



# Fact Sheet

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## How Republicans Have Failed the American People

Over the past year and a half, Senate Republicans have consistently put the interests of their corporate cronies above the American people. Obstructionism has become the central tactic in the Republican playbook, one which has failed hard-working Americans in a wide array of issues. In this short amount of time, Republicans have said “no” to:

- Middle-class families
- Health care consumers
- Small businesses
- Reforming Wall Street
- Military families
- Unemployment benefits
- Job creation
- Economic recovery
- Energy independence
- Tobacco regulation
- Hate crimes prevention
- Two Supreme Court nominees

Failing the American public and blaming Democrats is not new territory for Republicans, especially when it comes to the economy. In fact, they had ample practice during the Bush Administration. Their rhetoric is tired and based on a skewed version of reality. They seem to have forgotten that when President Obama took the oath of office, he inherited a record \$1.3 trillion deficit and an economy on the brink of collapse. [Office of Management and Budget] They also ignore the fact that when President Bush entered the White House eight years earlier, America enjoyed a \$236 billion budget surplus. The Bush Administration and Congressional Republicans not only squandered this surplus, but left the American people reeling from a decade of irresponsible tax breaks for multi-millionaires and special interests, and catastrophic fiscal policies.

Despite this record of failure, Republicans continue to insist on the same disastrous economic policies that squeezed American families and caused the financial crisis in the first place: deregulation and a hands-off approach to markets, tax breaks for the wealthy and corporations at the expense of the middle class, health care policies that favored insurance companies at the expense of consumers, and little or no assistance for those in greatest need. As history has shown, these ultra-conservative Republican policies helped cause America’s worst economic crises over the last century: the Great Depression in the 1930s, the Savings and Loan Collapse of the 1980s, and the Financial Crisis of 2008. The fact is that the economy has performed significantly better under Democratic administrations than Republican administrations.

This Fact Sheet provides just some of the examples of Republican's misguided, irresponsible tactics in the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress.

## ***Killed Jobs and Blocked Tax Cuts***

Republicans pushed a job-killing agenda that included opposition to tax cuts for small businesses, opposition to clean energy jobs, and opposition to closing tax loopholes exploited by multinational corporations. Senate Republicans opposed the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Recovery Act)* throughout the legislative process (**P.L. 111-5**). According to a Congressional Budget Office (CBO) report in May 2010, the positive change in employment attributable to the *Recovery Act* over the 4 year period from 2009-2012 is estimated to be 2.9 million to 7.7 million jobs. From 2009 through this year alone, CBO reported that the positive change in employment is an estimated 1.8 million to 4.4 million jobs. [CBO, Table 1, [5/2010](#)]

Senate Republicans largely opposed the *HIRE Act*, which created a new payroll tax exemption for businesses that hire American workers, a fully paid-for proposal designed to boost private-sector job growth (**P.L. 111-147**). On August 2, 2010, the Treasury Department reported that from February 2010 to June 2010, businesses hired an estimated 5.6 million new workers who had been unemployed for eight weeks or longer, making those businesses eligible to receive *HIRE Act* tax exemptions and credits. [Department of Treasury, [8/2/10](#)]

## ***Ignored Middle-Class Families***

Senate Democrats intend to extend tax cuts to the millions of middle-class Americans who need and deserve tax relief during these challenging economic times. With millions of Americans still out of work, this should have been a policy that garners broad support across party lines. Unfortunately, Congressional Republicans have blocked these efforts and are threatening to let middle-class tax cuts expire unless they can secure even bigger giveaways for millionaires and CEOs who ship American jobs overseas.

## ***Hurt Small Businesses***

For months, Senate Republicans chose to protect big corporations and millionaires at the expense of small businesses across the country. Republicans fought against key provisions for small businesses in the *Recovery Act* and attempted to block the *Small Business Jobs and Access to Credit Act*, which is estimated to create 500,000 new jobs. (**H.R. 5297**, signed into law on Sept. 27, 2010) Republicans used a rotating series of excuses to try and explain their decision to block these common-sense measures to help small business owners create half a million jobs in this tough economy. Republicans fought against tax cuts at a time when America's 27 million small businesses are starving for adequate access to capital and desperately seeking to hire workers and expand their businesses.

## ***Defended Wall Street CEOs***

Despite the overwhelming call for reform by the American people, Senate Republicans spent weeks obstructing progress on the *Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act* in an effort to protect special interests and banks. (**P.L. 111-203**) They attempted to water down this vital legislation on behalf of CEOs and credit card companies. But Democrats stood

up to these Republican tactics, believing that hard-working American families deserve strong protections from the predatory practices of Wall Street.

Senate Republicans also brought forward a CEO-friendly “plan” that failed to protect consumers, investors and businesses from the predatory practices of Wall Street. [Americans for Financial Reform, [4/28/10](#)] The proposal, hastily written after Senators McConnell and Cornyn agreed to do Wall Street’s bidding, would have left hard-working Americans susceptible to the same reckless behavior that destroyed over 8 million jobs and trillions of dollars in life savings. It would have inserted loopholes for lobbyists and watered down or eliminated critical provisions found in the Dodd-Frank Wall Street reform bill.

## ***Failed the Military***

Republicans stood between our troops and the resources they need to effectively carry out their missions and keep us safe. Senate Republicans have twice blocked the Senate from debating the Fiscal Year 2011 *National Defense Authorization Act*. **(S. 3454)** This legislation would authorize funding for military pay and benefits, health care for wounded service members, and critically needed protective equipment, including combat vehicles and bulletproof vests for our troops on the battlefield. Republicans actively stood in the way of investments to improve military equipment and ensure the readiness of our forces.

By preventing debate on the *Defense Authorization Act*, Republicans also withheld highly-deserved pay raises for our troops, which would go a long way in helping these service members and their families make ends meet. Senate Republicans have consistently delayed funding that would provide vital services and benefits to our troops and military families by preventing debate on the *Defense Authorization Act*, as well as by filibustering previous defense appropriations bills. While our troops risk their lives to safeguard our freedom, Republicans play politics with our national security.