

CONTRIBUTION

## How Would Candidate Obama Measure Up To President Obama?

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Last week's [Quinnipiac poll](#) is the worst news yet for President Barack Obama, who looks more like a lame duck with each passing day.

Forty-five percent of Americans now believe the country would have been better off with Mitt Romney as president than with Obama. More telling, 33 percent of Americans rate Obama as the worst president since 1945. To put that in perspective, President Richard Nixon received only 13 percent of this dubious vote. Jimmy Carter received only 8 percent.

It is tempting to attribute these numbers to the long chain of scandals that plague the Obama Administration: The misuse of the IRS, the Fast and the Furious fiasco, Benghazi, an attorney general who places himself above the law, the ongoing Department of Veterans Affairs scandal, and an National Security Administration wholly unfamiliar with the Fourth Amendment dominate the news cycle on a daily basis.

But all of this obscures an even deeper problem for President Obama. He has failed *by his own standards* in almost every meaningful respect. In 2008, candidate Obama made all sorts of promises, and now, almost six later, the jury is in. And it isn't pretty.

You might recall candidate Obama pledging to reduce health insurance premiums by as much as [\\$2,500](#) per family.

Well, guess what? The [average annual cost](#) of employer-sponsored family health insurance was \$12,680 in 2008, and rose to [over \\$16,000](#) by 2014. That means that the average family is \$5,500 per year worse off than what candidate Obama promised. While the Affordable Care Act is just now being fully implemented, [studies](#) indicate that most Americans can expect to pay even higher premiums in the future.

2008 Promise: Annual health insurance premiums will fall \$2,500.

2014 Reality: Annual health insurance premiums rose by \$3,300.

You might also recall candidate Obama saying that, “[if you make under \\$250,000](#), you will not see your taxes increase by a single dime – not your income taxes, not your payroll taxes, not your capital gains taxes. Nothing.”

Well, guess what? In 2007, middle-income Americans [paid](#) an average effective tax rate of 14 percent for all federal taxes combined. The lower middle class paid 10.3 percent, and poor Americans paid 5.1 percent. Upper middle class Americans paid 17.5 percent. By 2010, each of these numbers [fell](#). But on Jan. 1, 2013, they all rose again by 2 percentage points due to the expiration of the payroll tax cut. Of course, accountants and politicians will argue that an expiring tax cut is not the same as a tax increase.

They can call it whatever they want. The fact is that your tax bill rose by 2 percentage points. The net result is that households earning \$100,000 or more – less than half the \$250,000 limit the president promised – saw their total tax bill rise.

2008 Promise: Households earning under \$250,000 will not pay a single dime more in taxes.

2014 Reality: Households earning over \$100,000 are paying more taxes.

Candidate Obama also [pledged](#) to cut poverty in half within 10 years. This was a brave pledge, considering that he could only be president for eight years, but politicians love promising things beyond their own shelf life. Be that as it may, it is pretty easy to see the trend since Obama took office.

The U.S. poverty rate is [15 percent today](#) versus 13 percent in 2008. Instead of being well on our way to having 20 million fewer poor people, we have seven million more. It’s even worse than it sounds. In 2008, 28 million people were receiving food stamps. By 2013, that number had risen more than 70 percent to almost [48 million](#).

2008 Promise: 20 million fewer Americans will be living in poverty.

2014 Reality: 7 million more Americans are living in poverty.

Candidate Obama also had a lot to say about jobs. He pledged to save [one million](#) jobs in infrastructure, create [two million](#) jobs rebuilding roads, bridges, and schools, and create [five million](#) new green jobs over the next decade. There are [2.3 million more jobs](#) today than there were at the end of 2008, but this doesn’t account for the influx of new job seekers due to population growth. Counting the workers who have been unemployed for so long that they’ve given up looking for work, we need an additional 5.1 million jobs just to get back to the same employment level we had in 2008.

2008 Promise: There will be at least 8 million fewer unemployed Americans.

2014 Reality: There are more than 5 million more unemployed Americans.

Finally, candidate Obama told us that “...[in the year 2008](#), 45 million Americans still don’t have any health insurance at all... My health insurance plan will cover all Americans.” How is that working out? According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, the number of non-elderly uninsured Americans (all elderly Americans are covered by Medicare) was [44.2 million](#) (16.6 percent of the [non-elderly population](#)) in 2008. Today it is [47.6 million](#) (17.5 percent of the [non-elderly population](#)). Obamacare has actually made the problem worse. Imagine that.

2008 Promise: No American will be uninsured.

2014 Reality: Almost 48 million Americans are uninsured.

Candidate Obama campaigned to lead a nation that was reeling from the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression. Had he done absolutely nothing as president, the economy would have improved. After all, it had nowhere to go but up. Yet President Obama somehow managed to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory and make things worse.

Now, everywhere one looks, one sees only broken promises and failure. The president's best response, as from the first days of his administration, is to point fingers at others: first President George W. Bush, then the Tea Party, now Republicans. Never has this president taken responsibility for his own failures. This is why the Quinnipiac poll has him rated as the worst president since World War II. And like Obama's presidency, these poll numbers will only get worse with time.

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