



COUNTERING MISLEADING CLAIMS ABOUT THE ECONOMY

Conservatives make a number of misleading claims about the economy under President Obama. Their principal approaches are to:

1. Omit the fact that President Obama inherited an economic disaster from President Bush.
2. Blame President Obama for long-term trends that have concerned economists for decades.
3. Disregard actions by Congressional Republicans that slowed the recovery.

Mainstream economists and fact-checking organizations have found many conservative claims about the economy to be misleading or just plain wrong. This document provides an overview of the considerable economic progress made under President Obama. It then investigates a number of specific claims and includes precise details and data on why they are misleading.

President Obama inherited the worst economic catastrophe since the Great Depression

Barack Obama inherited from George W. Bush the worst economic catastrophe since the Great Depression of the 1930s. In the last year of the Bush administration, the economy shed more than 4.5 million private-sector jobs, including more than 800,000 jobs in January 2009 alone. The unemployment rate soared, on its way to peaking at 10.0 percent in October 2009. Over the Great Recession, average home prices fell by about one-quarter nationally and by twice as much in some areas. \$13 trillion in household wealth evaporated. During President Bush's last two quarters in office, real GDP fell more sharply than during any other two-quarter period in more than 50 years.

Democratic policies helped the economy recover

Under President Obama, the economy has added 15.6 million private-sector jobs over the past 81 months. The unemployment rate has been cut more than in half from its peak and now stands at 4.6 percent, its lowest level since August 2007. Average home values have recovered from severe losses, household wealth has gone up by nearly \$35 trillion and real GDP has increased by more than 16 percent. Last year, real median household income increased at its fastest pace on record.

The policies of President Obama and Congressional Democrats helped to stabilize the economy and lay the foundation for a return to growth. The nearly \$800 billion American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (the "stimulus") was the largest and most important fiscal policy response to the Great Recession. It made critical investments in infrastructure, clean energy and medical research. It also helped keep teachers and first responders on the job by providing support to states, and it cut taxes for working families to put money in their pockets and spur recovery.

In addition, with support from Democrats in Congress, President Obama rescued the U.S. auto industry, helping the industry go from shedding more than one-fifth of its workforce in just a year and a half to adding nearly 700,000 jobs since mid-2009. Economists Alan Blinder and Mark Zandi

estimate that, without the aggressive actions of the Federal Reserve, the Obama administration and Democrats in Congress, the recession would have lasted twice as long and job losses would have been about twice as great.¹

Republicans slowed the recovery

Many of the policies that helped the economy to recover were strongly opposed by most Republicans.² They voted nearly unanimously in opposition to the Recovery Act, and they blocked numerous additional stimulus measures, including legislation to repair our crumbling roads and bridges, bolster workforce training and prevent the layoffs of teachers.

Congressional Republicans even took active steps that slowed the recovery—threatening to default on U.S. debt and slashing spending at precisely the time when mainstream economic theory suggests that more investment was needed. In previous recoveries over the past 40 years, overall government spending increased to compensate for the lack of private-sector demand.³ But this time, Republicans demanded spending cuts, slowing economic growth. Federal fiscal austerity and uncertainty from 2010 to 2013 reduced GDP growth by about 1 percentage point and cost the economy more than 2 million jobs, according to Macroeconomic Advisers, LLC.⁴

The most significant economic challenges stem from long-term trends

Despite the fact that their actions slowed it down, Republicans criticize the pace of recovery under President Obama. They also omit the fact that many of the most significant challenges facing the U.S. economy stem from trends that long predate the Obama administration. Perhaps the most important is the fact that America is aging—there are now fewer younger workers driving economic growth for every retiree.⁵ According to CBO, slower growth in the size of the potential labor force is reducing potential GDP growth by approximately 1 percentage point per year from its postwar average.⁶ The retirement of the baby boomers is also a core driver of increases in the national debt, since many more people are collecting Social Security and Medicare benefits.

Economic growth and job creation have been stronger under Democratic presidents

Despite the numerous headwinds, the economy has performed better under President Obama than it did under President Bush. Growth has averaged 2.0 percent per year under President Obama versus just 1.6 percent under President Bush. Job growth has also been stronger under President Obama than under President Bush. Over the eight years of the Bush administration, businesses actually lost nearly 400,000 jobs on net. This was the first time since World War II that there were fewer private-sector jobs in the economy when a president left office than when he took office.

In fact, since World War II, the economy has consistently performed better under Democrats—by virtually every measure of economic success. Since World War II, real GDP growth has been 1.6 times faster, on average, under Democratic presidents than under Republican presidents.⁷ Private-sector job growth has been about 2.5 times faster, on average, under Democratic presidents.⁸

The United States has recovered faster than other countries

The recovery from the global economic meltdown has been faster in the United States than in virtually every other country.⁹ Real GDP in the United States is now more than 11 percent higher than it was before the recession. By contrast, real GDP in the Euro Area is only about 2 percent above its prerecession level. The U.S. unemployment rate is less than half the unemployment rate in the Euro Area.

CONTENTS

ECONOMIC GROWTH.....	5
<i>Claim: This has been the worst recovery from a recession since World War II.</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Related claim: The Obama recovery is weak compared to “average” postwar recoveries. .</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Related claim: President Obama is the first modern president not to preside over a single year of 3 percent growth.</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Claim: The economic recovery under President Reagan was much stronger.</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Claim: Republicans are better at managing the economy than Democrats.</i>	<i>6</i>
JOB GROWTH.....	7
<i>Claim: Job growth under President Obama has been weak.</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Claim: The Affordable Care Act (ACA) is a job killer.</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Claim: The ACA and other Obama administration policies have led to too many Americans working part time who would prefer to work full time.</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Claim: President Obama’s policies have hurt American manufacturing.</i>	<i>8</i>
UNEMPLOYMENT	9
<i>Claim: The unemployment numbers are “artificial numbers” that are “massaged to make the existing economy look good.”</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Claim: The decline in the unemployment rate overstates the progress in the labor market because it doesn’t count people who have given up looking for work.</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Claim: President Obama is responsible for widespread long-term unemployment.</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Claim: The share of Americans in the labor force is the lowest it has been since the 1970s. 10</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Related claim: Labor force participation is at a historic low.</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Claim: More than 90 million Americans aren’t working.</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Related claim: 14 million people have left the workforce entirely under President Obama. 10</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Claim: Unemployment among minority youth exceeds 50 percent.</i>	<i>10</i>
INCOME, WAGES AND POVERTY.....	11
<i>Claim: Middle-class incomes are down under President Obama.</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Claim: Middle-class incomes are lower than they were in 2000.</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Claim: Wages are stagnant.</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Claim: More Americans live in poverty now than when President Obama took office.</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Claim: “The federal government declared war on poverty, and poverty won.”</i>	<i>12</i>
GOVERNMENT SPENDING	13
<i>Claim: Government spending is out of control.</i>	<i>13</i>

<i>Claim: President Obama spent \$800 billion on a “stimulus” bill that didn’t work.</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Claim: Social Security and Medicare are going bankrupt.</i>	<i>14</i>
THE NATIONAL DEBT.....	15
<i>Claim: The national debt has doubled under President Obama due to reckless spending. ...</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Related claim: Obama has added more to the debt than all other presidents combined.</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Claim: We need to cut spending because we have a nearly \$20 trillion national debt.</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Related claim: We need to cut spending in order to balance the budget.</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Claim: We are on the verge of a debt crisis—the United States risks turning into Greece....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Claim: We are leaving a mountain of debt to the next generation.</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Claim: Republicans are more fiscally responsible than Democrats.</i>	<i>16</i>
TAXES.....	17
<i>Claim: President Obama has increased taxes on American families by \$1.7 trillion.</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Related claim: Democrats enacted “a massive tax increase on the middle class.”</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Claim: Some people pay 40 percent of their income in federal income taxes.</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Claim: The United States is the highest taxed nation in the world.</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Claim: The United States has the highest corporate tax rate in the world.</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Claim: The tax code is more than 70,000 pages long.</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Claim: Tax cuts spur economic growth.</i>	<i>18</i>
REGULATIONS.....	19
<i>Claim: The American people spend nearly \$2 trillion annually to comply with regulations—approximately \$15,000 per household.</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>Claim: President Obama set a record for the number of pages of regulations.</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>Claim: President Obama has unleashed a regulatory onslaught and rules by decree.</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Claim: The Obama administration ignores the costs of regulations.</i>	<i>20</i>
ENDNOTES.....	21

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Critics claim that the current economic recovery is weak relative to other postwar recoveries due to the policies of the Obama administration. This is extremely misleading because the Great Recession was far more severe than any other recession since World War II. In addition, demographic trends that long predate President Obama are holding back growth. In fact, the administration's policies have helped to make the U.S. recovery among the strongest in the world.

*Claim: This has been the worst recovery from a recession since World War II.*¹⁰

*Related claim: The Obama recovery is weak compared to "average" postwar recoveries.*¹¹

*Related claim: President Obama is the first modern president not to preside over a single year of 3 percent growth.*¹²

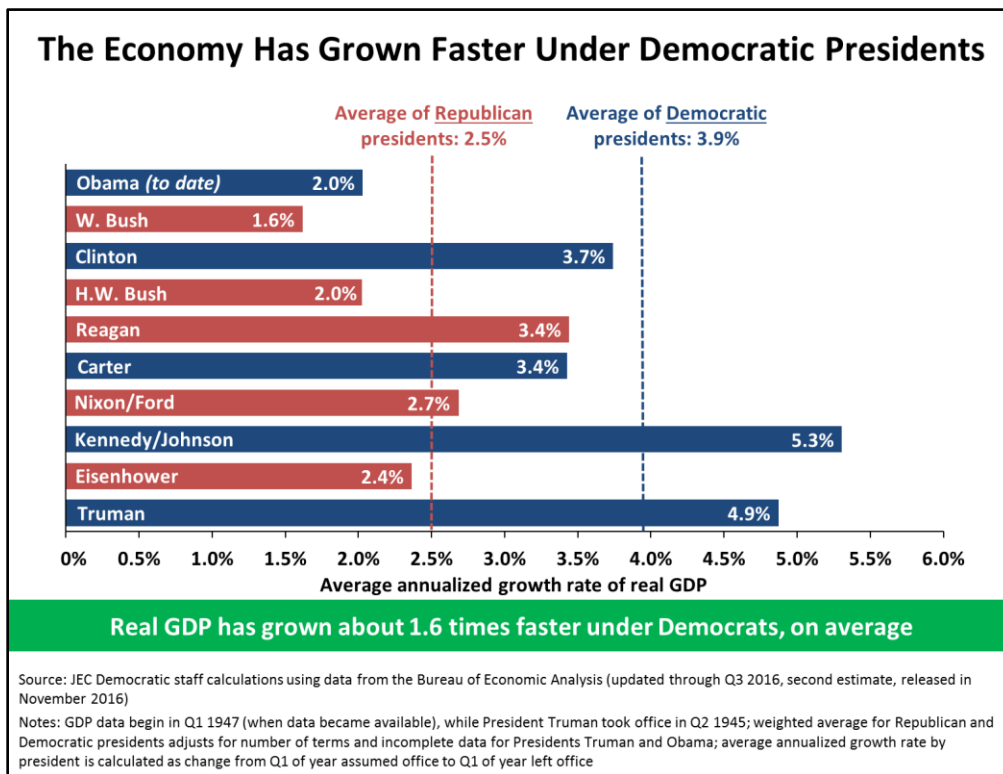
- President Obama inherited from President Bush the worst economic catastrophe since the Great Depression. Ben Bernanke called it the "worst financial crisis in global history."¹³ Alan Greenspan said it was "the most debilitating financial crisis ever."¹⁴
- President Obama's efforts were hampered by Congressional Republicans, who tried to block the Recovery Act that jumpstarted the economy, and who succeeded in stopping numerous additional measures that would have helped the economy.
- The economy also faces serious long-term demographic challenges. Unlike other recoveries since World War II, a rapidly growing labor force no longer can be counted on to power the economy. Baby boomers are exiting their prime working years, and women's workforce participation has levelled off after several decades of rapid growth.¹⁵ As growth of the labor force slows, it is much more difficult for the economy to grow as fast as it did on average over the postwar period.
- The United States has had one of the strongest recoveries among developed countries.¹⁶ Real GDP in the United States is now more than 11 percent higher than it was before the recession, while in the Euro Area it is only about 2 percent above its prerecession level. The U.S. unemployment rate is less than half the unemployment rate in the Euro Area.

*Claim: The economic recovery under President Reagan was much stronger.*¹⁷

- President Reagan faced a recession that was mild compared to the recent recession. Economist Kenneth Rogoff, co-author of a study that looked at recoveries from 100 systemic banking crises over three centuries, has said that the Reagan-era recession was "nothing" compared to the Great Recession.¹⁸
- Mainstream economists credit the 1980s recovery not to President Reagan but to Federal Reserve Chairman Paul Volcker, who jumpstarted the economy by slashing interest rates nearly 10 percentage points.¹⁹ This time, the Federal Reserve couldn't substantially boost the economy by cutting interest rates because they were already quite low and quickly hit zero.
- The 1980s recovery benefited from a substantial increase in overall government spending, including state and local spending, which boosted aggregate demand and supported economic growth. During the Obama recovery, government spending actually fell, slowing growth.²⁰

Claim: Republicans are better at managing the economy than Democrats.²¹

- Peer-reviewed research by Princeton economists Alan Blinder and Mark Watson undermines this claim. They write that “the U.S. economy has performed better when the president of the United States is a Democrat rather than a Republican, almost regardless of how one measures performance.”²²
- Since World War II, real GDP growth has been 1.6 times faster, on average, under Democratic presidents than under Republican presidents.²³
- Since World War II, private-sector job growth has been about 2.5 times faster under Democratic presidents, on average, than under Republican presidents.²⁴
- Nine of the past ten economic recessions began under Republican presidents.²⁵
- GDP growth has been faster under Barack Obama than under George W. Bush, 2.0 percent versus 1.6 percent per year, on average.

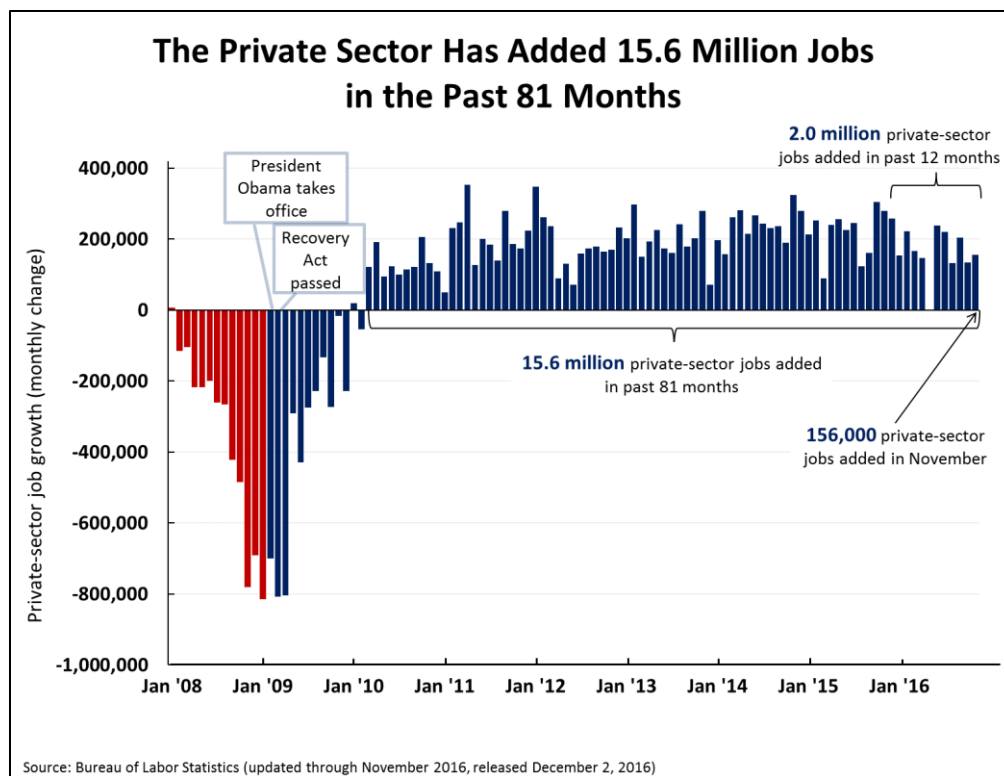


JOB GROWTH

Some claim that job growth under President Obama has been weak and that Democratic policies including the Affordable Care Act are forcing employers to shift employees to part-time work. However, job growth under President Obama far surpasses job growth under President George W. Bush, with businesses adding 15.6 million jobs over the past 81 months.

*Claim: Job growth under President Obama has been weak.*²⁶

- Job growth under President Obama has been significantly faster than under President Bush.
- George W. Bush is the only president since World War II that presided over a loss of private-sector jobs.²⁷ There were nearly 400,000 fewer private-sector jobs in the U.S. economy when President Bush left office than when he entered.
- Over the past 81 months of the Obama administration, businesses have added 15.6 million jobs, an average of more than 190,000 private-sector jobs per month.

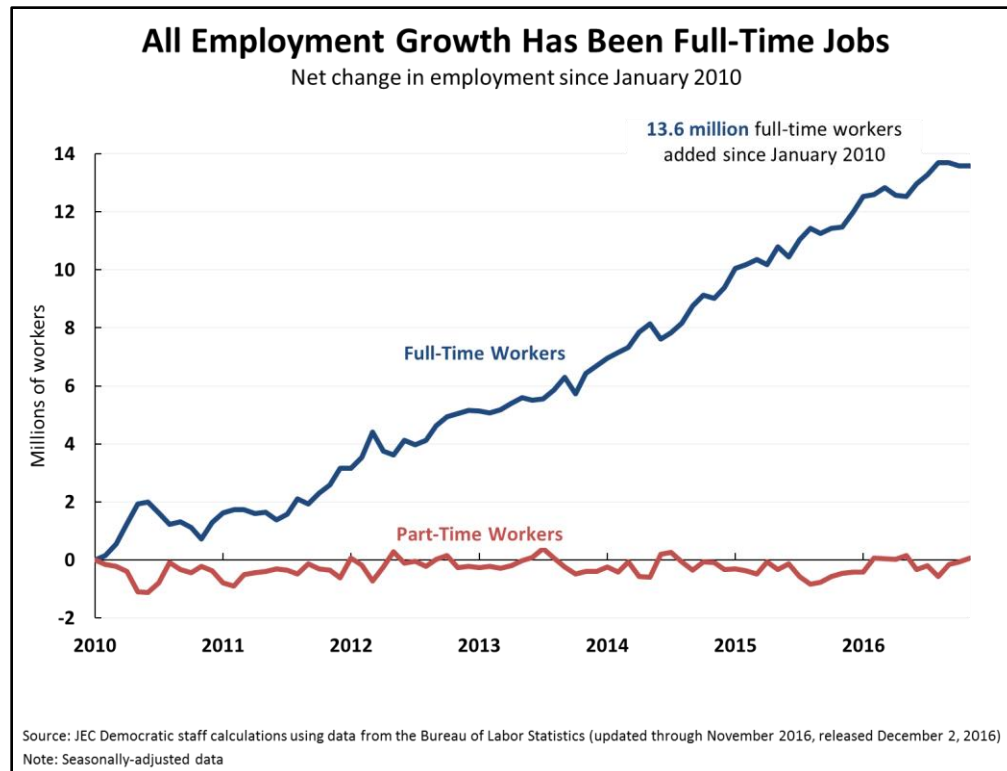


*Claim: The Affordable Care Act (ACA) is a job killer.*²⁸

- This claim has been repeatedly debunked by fact-checking organizations and disproved by economic data.²⁹ Since the ACA was enacted in March 2010, the economy has added 15.6 million private-sector jobs over 81 months.
- Those who base their claim that the ACA will kill jobs on CBO findings are misinterpreting what CBO wrote. CBO has projected that the labor supply will be modestly lower principally because workers will voluntarily choose to work less—not because they will lose their jobs.³⁰

*Claim: The ACA and other Obama administration policies have led to too many Americans working part time who would prefer to work full time.*³¹

- The number of people in part-time jobs who would prefer full-time work has declined every year since the ACA was enacted.³² More than 3.5 million fewer Americans are employed part time for economic reasons now than in 2010.
- Since the start of 2010, virtually all net employment growth has been in full-time jobs. There are 13.6 million more full-time workers now than in January 2010, while the number of part-time workers has not changed significantly.



*Claim: President Obama's policies have hurt American manufacturing.*³³

- The economy has gained more than 800,000 manufacturing jobs since early 2010, the first period of sustained manufacturing job growth since the 1990s.
- The American auto industry has come roaring back thanks to the decisive actions taken by President Obama. Since mid-2009, auto manufacturers have added more than 300,000 jobs.
- Despite these gains under President Obama, manufacturing employment remains well below levels seen in earlier decades. In the early 1970s, roughly one in four workers were in the manufacturing industry. Today, fewer than one in ten workers are in manufacturing.
- The decline in manufacturing employment in recent decades is the result of long-term trends. These include globalization and competition from low-wage workers overseas, as well as technological change that has led to the automation of many tasks.³⁴ There are no easy policy fixes that would turn back the clock and bring back massive numbers of manufacturing jobs.

UNEMPLOYMENT

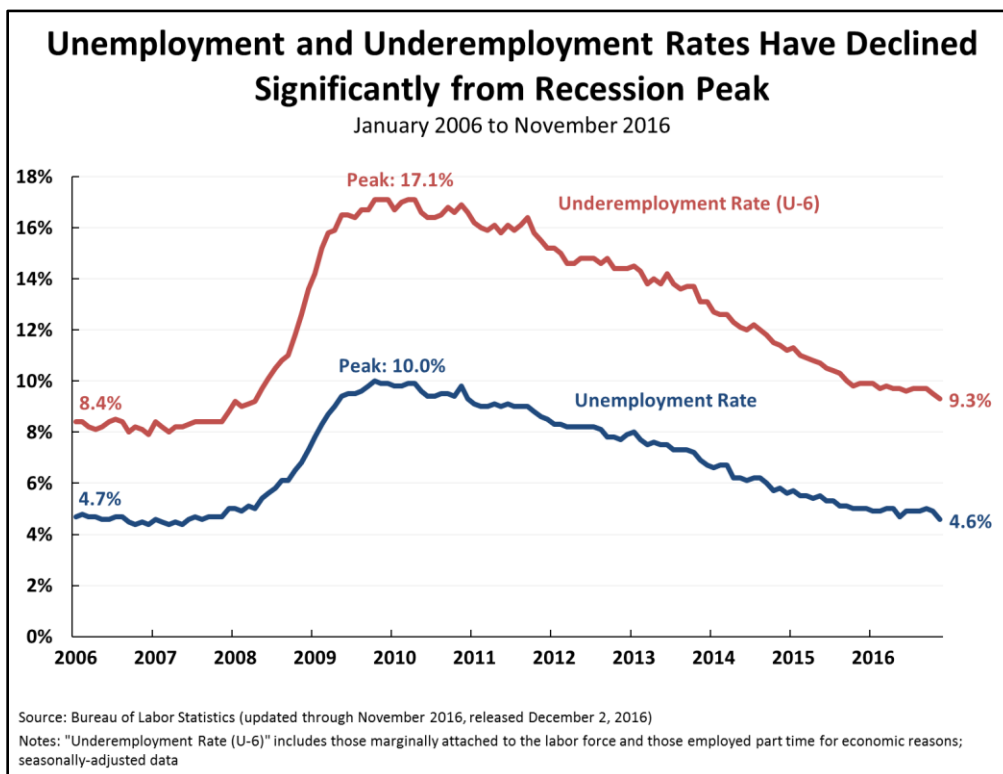
Under President Obama, the unemployment rate has been cut more than in half from a peak of 10.0 percent to 4.6 percent. However, critics contest this progress on the grounds that the official unemployment rate does not count people who have left the workforce. This ignores the fact that the unemployment rate has been measured the same way for decades. In addition, broader measures of underemployment have also shown substantial progress.

Claim: The unemployment numbers are “artificial numbers” that are “massaged to make the existing economy look good.”³⁵

- The unemployment rate has been calculated the same way for more than five decades.³⁶
- PolitiFact has called the idea that the unemployment rate is manipulated to make the economy look good a “pants on fire” lie.³⁷

Claim: The decline in the unemployment rate overstates the progress in the labor market because it doesn’t count people who have given up looking for work.³⁸

- Labor market statistics that include workers who have dropped out of the labor force have also shown substantial improvement under President Obama.
- The U-6 index, which includes workers in part-time jobs who want full-time work as well as discouraged and other workers who have dropped out of the labor force but want a job, has dropped precipitously since 2010, from a high of 17.1 percent to 9.3 percent in November.³⁹
- Other indicators show the labor market is strong. For example, initial claims for unemployment insurance have been under 300,000 for 91 straight weeks, the longest streak since 1970.



- The ratio of unemployed workers to job openings has dropped sharply. In September 2016, this ratio was 1.4 to 1, down from a peak of 6.6 to 1 in the first year of the Obama presidency.

*Claim: President Obama is responsible for widespread long-term unemployment.*⁴⁰

- Under President Obama, the long-term unemployment rate has fallen by nearly three-quarters from its recession-era peak, from 4.4 percent to less than 1.2 percent.
- While the long-term unemployment rate remains above its 1.0 percent prerecession average, it is coming down from a much higher peak than in other postwar recessions.⁴¹
- There are currently 1.9 million people who have been unemployed for more than six months, down from 6.8 million people in early 2010.

*Claim: The share of Americans in the labor force is the lowest it has been since the 1970s.*⁴²

*Related claim: Labor force participation is at a historic low.*⁴³

- The decline in the labor force participation rate—the share of Americans over the age of 15 working or looking for work—has little to do with the policies of President Obama.
- By far the biggest reason why the labor force participation rate has fallen is that baby boomers have exited their prime working years and are beginning to retire.⁴⁴

*Claim: More than 90 million Americans aren't working.*⁴⁵

*Related claim: 14 million people have left the workforce entirely under President Obama.*⁴⁶

- This figure is deeply misleading because it includes everyone over the age of 15 who is counted as not working or looking for work, including retirees, the disabled, full-time caregivers, and high school, college and graduate students.⁴⁷
- PolitiFact has scrutinized the 90+ million figure and found that it is “mostly false.”⁴⁸
- The roughly 14-million-person increase in the number of people who are not working since January 2009 is principally due to the fact that more Americans are retiring.
- A better measure is the number of people who don't have a job but want one. During the late-1990s boom, there were around 10 million such people.⁴⁹ This number skyrocketed as a result of the Great Recession to about 21 million. It has since dropped to less than 14 million.⁵⁰

*Claim: Unemployment among minority youth exceeds 50 percent.*⁵¹

- This misleading statement has been widely debunked, because it counts millions of people who are not in the labor force—including high school and college students—as unemployed.⁵²
- While there are large, persistent disparities in youth unemployment by race and ethnicity that must be addressed, unemployment rates have fallen across-the-board under President Obama.
- In 2015, 19.2 percent of African Americans and 12.4 percent of Hispanics ages 16 to 24 were unemployed, versus 10.0 percent of white youth. These rates are down from 2010 peaks of 30.2 percent for African Americans, 21.3 percent for Hispanics and 16.3 percent for whites.⁵³

INCOME, WAGES AND POVERTY

Critics of the Obama administration claim that the president's policies have caused income growth to stall. Moreover, they often omit that long-term trends such as globalization, automation and the decline of labor unions have kept median wages from growing as fast as worker productivity for more than 40 years.⁵⁴

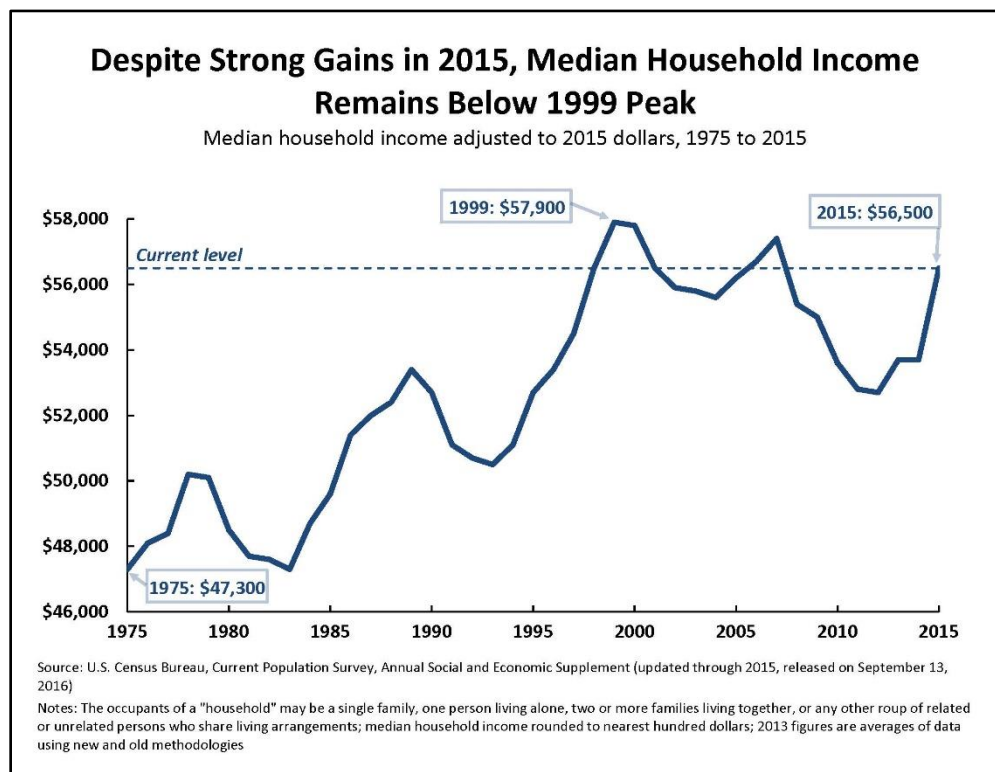
Despite these long-term trends, the most recent data from the Census Bureau show that real median household income is higher now than it was when President Obama took office. In addition, the poverty rate is headed back down after spiking during the recession.

*Claim: Middle-class incomes are down under President Obama.*⁵⁵

- Real median household income is about \$1,100 higher now than it was in 2008, President Bush's last year in office.⁵⁶
- Median household income grew faster last year than any other year on record. Adjusted for inflation, it increased by 5.2 percent (\$2,800) to \$56,500.
- Incomes increased across all major racial and ethnic groups in 2015. Incomes grew even faster for households in the bottom half of the income distribution than for those at the top.⁵⁷

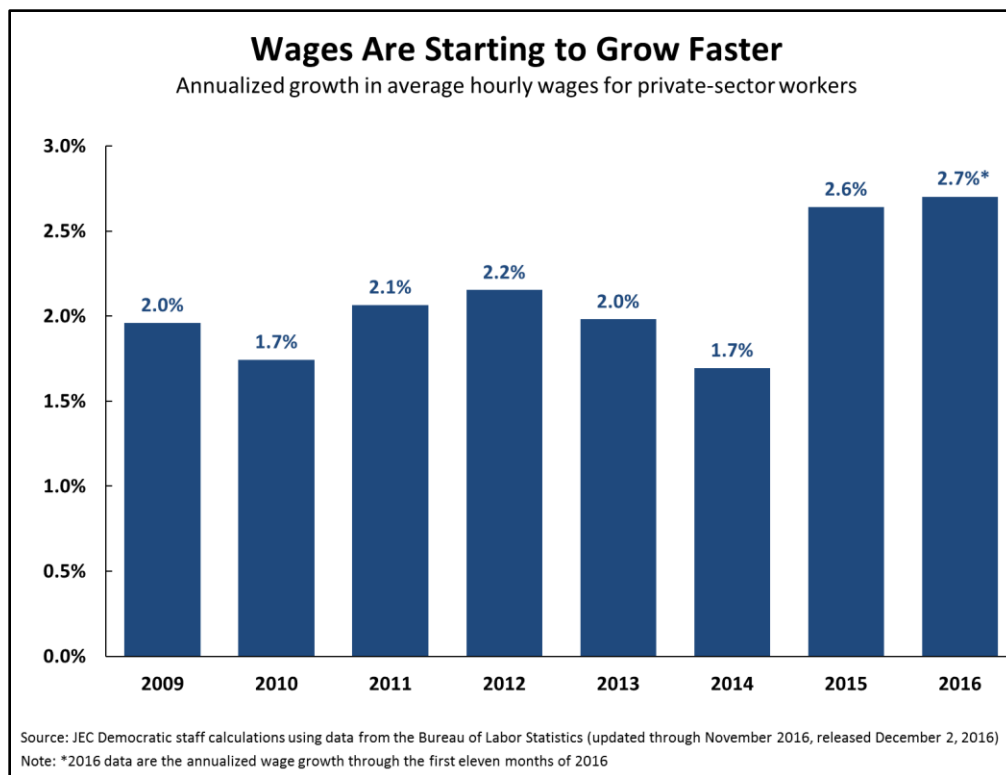
*Claim: Middle-class incomes are lower than they were in 2000.*⁵⁸

- While median household income remains 1.6 percent below its prerecession peak at the height of the housing bubble in 2007, and 2.4 percent below its all-time peak at the height of the tech bubble in the late 1990s, it is clearly heading in the right direction.⁵⁹



*Claim: Wages are stagnant.*⁶⁰

- Average hourly earnings of private-sector workers are increasing.
- Nominal average hourly earnings grew 2.6 percent last year, the largest gain since the recession ended, and they have grown at a 2.7 percent annual rate so far in 2016.⁶¹ Other measures of wages show even stronger growth.⁶²
- Because these rates of nominal wage growth outpace the currently low rate of inflation, they translate into real wage gains for private-sector workers.⁶³ The combination of real wage gains and strong job growth has led to higher real household incomes.



*Claim: More Americans live in poverty now than when President Obama took office.*⁶⁴

- The official poverty rate in 2015 (13.5 percent) is just slightly higher than the rate in 2008 (13.2 percent).⁶⁵
- The poverty rate is moving in the right direction. Last year, it fell by 1.2 percentage points, the largest single-year decline since 1968.⁶⁶

*Claim: "The federal government declared war on poverty, and poverty won."*⁶⁷

- Actually, thanks to many anti-poverty programs, the percentage of people in poverty has fallen substantially since the 1960s, when measured to include tax credits and other benefits.⁶⁸
- This misleading claim is based on the fact that the official poverty rate does not account for the impact of programs like SNAP and the EITC.⁶⁹ Without these programs and others, about twice as many Americans would be living in poverty.⁷⁰

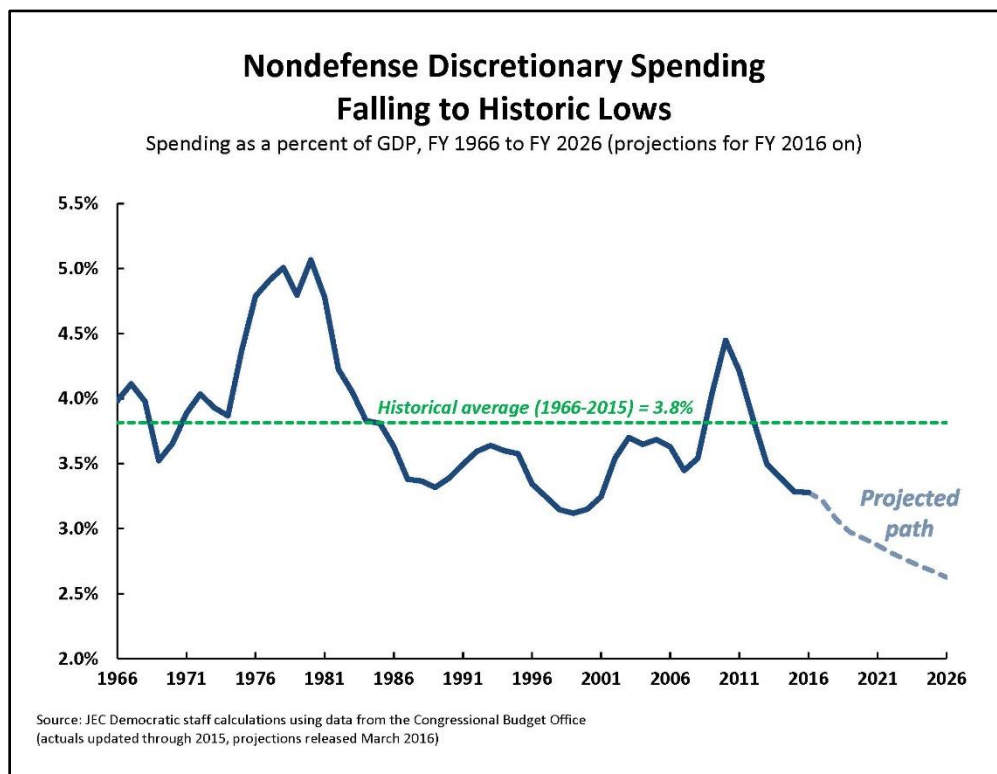
GOVERNMENT SPENDING

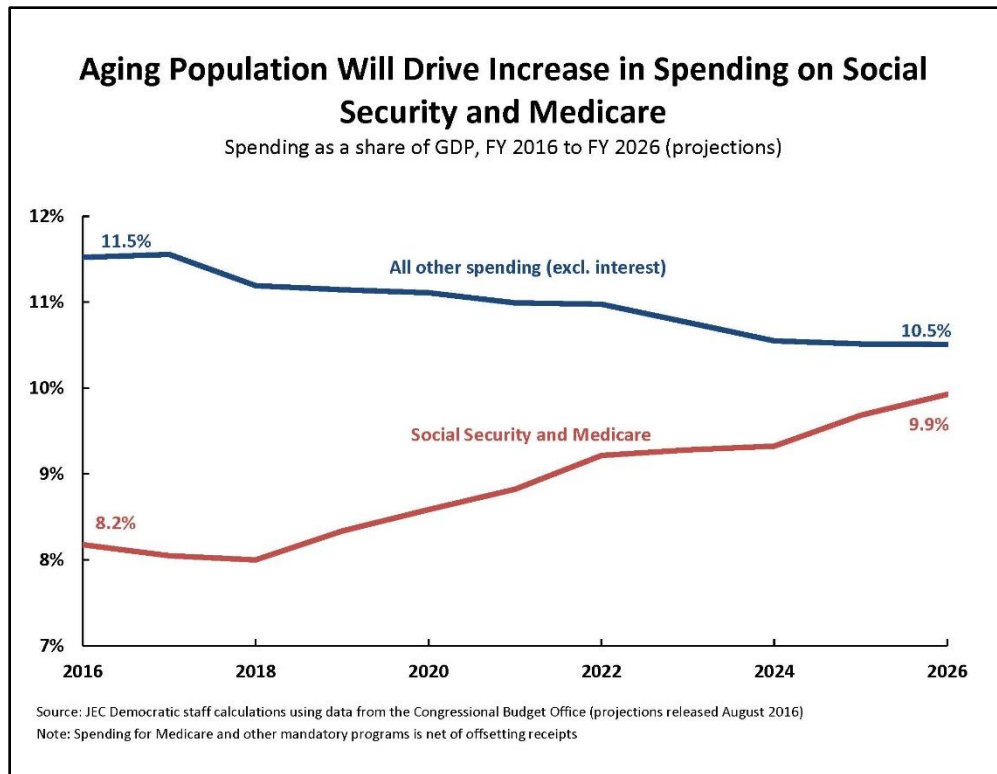
Some claim that President Obama has presided over an unprecedented increase in government spending. However, spending as a share of GDP has fallen below the level it was on average during President Reagan's second term.

Projected spending growth in the future is driven largely by the aging population and the increasing number of baby boomers collecting Social Security and Medicare benefits, as well as rising health care costs, another challenge that long predates President Obama. In fact, nondefense discretionary spending is set to hit its lowest level on record as a share of GDP.

Claim: Government spending is out of control.⁷¹

- On average, government spending as a share of the economy was lower over the past four years under President Obama than it was during President Reagan's last four years in office.⁷²
- Nondefense discretionary spending is currently below its 50-year average as a share of the economy and is projected to fall to its lowest level on record by 2018. This includes all spending subject to annual appropriations other than spending on defense.⁷³
- Contrary to claims that there is a "drift toward ever-expanding government,"⁷⁴ data show that program spending aside from spending on Social Security and Medicare is projected to decline as a share of the economy over the next decade.⁷⁵
- Even though projected spending growth is largely due to the aging population, many conservatives use this to justify deep, damaging cuts to programs that are not driving increases in spending.





Claim: President Obama spent \$800 billion on a “stimulus” bill that didn’t work.⁷⁶

- The Recovery Act was critical, but it could not fully overcome the recession’s devastating effects. Economic research finds that, without the Recovery Act, other fiscal policy efforts and actions by the Federal Reserve, the recession would have lasted twice as long and job losses would have been about twice as great.⁷⁷
- The aggressive policy response was in line with the views of mainstream economists on how to respond to a major recession. Presidents of both parties have responded to downturns by calling for policies that spur demand and support recovery, whether through tax cuts or spending programs.⁷⁸ The Recovery Act included both tax cuts and government investments.

Claim: Social Security and Medicare are going bankrupt.⁷⁹

- This claim is based on confusion about how Social Security and Medicare work. Both built up substantial trust funds while baby boomers were in their prime working years, which are now being spent down as they retire. Even after the trust funds are spent, the programs will still take in enough revenue each year to pay 75 percent or more of promised benefits.⁸⁰
- Even if no action is taken to shore up the program, Social Security will continue paying full benefits through 2034.⁸¹ Modest changes to generate more revenue or reduce benefits for well-off retirees could assure the long-term solvency of the program.⁸²
- One of the most effective ways of reducing Medicare spending is by making the health care system more efficient. The Affordable Care Act (ACA) is significantly reigning in Medicare spending growth, helping to add more than a decade to the solvency of the Medicare Hospital Insurance Trust Fund relative to projections before the ACA was enacted.⁸³

THE NATIONAL DEBT

Some blame President Obama for the increasing national debt, pointing out that the national debt has roughly doubled under his administration. However, this largely is not the fault of President Obama but the legacy of President Bush's wars, tax cuts and the devastating recession that began under his watch. Another major contributor is that baby boomers have begun to retire, increasing costs for Social Security and Medicare. Despite these pressures, the annual deficit—the amount added to the debt each year—has fallen by about two-thirds as a share of GDP under President Obama, from nearly 10 percent to 3.2 percent.⁸⁴

*Claim: The national debt has doubled under President Obama due to reckless spending.*⁸⁵

*Related claim: Obama has added more to the debt than all other presidents combined.*⁸⁶

- The increase in debt under President Obama largely is due to factors beyond his control and that predate his presidency. One of the most important factors is that baby boomers are starting to retire, driving up costs for Social Security and Medicare.
- Much of the debt accrued under Obama is due to the economic meltdown that began under George W. Bush, as well as the wars started and tax cuts enacted under Bush. The Bush tax cuts in 2001 and 2003 raised deficits by a total of \$1.5 trillion over 10 years.⁸⁷ The long-term cost of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan has been estimated at \$4 to 6 trillion.⁸⁸
- The national debt more than doubled under George W. Bush and nearly tripled under Reagan.⁸⁹

*Claim: We need to cut spending because we have a nearly \$20 trillion national debt.*⁹⁰

*Related claim: We need to cut spending in order to balance the budget.*⁹¹

- While the total nominal debt is nearly \$20 trillion, economists believe that this is a less important measure of fiscal health than the debt as a share of GDP—the debt-to-GDP ratio.⁹²
- A larger economy is able to support a larger debt. For example, while publicly held debt more than tripled between 1945 and 1981, it fell by about three-quarters as a share of GDP.⁹³
- If the economy grows faster than the debt, debt as a share of GDP will decline. The best way to do this is to invest in broad-based economic growth including in infrastructure, education and research. This was at the core of America's success in the decades after World War II.
- Cutting spending in order to balance the budget can undermine long-term fiscal sustainability by reducing productive investments in the drivers of economic growth.⁹⁴

*Claim: We are on the verge of a debt crisis—the United States risks turning into Greece.*⁹⁵

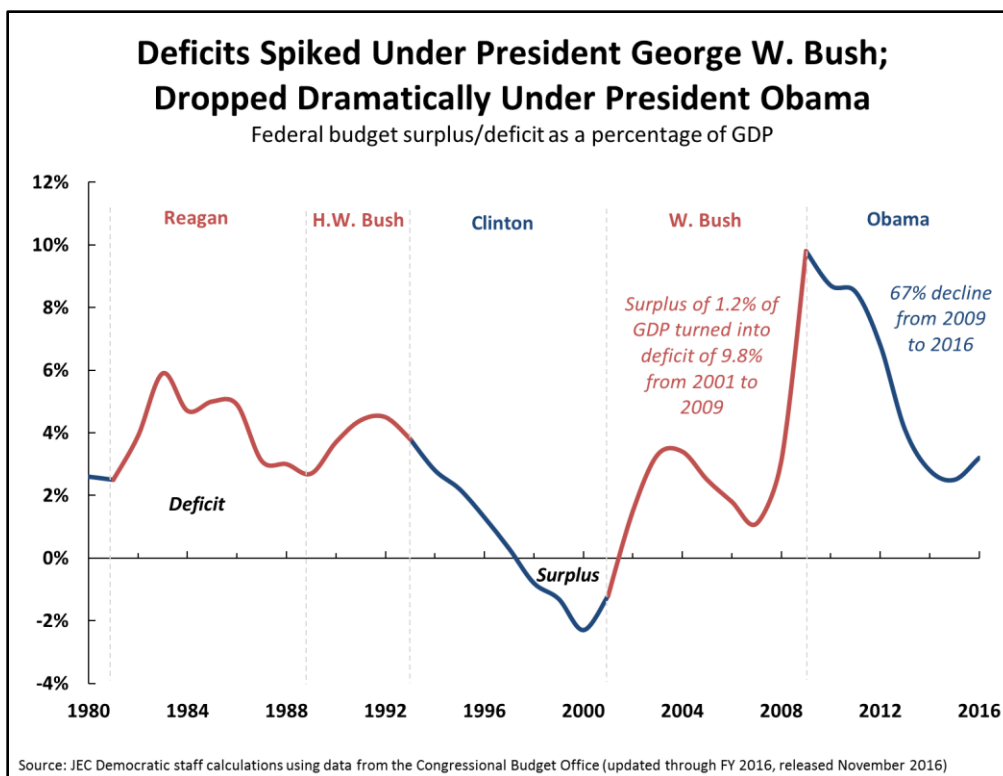
- There is no evidence to suggest that the United States is anywhere close to a debt crisis, even though stabilizing the debt-to-GDP ratio remains a long-term challenge.
- Market indicators of investors' willingness to purchase U.S. debt show that there is little concern that the United States will default. Despite a post-election uptick, interest rates on Treasuries remain low relative to historically typical levels, indicating that global investors continue to view the United States as a safe bet.⁹⁶

Claim: We are leaving a mountain of debt to the next generation.⁹⁷

- It is misguided to focus exclusively on Treasury debt while neglecting the other serious burdens we risk leaving to our children and grandchildren.
- Failing to repair our crumbling infrastructure leaves a serious debt to the next generation in the form of a backlog of deferred maintenance.⁹⁸
- Failing to invest in education means that our workforce will be less productive and less prepared to compete in the global economy.
- Failing to invest in medical research could deny lifesaving cures to future generations.
- Failing to take action on climate change could have devastating consequences for our economy, our citizens' health and our planet.⁹⁹

Claim: Republicans are more fiscally responsible than Democrats.¹⁰⁰

- Since President Reagan took office in 1981, annual deficits have generally gone up under Republican presidents and come down under Democrats.¹⁰¹ In fact, no Republican president has run a budget surplus since President Eisenhower in 1960.¹⁰²
- President Clinton presided over four straight years of budget surpluses before deficits returned under President Bush. President Obama inherited a deficit of nearly 10 percent of GDP from President Bush, but the deficit has fallen by about two-thirds to 3.2 percent in FY 2016.¹⁰³
- David Stockman, OMB Director under President Reagan, wrote in 2010 that rising debt is due less to “big spending” and more to Republicans’ belief in “the insidious doctrine that deficits don’t matter if they result from tax cuts.”¹⁰⁴



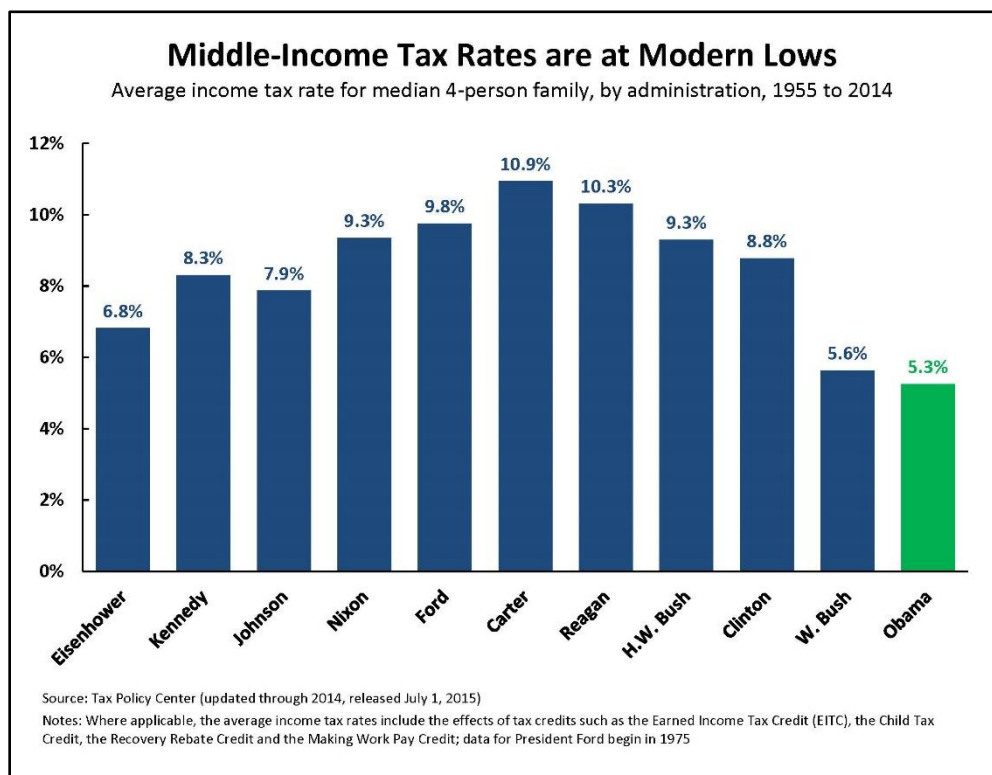
TAXES

Some claim that taxes are too high, that the tax code is too complex and that cutting taxes would spur growth. However, taxes for middle-class families have been lower under President Obama than under any other president since President Eisenhower.¹⁰⁵ Moreover, tax complexity stems in large part from loopholes that serve to benefit the wealthy and large corporations—and that President Obama has proposed curtailing. Across-the-board tax cuts would increase the debt without having a significant impact on economic growth.

*Claim: President Obama has increased taxes on American families by \$1.7 trillion.*¹⁰⁶

*Related claim: Democrats enacted “a massive tax increase on the middle class.”*¹⁰⁷

- The average federal income tax rate for a median-income family of four has been lower during President Obama’s tenure than under any other president since Dwight Eisenhower.¹⁰⁸
- President Reagan’s last year in office, a median-income family of four paid 9.3 percent of its income in federal income taxes. Under President Obama, this rate has averaged 5.3 percent, about \$4,000 per year.¹⁰⁹
- PolitiFact has called the claim that there has been a “massive tax increase” on the middle class “mostly false.”¹¹⁰ Most revenue increases under President Obama were targeted to the wealthy. For example, the Obama administration allowed the Bush tax cuts to expire for the wealthiest Americans—ensuring that they pay more of their fair share to help reduce deficits.¹¹¹



Claim: Some people pay 40 percent of their income in federal income taxes.

- Marginal tax rates are not the same as average tax rates. Marginal rates only apply to taxable income over certain thresholds, with income below the thresholds taxed at lower rates. In addition, exemptions and deductions often reduce taxable income well below gross income.
- While the top marginal rate is 39.6 percent, this does not mean that the wealthy pay nearly 40 percent of their income in federal income taxes. This rate only applies to taxable income above about \$415,000.¹¹² In fact, the average federal income tax rate for the *400 Americans with the highest incomes* is less than 25 percent.¹¹³

Claim: The United States is the highest taxed nation in the world.¹¹⁴

- PolitiFact has found this claim to be false.¹¹⁵ Total tax revenue as a share of the economy is lower in the United States than in virtually every other developed country. And our top statutory individual income tax rate ranks in the middle among developed countries.¹¹⁶

Claim: The United States has the highest corporate tax rate in the world.¹¹⁷

- As a share of GDP, corporate tax revenue in the United States is lower than the average for developed countries.¹¹⁸
- The top rate of 35 percent is not the same as the effective rate corporations actually pay. After deductions and loopholes, large profitable corporations paid an average of about 14 percent in federal income taxes from 2008 to 2012, according to a recent GAO report.¹¹⁹
- More than two dozen Fortune 500 corporations paid no federal income taxes at all from 2008 to 2012, despite earning profits each year—including Boeing, Verizon and General Electric.¹²⁰

Claim: The tax code is more than 70,000 pages long.¹²¹

- PolitiFact has called this “false” because it includes regulations, court cases and additional materials that are not actually part of the tax code.¹²²
- To a great extent, the length of the tax code is a testament to the effectiveness of lobbyists winning concessions for their clients. The tax code is made complicated by an array of deductions, exemptions, credits and other loopholes.
- Many tax breaks overwhelmingly benefit the wealthy. According to CBO, more than half of the benefits of major tax expenditures go to the top 20 percent of households and 17 percent of the benefits go just to the top 1 percent.¹²³

Claim: Tax cuts spur economic growth.¹²⁴

- Economic research has found no clear connection between tax rates and growth.¹²⁵
- In recent decades, the economy has grown faster when tax rates have been higher. For example, growth was much stronger during the Clinton years than when George W. Bush was president.
- Moreover, tax cuts increase deficits.¹²⁶ Lower tax revenue is a big reason why the national debt tripled under President Reagan and doubled under President George W. Bush.¹²⁷

REGULATIONS

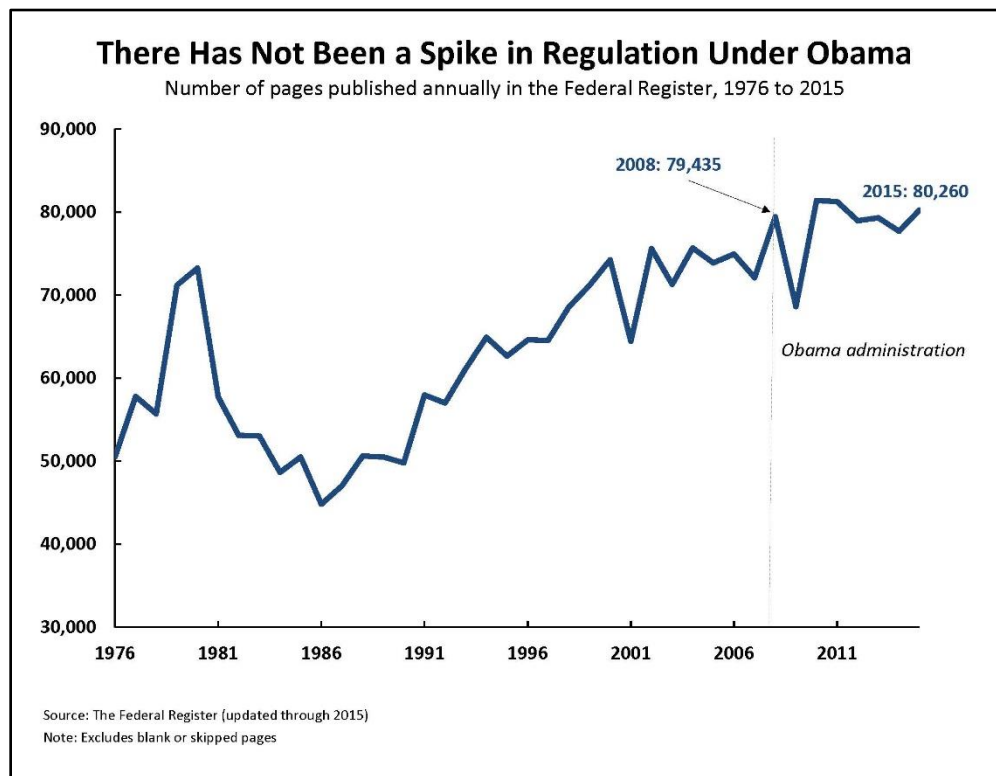
Some claim that regulatory growth under President Obama is restraining economic growth, often citing inflated and misleading figures that suggest that regulations cost each household thousands of dollars each year. However, regulations have both costs and benefits. While regulations may limit the type of products that can be sold or require businesses to adjust their processes, they are essential to protecting Americans' health and welfare, keeping our air and water safe, and preventing people from being ripped off or sold harmful consumer or financial products.

Claim: The American people spend nearly \$2 trillion annually to comply with regulations—approximately \$15,000 per household.¹²⁸

- This estimate is based on misleading math and the faulty assumption that regulations have no benefits. It has been debunked by the *Washington Post* Fact Checker.¹²⁹
- It is highly misleading to divide this questionable estimate of the total cost of regulation into the share each household supposedly spends. Even the organization that came up with the \$15,000 figure admits that households do not actually pay this money out of pocket.¹³⁰

Claim: President Obama set a record for the number of pages of regulations.¹³¹

- There is no meaningful difference in the number of pages of new regulations issued each year between President Obama and President Bush.
- The total number of pages in the *Federal Register* was about 80,300 last year, versus 79,400 in 2008, the last year under George W. Bush.¹³²



*Claim: President Obama has unleashed a regulatory onslaught and rules by decree.*¹³³

- President Obama has issued fewer regulations than President Bush had at the same point in his presidency.¹³⁴
- The total number of final rules issued exceeded 4,000 in each of the first four years of the Bush presidency—but it has never topped 4,000 in any year under President Obama.¹³⁵
- President Obama has signed fewer Executive Orders than any two-term president since Ulysses S. Grant.¹³⁶

*Claim: The Obama administration ignores the costs of regulations.*¹³⁷

- The Obama administration has expanded cost-benefit analysis of regulations and reviews of existing regulations.
- President Obama issued an Executive Order in 2011 that added new requirements for agencies to periodically review whether regulations should be modified, repealed or expanded to make them less burdensome and more effective.¹³⁸ The order reiterated that a regulation should only remain in effect if its benefits exceed its costs.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Alan S. Blinder and Mark Zandi, "[The Financial Crisis: Lessons for the Next One](#)," Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (October 15, 2015).
- ² Mitt Romney, for example, famously wrote: "Let Detroit Go Bankrupt." Mitt Romney, "[Let Detroit Go Bankrupt](#)," *The New York Times* (November 18, 2008).
- ³ Josh Bivens, "[Why is recovery taking so long—and who's to blame?](#)" Economic Policy Institute (August 11, 2016).
- ⁴ Macroeconomic Advisers, LLC, "[The Cost of Crisis-Driven Fiscal Policy](#)," Prepared for the Peterson G. Peterson Foundation (October 2013).
- ⁵ Congressional Budget Office, "[An Update to the Budget and Economic Outlook: 2016 to 2026](#)" (August 2016).
- ⁶ Ibid.
- ⁷ U.S. Congress Joint Economic Committee Democratic Staff, "[The Economy Under Democratic vs. Republican Presidents](#)" (June 2016).
- ⁸ Ibid.
- ⁹ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, "[OECD Economic Surveys: United States](#)," Overview (June 2016).
- ¹⁰ Senator Dan Sullivan, "[Economic Growth](#)," Floor Speech (June 21, 2016); Catherine Rampell, "[Don't listen to GOP leaders. The economy's not so bad](#)," *The Washington Post* (June 9, 2016).
- ¹¹ Representative Tom Marino, "[Congressional Record – House](#)," Floor Speech (January 7, 2016); Representative Mike Bishop, "[Congressional Record – House](#)," Floor Speech (January 6, 2016); Representative Jeb Hensarling, "[Congressional Record – House](#)," Floor Speech (July 22, 2015).
- ¹² Speaker Paul Ryan, "[A Better Way, Our Vision For a Confident America, The Economy](#)" (June 14, 2016); Sandy Fitzgerald, "[McConnell to Trump: Stop 'Outrageous' Remarks, Focus on Economy](#)," *Newsmax* (June 7, 2016); Jim Hoft, "[Obama First President Ever to Not See Single Year of 3% GDP Growth](#)," *Glennbeck.com* (April 28, 2016); Kevin Williamson, "[Year Eight of Obama's Recovery](#)," *National Review* (May 1, 2016).
- ¹³ Pedro Nicolaci Da Costa, "[Bernanke: 2008 Meltdown Was Worse Than Great Depression](#)," *The Wall Street Journal* (August 26, 2014).
- ¹⁴ Alexandra Wolfe, "[Alan Greenspan: What Went Wrong](#)," *The Wall Street Journal* (October 18, 2013).
- ¹⁵ U.S. Congress Joint Economic Committee Democratic Staff, "[The 2016 Joint Economic Report](#)," Response to the 2016 Economic Report of the President, 114th Congress, Minority Views (March 1, 2016).
- ¹⁶ Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, "[OECD Economic Surveys: United States](#)," Overview (June 2016).
- ¹⁷ Representative Andy Barr, "[Dodd-Frank and Other Financial Services Bills](#)," Floor Speech (March 4, 2015); Senator John Thune, "[The President's Budget](#)," Floor Speech (February 3, 2015).
- ¹⁸ Andrew Ross Sorkin, "[President Obama Weighs His Economic Legacy](#)," *The New York Times* (April 28, 2016).
- ¹⁹ Paul Krugman, "[Modern and Postmodern Recessions](#)," *The New York Times* (March 18, 2015); Paul Krugman, "[Lies, Damned Lies, and Reaganolatry](#)," *The New York Times* (December 27, 2014).
- ²⁰ Josh Bivens, "[Why is recovery taking so long—and who's to blame?](#)" Economic Policy Institute (August 11, 2016).
- ²¹ Republican Party Platforms, "[We Believe in America: 2012 Republican Platform](#)," Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Wooley, *The American Presidency Project* (August 27, 2012).
- ²² Alan S. Blinder and Mark W. Watson, "[Presidents and the US Economy: An Econometric Exploration](#)," *American Economic Review*, Vol. 106, No. 4 (April 2016).

-
- ²³ U.S. Congress Joint Economic Committee Democratic Staff, "[The Economy Under Democratic vs. Republican Presidents](#)" (June 2016).
- ²⁴ Ibid.
- ²⁵ Jeffrey Frankel, "[Are Democrats Really Better for America's Economy?](#)" *Project Syndicate* (June 22, 2016).
- ²⁶ Speaker Paul Ryan, "[A Better Way: Our Vision For a Confident America. The Economy](#)" (June 14, 2016).
- ²⁷ U.S. Congress Joint Economic Committee Democratic Staff, "[The Economy Under Democratic vs. Republican Presidents](#)" (June 2016).
- ²⁸ Dan Diamond, "[Obamacare, the secret jobs program](#)," *Politico* (July 13, 2016); Jon Greenberg, "[Ted Cruz's Pants on Fire claim that the health care law is nation's 'biggest job-killer'](#)," *PolitiFact* (January 29, 2016); Pat Garofalo, "[The 'Obamacare Is a Job Killer' Myth](#)," *U.S. News & World Report* (July 24, 2013).
- ²⁹ Bowen Garrett and Robert Kaestner, "[Claims That The ACA Would Be A Job Killer Are Not Substantiated By Research](#)," *Health Affairs Blog* (February 3, 2016); Jon Greenberg, "[Ted Cruz's Pants on Fire claim that the health care law is nation's 'biggest job-killer'](#)," *PolitiFact* (January 29, 2016); Lori Robertson, "[Obamacare Myths](#)," *FactCheck.org* (September 16, 2013); Lori Robertson, "[GOP's 'Job-Killing' Whopper, Again](#)," *FactCheck.org* (February 21, 2012).
- ³⁰ Congressional Budget Office, "[How CBO Estimates the Effects of the Affordable Care Act on the Labor Market: Working Paper 2015-09](#)" (December 7, 2015).
- ³¹ Anthony Cave, "[Donald Trump wrongly claims there are many more part-time jobs because of the health care law](#)," *PolitiFact* (June 22, 2016); Jon Greenberg, "[Ted Cruz's Pants on Fire claim that the health care law is nation's 'biggest job-killer'](#)," *PolitiFact* (January 29, 2016).
- ³² Bureau of Labor Statistics, "[Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey](#)," Employment Level – Part-Time for Economic Reasons, All Industries (extracted on December 2, 2016).
- ³³ Speaker Paul Ryan, "[Statement on the Passage of BRICK Act](#)" (March 3, 2016); John Hayward, "[Ted Cruz on Corruption, and the Democrat Devastation of Detroit](#)," *Breitbart.Com* (March 4, 2016).
- ³⁴ Jacob Goldstein, "[Manufacturing Jobs Aren't Coming Back, No Matter Who's President](#)," *NPR* (October 17, 2012); Noah Smith, "[Guess What's Destroying the Middle Class?](#)" *Bloomberg* (March 25, 2015).
- ³⁵ C. Eugene Emery Jr., "[Donald Trump Jr. says unemployment rates are manipulated for political purposes](#)," *PolitiFact* (July 25, 2016).
- ³⁶ C. Eugene Emery Jr., "[Donald Trump Jr. says unemployment rates are manipulated for political purposes](#)," *PolitiFact* (July 25, 2016); Robert Farley, "[What's the 'Real' Jobless Rate?](#)" *FactCheck.Org* (February 10, 2012); Josh Zumbrun, "[Trump Campaign Revives Debate: Is the Unemployment Rate 'Artificial'?](#)" *The Wall Street Journal* (July 26, 2016).
- ³⁷ C. Eugene Emery Jr., "[Donald Trump Jr. says unemployment rates are manipulated for political purposes](#)," *PolitiFact* (July 25, 2016).
- ³⁸ Senator Dan Sullivan, "[Economic Growth](#)," Floor Speech (June 21, 2016); Representative Marcia Blackburn, "[Economic, Retirement, and National Security](#)," Floor Speech (May 18, 2016); Jim Clifton, "[The Big Lie: 5.6% Unemployment](#)," *Gallup* (February 3, 2015); Josh Zumbrun, "[Trump Campaign Revives Debate: Is the Unemployment Rate 'Artificial'?](#)" *The Wall Street Journal* (July 26, 2016).
- ³⁹ Bureau of Labor Statistics, "[Alternative measures of labor underutilization](#)," Table A-15 (accessed December 2, 2016).
- ⁴⁰ Tommy Christopher, "[Fox's Ed Henry Asks Carney if Obama 'Takes Responsibility' For Long-Term Unemployment](#)," *Mediate* (January 7, 2014); Bill McMorris, "[Number of Long-Term Unemployed 'Unprecedented' Under Obama](#)," *The Washington Free Beacon* (August 21, 2013).
- ⁴¹ JEC Democratic staff based on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Average over the last business cycle (March 2001 to November 2007) of individuals unemployed for 27 weeks or more as a share of the civilian labor force.

-
- ⁴² Senator Dan Sullivan, "[Economic Growth](#)," Floor Speech (June 21, 2016); Sean Forman, "[David Brat: U.S. labor participation rate is lowest since '70s](#)," *PolitiFact* (June 13, 2016).
- ⁴³ Representative Tom Marino, "[Responsibly and Professionally Invigorating Development Act of 2015](#)," Floor Speech (September 25, 2015); Representative Bob Goodlatte, "[Congressional Record – House](#)," Floor Speech (September 24, 2015).
- ⁴⁴ Council of Economic Advisers, "[The Labor Force Participation Rate Since 2007: Causes and Policy Implications](#)," (July 2014).
- ⁴⁵ Representative Tom Marino, "[Responsibly and Professionally Invigorating Development Act of 2015](#)," Floor Speech (September 25, 2015); Angela Greiling Keane and Michelle Jamrisko, "[Parsing the Numbers in Rick Perry's '93 Million Not Working' Quote](#)," *Bloomberg Politics* (June 5, 2015); Representative Marlin Stutzman, "[America's Small Business Tax Relief Act](#)," Floor Speech (February 12, 2015); Senator Ted Cruz, "[Ted Cruz says 92 million Americans aren't working](#)," *PolitiFact* (February 10, 2015).
- ⁴⁶ Glenn Kessler and Michelle Ye Hee Lee, "[Fact-checking Donald Trump's acceptance speech at the 2016 RNC](#)," *The Washington Post* (July 22, 2016).
- ⁴⁷ Senator Ted Cruz, "[Ted Cruz says 92 million Americans aren't working](#)," *PolitiFact* (February 10, 2015).
- ⁴⁸ Ibid.
- ⁴⁹ JEC Democratic staff calculations based on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The sum of the number of people unemployed and the number of people not in the labor force who currently want a job. 12-month averages of not seasonally adjusted data.
- ⁵⁰ The share of the population that doesn't have a job but wants one has dipped below its average over George W. Bush's presidency. JEC Democratic staff calculations based on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The sum of the number of people unemployed and the number of people not in the labor force who currently want a job. 12-month averages of not seasonally adjusted data. Share refers to the share of the civilian noninstitutional population.
- ⁵¹ Warren Fiske, "[Trump misleadingly puts black youth unemployment rate at 59 percent](#)," *PolitiFact* (June 20, 2016).
- ⁵² Warren Fiske, "[Trump misleadingly puts black youth unemployment rate at 59 percent](#)," *PolitiFact* (June 20, 2016); Michelle Ye Hee Lee, "[Trump's misleading claim that 58 percent of black youths are unemployed](#)," *The Washington Post* (August 24, 2016); Mark Murray, "[Fact-Check: How Did Trump's Claims Hold Up?](#)" *NBC News* (July 22, 2016); D'Angelo Gore, Lori Robertson and Eugene Kiely, "[Groundhog Friday](#)," *FactCheck.org* (August 26, 2016).
- ⁵³ JEC Democratic staff calculations based on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.
- ⁵⁴ Lawrence Mishel, Elise Gould and Josh Bivens, "[Wage Stagnation in Nine Charts](#)," Economic Policy Institute (January 6, 2015).
- ⁵⁵ Glenn Kessler, "[Mitch McConnell earns Four Pinocchios for a very stale talking point on household income](#)," *The Washington Post* (June 1, 2016).
- ⁵⁶ U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement, "[Households by Total Money Income, Race, and Hispanic Origin of Householder: 1967 to 2015](#)," Table A-1 (September 2016).
- ⁵⁷ Jason Furman, Sandra Black and Matt Fiedler, "[Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance in the United States in 2015](#)," *White House Blog* (September 13, 2016).
- ⁵⁸ Glenn Kessler and Michelle Ye Hee Lee, "[Fact-checking Donald Trump's acceptance speech at the 2016 RNC](#)," *The Washington Post* (July 22, 2016).
- ⁵⁹ U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement, "[Households by Total Money Income, Race, and Hispanic Origin of Householder: 1967 to 2015](#)," Table A-1 (September 2016).
- ⁶⁰ Peter Schroeder, "[Speaker Ryan: Obama doesn't deserve credit for economy](#)," *The Hill* (January 12, 2016); Senator John Thune, "[The State of The Union](#)," Floor Speech (January 12, 2016); Representative Marlin Stutzman, "[America's Small Business Tax Relief Act](#)," Floor Speech (February 12, 2015); Representative Scott Garrett, "[Encouraging Employee Ownership Act of 2015](#)," Floor Speech (February 3, 2016).

-
- ⁶¹ JEC Democratic staff calculations based on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, “[Employment, Hours and Earnings from the Current Employment Statistics Survey \(National\)](#),” Total Private Average Hourly Earnings of All Employees (accessed December 2, 2016).
- ⁶² Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, “[Wage Growth Tracker](#)” (accessed December 2, 2016).
- ⁶³ Bureau of Labor Statistics, “[Real Earnings](#),” Table A-1. Current and real (constant 1982-1984 dollars) earnings for all employees on private nonfarm payrolls, seasonally adjusted (accessed December 2, 2016).
- ⁶⁴ Danielle Kurtzleben, “[Fact Check: Is It Obama’s Fault That Poverty Has Grown?](#)” *NPR* (August 17, 2015).
- ⁶⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, “[Income and Poverty in the United States: 2015](#),” P60-256 (September 2016).
- ⁶⁶ U.S. Census Bureau, “[Historical Poverty Tables: People and Families – 1959 to 2015](#),” Table 2. Poverty Status of People by Family Relationship, Race, and Hispanic Origin (2016).
- ⁶⁷ Speaker Paul Ryan, “[A Better Way: Poverty, Opportunity, and Upward Mobility](#)” (June 7, 2016).
- ⁶⁸ Council of Economic Advisers, “[The War on Poverty 50 Years Later: A Progress Report](#)” (January 2014); U.S. Census Bureau, “[The Supplemental Poverty Measure: 2015](#),” PG60-258 (September 2016).
- ⁶⁹ U.S. Census Bureau, “[Income, Poverty and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2015](#),” Release Number: CB16-158 (September 13, 2016).
- ⁷⁰ Danilo Trisi, “[Safety Net Cut Poverty Nearly in Half Last Year](#),” Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (September 14, 2016).
- ⁷¹ Representative Tom Price, “[A Balanced Budget For a Stronger America: Fiscal Year 2017 Budget Resolution](#),” U.S. House of Representatives Committee on the Budget (March 2016); Representative Ander Crenshaw, “[Financial Services and General Government Appropriations Act, 2017](#),” Floor Speech (July 6, 2016); Representative Lamar Smith, “[President Obama’s Policies Hurt the Economy](#),” Floor Speech (May 17, 2016).
- ⁷² Total government spending as a share of GDP averaged 20.7 percent from FY 2013 to FY 2016 versus 21.0 percent from FY 1986 to FY 1989. JEC Democratic staff calculations based on data from the Congressional Budget Office, “[Historical Budget Data](#)” (March 2016) (for FYs 1986 to 1989 and FY 2013) and Congressional Budget Office, “[Monthly Budget Review: Summary for Fiscal Year 2016](#)” (November 7, 2016) (for FYs 2014 to 2016).
- ⁷³ For historical data, see Congressional Budget Office, “[Historical Budget Data](#)” (March 2016); For future projections, see Congressional Budget Office, “[10-Year Budget Projections](#)” (August 2016).
- ⁷⁴ Representative Tom Price, “[A Balanced Budget For a Stronger America: Fiscal Year 2017 Budget Resolution](#),” U.S. House of Representatives Committee on the Budget (March 2016).
- ⁷⁵ Robert Greenstein, Joel Friedman and Isaac Shapiro, “[Program Spending Historically Low Outside Social Security and Medicare, Projected to Fall Further](#),” Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (February 24, 2016).
- ⁷⁶ Senator John Thune, “[South Dakotans Feeling the Effect of the Obama Economy](#),” Op-Ed (May 13, 2016); Senator Dean Heller, “[Federal Reserve Transparency Act](#),” Floor Speech (January 12, 2016); U.S. Congress Joint Economic Committee Republican Staff, “[Updated: Two Charts Depict Failure of Obama Recovery](#)” (November 2, 2012).
- ⁷⁷ Alan S. Blinder and Mark Zandi, “[The Financial Crisis: Lessons for the Next One](#),” Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (October 15, 2015).
- ⁷⁸ Alan S. Blinder, “[Fiscal Policy Reconsidered](#),” The Hamilton Project, Policy Proposal 2016-05 (May 2016).
- ⁷⁹ Representative Rob Woodall, “[Balancing the Budget](#),” Floor Speech (October 9, 2015); Representative John Culberson, “[Congressional Record – House](#),” Floor Speech (June 2, 2015).
- ⁸⁰ Social Security Administration, “[Status Of The Social Security and Medicare Programs](#),” A Summary of the 2016 Annual Reports, Social Security and Medicare Boards of Trustees (accessed September 23, 2016).
- ⁸¹ U.S. Congress Joint Economic Committee Democratic Staff, “[Social Security and Retirement Savings in the United States](#)” (August 2016).

-
- ⁸² Jared Bernstein, "[Testimony: The need for productivity enhancing public investments](#)," Testimony before the U.S. House Committee on the Budget (September 14, 2016).
- ⁸³ Juliette Cubanski and Tricia Neuman, "[The Facts on Medicare Spending and Financing](#)," Kaiser Family Foundation (July 20, 2016).
- ⁸⁴ JEC Democratic staff calculations based on data from the Congressional Budget Office, "[Historical Budget Data](#)" (March 2016) (for FYs 2009 to 2015) and Congressional Budget Office, "[Monthly Budget Review: Summary for Fiscal Year 2016](#)" (November 7, 2016) (for FY 2016).
- ⁸⁵ Senator John Thune, "[South Dakotans Feeling the Effect of the Obama Economy](#)," Op-Ed (May 13, 2016); Representative Tom McClintock, "[Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization and Outreach](#)," Floor Speech (June 3, 2015); Chriss W. Street, "[President Obama is 'Mr. \\$20 Trillion'](#)," *Breitbart* (November 2, 2015); Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, "[Has President Obama Doubled the National Debt?](#)" (July 25, 2016).
- ⁸⁶ Senator Rand Paul, "[Trade Act of 2015](#)," Floor Speech (October 30, 2015); Louis Jacobson, "[Jeb Bush says Barack Obama will add more debt than all 43 previous presidents combined](#)," *PolitiFact* (February 18, 2016).
- ⁸⁷ Congressional Budget Office, "[Changes in CBO's Baseline Projections Since January 2001](#)" (June 7, 2012).
- ⁸⁸ Linda J. Bilmes, "[The Financial Legacy of Iraq and Afghanistan: How Wartime Spending Decisions Will Constrain Future National Security Budgets](#)" (March 2013).
- ⁸⁹ JEC Democratic staff calculations based on data from the Office of Management and Budget, "[Federal Debt at the End of the Year: 1940–2021](#)," Table 7.1 (accessed September 23, 2016); calculated as the increase in the debt from the fiscal year the president took office to the fiscal year the president left office.
- ⁹⁰ Representative Mike Coffman, "[Our Unconscionable Debt](#)," Floor Speech (July 13, 2016); Senator Mike Enzi, "[Reforming the Budget Process](#)," Floor Speech (July 13, 2016); Senator Dan Sullivan, "[Economic Growth](#)," Floor Speech (June 23, 2016).
- ⁹¹ Senator Deb Fischer, "[Congressional Record – Senate](#)," Floor Speech (March 25, 2015); Representative Rick Allen, "[Congressional Record – House](#)," Floor Speech (October 23, 2015); Representative Marsha Blackburn, "[Congressional Record – House](#)," Floor Speech (March 25, 2015).
- ⁹² Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, "[How Much Would Clinton and Trump Increase Our \\$19 Trillion Gross Debt?](#)" (July 27, 2016).
- ⁹³ JEC Democratic staff calculations based on data from the Office of Management and Budget, "[Federal Debt at the End of the Year: 1940–2021](#)," Table 7.1 (accessed September 23, 2016).
- ⁹⁴ Jared Bernstein, "[Testimony: The need for productivity enhancing public investments](#)," Testimony before the U.S. House Committee on the Budget (September 14, 2016).
- ⁹⁵ Representative Paul Ryan, "[Budget](#)" (accessed September 23, 2016); Senator Orrin Hatch, "[Balanced Budget Amendment](#)," Floor Speech (February 11, 2016); Senator David Perdue, "[The Debt](#)," Floor Speech (January 28, 2016).
- ⁹⁶ Owen Davis, "[Time Magazine Is Wrong: You Shouldn't Ever Worry About Your Share Of The US National Debt](#)," *International Business Times* (April 4, 2016).
- ⁹⁷ Representative Keith Rothfus "[President Obama's FY 2017 Budget and Crushing Debt](#)," Floor Speech (February 10, 2016); Representative Doug Collins, "[Congressional Record – House](#)," Floor Speech (February 24, 2016); Senator Shelley Moore Capito, "[The Budget](#)," Floor Speech (March 24, 2015).
- ⁹⁸ Conor Dougherty, "[Coming Soon, Economists Hope: Big Spending on Roads, Bridges and Ports](#)," *The New York Times* (September 18, 2016); David Wessel, "[Spending on Our Crumbling Infrastructure](#)," *The Wall Street Journal* (March 10, 2015).
- ⁹⁹ Council of Economic Advisers, "[The Cost of Delaying Action to Stem Climate Change](#)" (July 2014).
- ¹⁰⁰ Representative Tom Price, "[The Congressional Record – House](#)," Floor Speech (February 11, 2016); Representative Virginia Foxx, "[Making a Difference for the American People](#)," Floor Speech (April 21, 2015); Joseph P. Williams, "[The Party of Red Ink](#)," *U.S. News & World Report* (May 29, 2015).

-
- ¹⁰¹ Office of Management and Budget, “[Summary of Receipts, Outlays, Surpluses or Deficits \(-\) as Percentages of GDP](#),” Table 1.2 (accessed September 23, 2016); In addition, recent research shows that Republicans typically run larger structural deficits than Democrats. See Alan S. Blinder and Mark W. Watson, “[Presidents and the US Economy: An Econometric Exploration](#),” *American Economic Review*, Vol. 106, No. 4 (April 2016).
- ¹⁰² Office of Management and Budget, “[Summary of Receipts, Outlays, Surpluses or Deficits \(-\) as Percentages of GDP](#),” Table 1.2 (accessed September 23, 2016).
- ¹⁰³ JEC Democratic staff calculations based on data from the Congressional Budget Office, “[Historical Budget Data](#)” (March 2016) (for FYs 2009 to 2015) and Congressional Budget Office, “[Monthly Budget Review: Summary for Fiscal Year 2016](#)” (November 7, 2016) (for FY 2016).
- ¹⁰⁴ David Stockman, “[Four Deformations of the Apocalypse](#),” *The New York Times* (July 31, 2010).
- ¹⁰⁵ The White House, “[Taxes](#)” (accessed September 23, 2016).
- ¹⁰⁶ Senator John Thune, “[South Dakotans Feeling the Effect of the Obama Economy](#),” Floor Speech (May 13, 2016); Senator John Thune, “[The Economy](#),” Floor Speech (May 11, 2016).
- ¹⁰⁷ Lauren Carroll, “[Jeb Bush: Obama caused 'massive' tax increase on middle class](#),” *PolitiFact* (June 23, 2016); Representative Pete Sessions, “[Congressional Record – House](#),” Floor Speech (October 28, 2015); Representative Louie Gohmert, “[Obamacare](#),” Floor Speech (March 23, 2015).
- ¹⁰⁸ Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center, “[Historical Federal Income Tax Rates for a Family of Four](#)” (2015).
- ¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*
- ¹¹⁰ Lauren Carroll, “[Jeb Bush: Obama caused 'massive' tax increase on middle class](#),” *PolitiFact* (June 23, 2016).
- ¹¹¹ The White House, “[Taxes](#)” (accessed September 23, 2016).
- ¹¹² Kyle Pomerleau, “[2016 Tax Brackets](#),” The Tax Foundation (October 14, 2015).
- ¹¹³ Internal Revenue Service, “[Data on the 400 Individual Income Tax Returns Reporting the Largest Adjusted Gross Incomes](#)” (accessed September 15, 2016).
- ¹¹⁴ Louis Jacobson and Linda Qiu, “[For the third time, Donald Trump, U.S. is not 'highest taxed nation in the world'](#),” *PolitiFact* (May 8, 2016).
- ¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*
- ¹¹⁶ Danielle Kurtzleben, “[Fact-Check: GOP Candidates On Taxes And Downgrades](#),” *NPR* (February 7, 2016).
- ¹¹⁷ Senator Rob Portman, “[Tax Code Reform](#),” Floor Speech (November 3, 2015); Senator Orrin Hatch, “[Corporate Inversions](#),” Floor Speech (April 21, 2016); Representative Ted Poe, “[Congressional Record - House](#),” Floor Speech (January 7, 2016).
- ¹¹⁸ Louis Jacobson and Linda Qiu, “[For the third time, Donald Trump, U.S. is not 'highest taxed nation in the world'](#),” *PolitiFact* (May 8, 2016).
- ¹¹⁹ U.S. Government Accountability Office, “[Corporate Income Tax: Most Large Profitable U.S. Corporations Paid Tax but Effective Tax Rates Differed Significantly from the Statutory Rate](#),” GAO016-363 (March 17, 2016).
- ¹²⁰ Citizens for Tax Justice, “[The Sorry State of Corporate Taxes: What Fortune 500 Firms Pay \(or Don't Pay\) in the USA And What they Pay Abroad – 2008 to 2012](#),” (February 2014).
- ¹²¹ Representative Tom Reed, “[Congressional Record – House](#),” (September 30, 2015); Andrew Lundeen and Scott A. Hodge, “[The Income Tax Code Spans More than 70,000 Pages](#),” The Tax Foundation (October 23, 2013); Howard Gleckman, “[Could We Get the Tax Code Down to Three Pages? Why Would We Want To?](#)” Tax Policy Center (November 12, 2015).
- ¹²² Eugene Emery Jr., “[U.S. Senate candidate Barry Hinckley says the nation's tax code is 80,000 pages](#),” *PolitiFact* (December 27, 2011).
- ¹²³ Congressional Budget Office, “[The Distribution of Major Tax Expenditures in the Individual Income Tax System](#),” (May 2013).

¹²⁴ Danielle Kurtzleben, "[FACT CHECK: Do Tax Cuts Grow The Economy?](#)" *NPR* (October 30, 2015); Arthur Laffer and Stephen Moore, "[Which Republican candidates can make the flat tax work and help the economy?](#)" *Fox News Opinion* (February 8, 2016); Representative Tom Price, "[Pro Growth Tax Reform](#)" (accessed September 23, 2016); Michael Leachman, "[Kansas' Economic Growth Continues to Lag, Despite Tax Cuts](#)," Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (November 30, 2015).

¹²⁵ Jared Bernstein, "[Meeting the Goals of the Federal Tax System](#)," Testimony before the U.S. Congress Joint Economic Committee (April 20, 2016); William Gale and Andrew Samwick, "[Effects of Income Tax Changes on Economic Growth](#)," Economic Studies at Brookings (September 2014).

¹²⁶ Rebecca Shabad, "[Budget director: 'Tax cuts do not pay for themselves'](#)," *The Hill* (August 25, 2015).

¹²⁷ JEC Democratic staff calculations based on data from the Office of Management and Budget, "[Federal Debt at the End of the Year: 1940–2021](#)," Table 7.1 (accessed September 23, 2016); calculated as the increase in the debt from the fiscal year the president took office to the fiscal year the president left office.

¹²⁸ Speaker Paul Ryan, "[A Better Way, Our Vision For a Confident America, The Economy](#)," (June 14, 2016); Senator Orrin Hatch, "[Hatch Hails House Passage of SCRUB Act, Urges Senate to Act](#)," Press Release (January 15, 2016); Senator Dan Sullivan, "[Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions](#)," Floor Speech (August 5, 2015).

¹²⁹ Glenn Kessler, "[The claim that American households have a \\$15,000 regulatory 'burden'](#)," *The Washington Post* (January 14, 2015).

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ Alex Swoyer, "[2015 Sets Regulation Record: Federal Register Hits All Time High 81,611 Pages](#)," *Breitbart.Com* (December 30, 2015); Representative Cresent Hardy, "[Regulatory Gridlock](#)," Floor Speech (January 8, 2016); Sean Gorman, "[Dave Brat says Obama has issued 468,500 pages of regulations](#)," *PolitiFact* (March 30, 2015).

¹³² Note: excludes blank and skipped pages. See Federal Register, "[Federal Register Pages Published](#)" (accessed September 23, 2016).

¹³³ Senator Ted Cruz, "[Obama Is Not a Monarch](#)," *Politico* (November 19, 2014); Senator Rand Paul, "[Congressional Record – Senate](#)," Floor Speech (June 7, 2016); Representative Blaine Luetkemeyer, "[Congressional Record – House](#)," Floor Speech (January 7, 2016).

¹³⁴ JEC Democratic staff calculations based on data from the Federal Register, "[Federal Register Documents, Annual Percentage Change, 1976-2015](#)," (accessed September 23, 2016); calculated as the sum of rules issued from 2001 to 2007 compared to rules issued from 2009 to 2015; see also President Barack Obama, "[Remarks by the President on the Economy](#)" (June 1, 2016).

¹³⁵ Federal Register, "[Federal Register Documents, Annual Percentage Change, 1976-2015](#)," (accessed September 23, 2016).

¹³⁶ John Wooley and Gerhard Peters, "[Executive Orders: Washington - Obama](#)," UCSB - The American Presidency Project (accessed September 23, 2016); President Barack Obama, "[Remarks by the President on the Economy](#)" (June 1, 2016).

¹³⁷ Michael Grunwald, "[GOP Delegates Say the Economy Is Terrible – Except Where They Live](#)," *Politico* (July 19, 2016); Senator Dan Sullivan, "[Overregulation of the American Economy](#)," Floor Speech (January 28, 2016).

¹³⁸ The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, "[Executive Order 13563 -- Improving Regulation and Regulatory Review](#)" (January 18, 2011).