

# State of the Union, Why Don't They Ask?

✘ The President laid out his agenda in the State of the Union Address, and it was filled with initiatives and statements similar to what he has said before. It gives the media the opportunity to ask questions that they have neglected in the past. Statements that were presented as facts also need clarification. Up until now, the President and the White House press secretary have escaped answering important questions. We should continue to wonder why the following clarifications and challenging questions are not asked.

Mr. President: In your speech you spoke about universal preschool. Almost every study concludes that there can be temporary effects, but by the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade there is no lasting impact of preschool. In these challenging budgetary times, why are you pushing for increasing a program that has shown such a universally agreed lack of results?

Mr. President: With your interest in raising the minimum wage, can you show any time this policy has led to more employment? Didn't unemployment increase when you and a Democratic Congress raised the minimum wage in 2009?

Mr. President: You said that you have cut two and half trillion dollars of the \$4 trillion that economists say is needed to show a sustainable path. If it is assumed that part of your \$2.5 trillion claim is the \$1.2 trillion sequester, then why are you advocating delaying and reducing these cuts, before they're even implemented, while counting them toward this goal? The figure of \$4 trillion was put out more than three years ago. With your delay in dealing with this problem, many groups have changed it to \$6 trillion to make up for the time squandered. Are you aware of this? Is there going to ever be a year in our government's future where we

will spend less than the year before?

Mr. President: You have said that you are waiting for Congress to act on climate change, and if they don't, you will. If climate change is truly as devastating to our future as you have expressed, and you have this power that you stated in the speech, then why won't you act now?

Mr. President: You said that none of your proposals will add one dime to the deficit. Certainly, most of these proposals cost money. Can you tell us what you are proposing to cut or what taxes are you proposing to increase in order to pay for each of these new initiatives?

Mr. President: You continue to reference the Cayman Islands and people having bank accounts offshore as a loophole in the tax code. Can you tell us the loophole in the tax code that you're referring to, and your proposal to eliminate it? Could you be misstating the fact that other countries have lower taxes, and it is wise for a company to locate their headquarters outside the United States for that reason?

Mr. President: You had a very emotional appeal on gun control in your speech. Gun control has not proven to be effective in reducing gun violence anywhere that it has been tried. What is your reason for supporting the proposed gun-control legislation?

Mr. President: You implied in your speech, and have stated in the past, that the Washington "dysfunction" and arguing over policy are causing the economy to underperform. A time period that you often refer to in terms of economic success is the 1990's. During that time, Newt Gingrich was Speaker of the House, and the Republicans controlled the Senate as well. Their disagreements with President Clinton led to two government shutdowns. This shows how the "dysfunction" in Washington was much worse at that time than it is now. Shouldn't we look at your policies and actions to explain the

lack of economic performance rather than the fact that there are continuing arguments in Washington?

Perhaps some adventurous reporter will now have the opportunity to ask for clarification on these issues...but probably not.