

## President Obama's Slip

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The Iowa Republican presidential candidate debate was very well done. Fox News people had good questions, Republican presidential candidates had good answers, and there was very little of the candidate nastiness that we had seen in earlier debates. The most successful candidates seemed to be Newt Gingrich and Mitt Romney. Rick Santorum was nearly as good, and Rick Perry did better than he had been in the past.

What should be encouraging all of the Republican candidates is the lead a generic Republican has over President Barack Obama in the latest polls. The National Journal's December 15th Ron Brownstein piece—"Where Obama Has Slipped"—has even more encouraging news for the Republican candidates:

"Obama's approval rating is now 12 percentage points lower than his 2008 share of the vote among young adults (age 18-29); 11 points lower among African Americans; and 10 points among college-educated white women... Compared to his 2008 showing, he's tumbled 14 percentage points among independents, another group that provided him a narrow majority of its votes last time. [Among] upper middle-income families earning between \$75,000 and \$100,000 annually.... he's dropped from 51 percent of the vote with them to 44 percent approval."

The cause of the sinking numbers across so many demographic groups is, of course, the policies this administration has pushed for the last three years and the very negative impact they have had on our nation's economy. People are rightly scared by the programs Obama has put in place and worried that things will get even worse if these policies continue.

A significantly more expensive federal government is just the beginning. During a period when the private sector was shedding jobs, the federal payroll (exclusive of the military) has increased to 2.84 million in 2010 from 2.70 million in 2007. Federal spending has grown to 24% of GDP from 21% in 2008, adding \$4 trillion to our national debt in just three years.

Even in the middle of economic weakness, the President and his Democratic Senate majority pushed to raise taxes on individuals, families, businesses, and investors. According to James

Gattuso and Diane Katz of the Heritage Foundation, major regulations issued in just the first 26 months of the Obama administration will saddle our economy with almost \$40 billion per year in new costs. No doubt there will be much more to come as ObamaCare, Dodd-Frank and other regulations are fully rolled out and the activist Environmental Protection Agency expands its regulatory reach. In short, Team Obama has pushed our nation leftward, to a more statist European model of government, and we are seeing the consequences of it.

In contrast to the European policies that the current administration is pursuing are the ideas supported by most of the Republican candidates in the presidential race:

- Less government spending
- Lower taxes on businesses and individuals
- Repeal of ObamaCare and Medicare reform
- Opening up energy production to the vast U.S. resources
- Free-er trade
- And finally, getting the government out of the business of picking winners and losers

President Obama's falling numbers show that the American people are smart. They can tell when they see policies that do not make sense, and they can see the negative impact of those policies on jobs, standard of living, health care and personal freedom.

So the crucial question is whether one of the Republican presidential candidates can make the case to the American people that they can do better. We shall soon see.