poll taken after U.S. forces killed al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden. In worrisome signs for Republicans, the president's standing improved not just on foreign policy but also on the economy, and independents – a key voting bloc in the November 2012 presidential election – caused the overall uptick in support by sliding back to Obama after fleeing for much of the past two years. Comfortable majorities of the public now call Obama a strong leader who will keep America safe. Nearly three-fourths – 73 percent – also now say they are confident that Obama can effectively handle terrorist threats. And he improved his standing on Afghanistan, Iraq and the United States' relationships with other countries. Despite a sluggish recovery from the Great Recession, 52 percent of Americans now approve of Obama's stewardship of the economy, giving him his best rating on that issue since the early days of his presidency; 52 percent also now like how he's handling the nation's stubbornly high 9 percent unemployment. The economy remains Americans' top issue. Impressions of the nation's economic health have improved following last Friday's positive jobs report, which showed American companies are on a hiring spree. More people now say the economy got better in the past month and that it's likely to continue doing so in the coming year. Also, more Americans – 45 percent, up from 35 percent in March – say the country is headed in the right direction. Still, about half – 52 percent – say it's on the wrong track, meaning Obama still has work to do to convince a restive public to stay with the status quo. Some have seen enough to know they'll stick with him

### N/U Independent Voters

#### Polls prove – Romney holds a lead, and healthcare tipps independents away from Obama.

Dinan 7/9/12 Stephanie Dinian the Washington Post Obama loses ground to Romney in key measures of pollhttp://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2012/jul/9/obama-loses-ground-to-romney-in-key-measures-of-po/

[Mitt Romney](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/mitt-romney/) continues to hold a whisker-thin 1-percentage-point lead over President Obama in a head-to-head election match-up, but the former Massachusetts governor is eating into the president’s air of inevitability, according to the latest The Washington Times/JZ Analytics poll released Monday night — about the same margin as the poll in May, but Mr. Obama slipped on several key measures, including fewer voters who say they expect him to win, and fewer who say they are voting for him because he’s the best candidate. **Voters, who by a small margin say they agree with the** [**Supreme Court**](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/supreme-court/)**’s ruling upholding health care, still seem in a mood to punish Mr. Obama for it** — particularly among independents. The poll found 45 percent of self-identified independents said they are less likely to support the president now after the ruling, compared with 20 percent who said the ruling made them more likely to back him. [John Zogby](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/john-zogby/), the pollster who conducted the survey, said Mr. Obama had been ticking upward in other polling last month, but the health care ruling appears to have arrested that momentum. “What happened was he was leading on the basis of doing better among independents. But this time around, there’s a shift — still a lot of independents who are undecided, but [Romney](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/mitt-romney/) has the plurality now,” [Mr. Zogby](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/john-zogby/) said. “The health care issue, at least at the moment, is tipping away from Obama among independents, and has caused other independents to kind of park themselves in the undecided parking lot.” The nationwide survey of 800 likely voters was conducted Friday through Sunday, and the findings are in line with other major polls showing a tight race. In the previous TWT-JZ Analytics Poll, taken in mid-May, [Mr. Romney](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/mitt-romney/) led by less than half a percentage point. Adding [Libertarian Party](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/libertarian-party/) nominee [Gary Johnson](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/gary-johnson/) into the mix gives Mr. Obama the edge, 43 percent to 41 percent, over [Mr. Romney](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/mitt-romney/). [Mr. Johnson](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/gary-johnson/) collects about 4 percent of the vote. Pollsters say the expectations game plays a big role in predicting election winners. On that score Mr. Obama is doing better than [Mr. Romney](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/mitt-romney/): 45 percent of voters said they expect the president to win re-election versus 33 percent who say [Mr. Romney](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/mitt-romney/) will win. But in both cases, those numbers are down from the May TWT/JZ Analytics Poll, while the number of those who aren’t sure who will win has risen 8 percentage points, to reach nearly a quarter of all voters. Democrats were more optimistic about Mr. Obama’s chances than Republicans were optimistic about [Mr. Romney](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/mitt-romney/)‘s, the survey found. [Mr. Zogby](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/john-zogby/) said the expectations game is good news for Mr. Obama, and shows [Mr. Romney](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/mitt-romney/) still has some work to do in convincing his party faithful that he is up for the challenge. But he said Mr. Obama also should be worried that he is polling so low overall as an incumbent. “An incumbent president polling 42 percent at this point in time is not good,” he said. Mr. Obama also has slipped in one measure of enthusiasm. In the May poll, 64 percent of the president’s supporters said they were backing him because he was the “best candidate,” but that slipped to 57 percent in this survey. The number voting for him because they dislike [Mr. Romney](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/mitt-romney/) or find Mr. Obama the “lesser of two evils” grew 9 points. Another piece of news for [Mr. Romney](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/mitt-romney/) came Monday, when the two campaigns announced some of their fundraising numbers. [Mr. Romney](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/mitt-romney/) and his Republican allies reported raising $35 million more in June than Mr. Obama and allied Democratic committees.

## LINK TURN

#### **Link turn: Transportation Infrastructure is popular with voters**

Walsh 12 feb. 23rd writer for US news Obama Officials Optimistic as Economy, Public Opinion Improveshttp://www.usnews.com/news/blogs/Ken-Walshs-Washington/2012/02/23/obama-officials-optimistic-as-economy-public-opinion-improves

President Obama believes there is a reasonable chance that congressional Republicans [will feel enough public pressure](http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2012/02/14/improving-economy-driving-independents-back-to-obama) to compromise with him on key parts of his 2012 agenda, White House aides say. "They can be productive," a senior White House official told me. "Substantively, there can be accomplishments with Congress even though this is an election year." Among the initiatives that White House officials are considering for possible areas for compromise: more investment in infrastructure projects such as roads and bridges, tax breaks for small businesses, tax breaks for businesses that relocate jobs from overseas to the United States and making it easier for some homeowners to refinance their mortgages at lower interest rates. All of these initiatives are popular with voters, Obama strategists say. The president and his senior advisers were happy that Congress approved an extension of a payroll tax cut and longer-term unemployment benefits last week. They consider this a sign that progress can be made on other issues this year. Overall, administration officials say that [Americans seem to be more optimistic](http://www.usatoday.com/news/politics/story/2012-02-21/poll-obama-republicans/53211198/1) about where the economy is headed as unemployment slowly decreases, more private sector jobs are created month-to-month, and the Dow Jones industrial average rises. Americans seem to feel that "things are getting better," a top Obama aide told me, but the president believes "we are not near to being out of the woods."

## AT: Russia Impact

### Obama kills relations

#### Obama ruins Russia relations

Tobin 6/19/12 (Jonathon S. Tobin, Jonathan S. Tobin is Senior Online Editor of Commentary magazine with responsibility for managing the editorial content of the website as well as serving as chief politics blogger. From January 2009 to April 2011, he was executive editor of the magazine. Prior to coming to Commentary, Tobin was editor in chief of the Jewish Exponent in Philadelphia and the Connecticut Jewish Ledger. He is a syndicated columnist for the JointMedia News Service (JNS) and his writing has appeared in the New York Post, the Jerusalem Post, the Weekly Standard, the New York Times, the Christian Science Monitor, USA Todayand many other publications. Over the course of his career, he has won more than 50 journalism awards for commentary, editorial writing, and arts criticism. He has been named the top columnist and editorial writer for Jewish newspapers in North America several times, as well as the top weekly columnist and editorial writer in Pennsylvania and Connecticut. In 2006, he received the unique distinction of being named both the best editorial columnist and the best arts critic in Philadelphia by the Society of Professional Journalists. He has lectured on campuses and to organizations around the country and has appeared on CNN, FOX News Channel, the FOX Business Channel, the BBC, PBS, Pacifica and numerous other media outlets. ; commentary magazine, COMMENTARY is America’s premier monthly magazine of opinion and a pivotal voice in American intellectual life. Since its inception in 1945, and increasingly after it emerged as the flagship of neoconservatism in the 1970s, the magazine has been consistently engaged with several large, interrelated questions: the fate of democracy and of democratic ideas in a world threatened by totalitarian ideologies; the state of American and Western security; the future of the Jews, Judaism, and Jewish culture in Israel, the United States, and around the world; and the preservation of high culture in an age of political correctness and the collapse of critical standards.¶ Many of COMMENTARY’s articles have been controversial, and more than a few have been hugely influential, touchstones for debate and discussion in universities, among policy analysts in and out of government, within the ranks of professionals and community activists of all kinds, and in circles of serious thought worldwide. A large number of articles can be counted as landmarks of American letters and intellectual life. Agree with it or disagree with it, COMMENTARY cannot be ignored. To read it is to take part in the great American discussion.¶ COMMENTARY was founded in 1945 by the American Jewish Committee. To learn more about AJC, which has worked since 1906 to safeguard and strengthen Jews and Jewish life worldwide by promoting democratic and pluralistic societies that respect the dignity of all peoples, click here.; Obama Fails to Sweet Talk Putin, http://www.commentarymagazine.com/2012/06/19/obama-failed-attempt-to-sweet-talk-vladimir-putin-syria/)

At today’s meeting in Mexico between President Obama and his Russian counterpart, the U.S. leader sought to persuade Vladimir Putin that America had no desire to come between Moscow and its loyal client state Syria. Counting on his personal charm and instinctive belief that a demonstration of his good will toward those who are hostile to the United States will solve most problems, Obama thought he could convince Putin to back off on his support for the murderous Assad regime and join the West in pushing for an end to the slaughter in Syria. But the grim look on the faces of both Obama and Putin after they endured two hours of each other’s company indicates just how badly the American failed.¶ Obama’s attempt to sweet talk the former KGB agent went about as well as some of his previous efforts to apologize his way into foreign popularity. It’s not just that Putin doesn’t trust Obama — though he obviously doesn’t — but that after three and a half years in power and one failed “reset” later, the U.S. president still doesn’t understand the basic dynamic of Russian attitudes toward the United States. The meeting, the first between the two men, was clearly a dialogue of the deaf. The net result is another humiliation for Obama who not only has failed to do anything about the massacres in Syria but also will now be seen to have tried and failed to get Assad’s patron to abandon him. For his part, Putin has looked Obama in the eye and saw a man determined to kowtow to Moscow, a sign of weakness that Putin could not mistake and will not fail to exploit in the future.¶ The cold shoulder given to Obama by Putin only underlines the downward spiral of U.S.-Russia relations. With the Russians sending missiles to Syria and now reports from Iran discussing the possibility of joint military exercises with Russia, Obama, whose camp mocked Mitt Romney’s description of Russia as America’s number one geopolitical foe, is seeing Putin restore his country’s Soviet-era influence over parts of the Middle East.¶ Obama cannot be blamed for Putin’s bad behavior or the Russian’s determination to cut America off at the knees any chance he gets. But the president’s characteristic try at romancing Putin may set the stage for even worse to come. Just as his past appeasement of Russia by dumping missile defense for the Poles and the Czechs failed to win the Putin regime’s failure, by starting the talks by conceding that after the theoretical fall of Bashar al-Assad Syria would remain under Moscow’s influence, Obama increased the likelihood that the Russians will continue to push the envelope in their ongoing effort to undermine U.S. influence. Rather than making it clear to the Russians that the United States would not tolerate such misbehavior or the continuation in power of a murderous tyrant, Obama has worsened an already fraught relationship and virtually guaranteed that Assad has nothing to worry about no matter how many people he kills.¶ The fault here is not just the bad intentions of the Russians but also the hopeless romanticism of the U.S. administration about winning the hearts and minds of foreign leaders and their nations. Though it has long been obvious his belief that his charm and demonstration of good will would be enough to overcome stark policy differences with other countries is a self-serving myth, President Obama continues to blunder along, trusting in the power of his personality. That will cost the Syrian people dearly. If he continues along these lines and lets the Russians, Chinese and the Europeans drive the effort to pressure Iran to give up its nuclear program in the ditch, the cost for the Middle East and the world will be even higher.

## IMPACT TURN

### CTBT Bad

**Obama would push CTBT**

**GSN, ’12** (2/22/12, <http://www.nti.org/gsn/article/white-house-again-lobby-congress-ctbt-ratification/>, JD)

The White House remains intent on persuading Congress to ratify an international pact that would prohibit nuclear-weapon testing, the State Department's top arms control official recently said (see GSN, July 20, 2011). The United States is one of eight nations that still must ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty before it can enter into force. President Obama early in his tenure called for Senate passage of the pact, which last came up for a vote in the upper chamber in 1999, Defense News reported on Tuesday. "A lot has changed since 1999, and people have not had a chance to really look at the CTBT and understand what it can accomplish for U.S. national security," acting Undersecretary of State Rose Gottemoeller said. "The International Monitoring System [for the treaty] was barely getting off the ground back then. Now, the International Monitoring System is over 80 percent complete in its deployment and we can see its effectiveness," she said of the worldwide complex of nuclear-test detection technologies (see GSN, Feb. 17). The system, comprised of more than 300 monitoring sites and laboratories spread across the globe, was able to successfully pinpoint the release of trace amounts of radiation into the atmosphere following the March 2011 disaster at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear energy site in Japan, Gottemoeller said. Additionally, the Energy Department's Stockpile Stewardship and Management Program has made significant advancements, the undersecretary said. The program, managed by the semiautonomous National Nuclear Security Administration, is focused on ensuring the reliability, safety, and effectiveness of the U.S. nuclear arsenal absent any new testing. "It has come a long way and it is developing quite a bit of capability," Gottemoeller said. The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty has been ratified by 157 countries. A total of 44 "Annex 2" nations must deliver legislative approval for its entry into force; the holdouts from that group are China, Egypt, India, Iran, Israel, North Korea, Pakistan and the United States. Advocates say the treaty would help stem nuclear proliferation by preventing nations from conducting test explosions required to develop new or more potent weapons. Opponents of the U.S. ratification argue the potential remains for countries to secretly detonate nuclear devices without being detected and that the United States might in the future need to end its two-decade voluntary moratorium on testing to ensure the viability of its strategic deterrent. Gottemoeller said she has been informing congressional lawmakers and their aides on issues related to the treaty. "I expect to be doing a lot more of that in 2012. "We're not going to set a deadline for ratification; we want to make sure the time is right. Believe me, I was at the [Energy Department] in 1999 and watched the treaty go down in flames. I don't want to see that happen again," said Gottemoeller, who played a leading role in negotiating the 2010 New START nuclear arms control accord with Russia. In pursuing Senate ratification of New START, Gottemoeller said she was pleased to see a number of lawmakers give considerable focus to understanding the technical specifics of the treaty. "I'm hoping that the same thing will happen with the CTBT and we won't have people rushing to judgment," she said (Kate Brannen, Defense News, Feb. 21).

**CTBT would collapse deterrence**

**Monroe,** Former Director of the Defense Nuclear Agency, **07**

(Robert, *Washington Times*, Nuclear Testing Realities, December 4, Questia)

Reality No. 1 is that **U.S. ratification of the CTBT would do unbelievably grave damage to U.S. national security. Nuclear weapons exist - tens of thousands of them. More states now have them than ever before,** and they're being improved. A whole world of fourth- generation nuclear weapons is just around the corner. More than half the world's population lives in states that have nuclear weapons, and other states and terrorist organizations are striving to acquire them, and use them. The U.S. will continue to face serious nuclear weapon threats for generations to come. Our very lives will depend upon our ability to develop new nuclear weapon strategies and advanced nuclear weapons to deter these threats. **Our survival will depend on our nuclear technology being superior to that of anyone else in the world, decade after decade. This will certainly require testing, which the CTBT would deny.**

**Causes multiple scenarios for nuclear war**

**Spring,** Heritage Foundation Foreign Policy Studies Research Fellow in National Security Policy **07**

(Baker, “Ratifying the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty: A Bad Idea in 1999, a Worse Idea Today,” June 29, http://www.heritage.org/Research/HomelandDefense/wm1533.cfm)

\* The nuclear threat is expanding. Established nuclear powers (Russia and China), new de facto nuclear powers (India, North Korea, and Pakistan), and aspiring nuclear powers (Iran) are moving forward in establishing or expanding their nuclear capabilities. Russian leaders continue to believe that a modernized nuclear arsenal plays a central role in their national strategy.[9] China is expanding the number of nuclear-capable missiles in its arsenal.[10] India and Pakistan conducted nuclear tests in 1998, and North Korea conducted one in 2006. Iran continues to defy multilateral demands that it freeze its program for enriching uranium. Without the option to conduct tests in the future, the United States will see lesser powers equal and eventually surpass its nuclear capabilities.

\* Nuclear proliferation is creating the need for a modern U.S. nuclear arsenal that is suited to maintaining stability in a multi-polar setting. The U.S. nuclear arsenal is suited for the bipolar setting of the Cold War; it is not designed to address nuclear multi-polarity created by proliferation. Indeed, the Cold War nuclear deterrence policy and the arsenal it created are likely undermining nuclear stability and increasing the prospect for the use of nuclear weapons.[11] A permanent ban on nuclear testing will bar the United States from developing a new nuclear-deterrent posture. The new arsenal should include nuclear weapons, along with conventional and defensive weapons, that support a damage limitation strategy. Such a strategy aims to prevent or limit the damage from attacks by enemies armed with weapons of mass destruction.