

PRESIDENT OBAMA URGES ACTION FOR JOBS CREATION



President Barack Obama is urging the government to pass his \$447 billion jobs package despite there being multiple signs pointing towards it being defeated in Congress. Obama is also pushing for more modest administrative remedies to the country's economy and high unemployment rates that continue to rise. Obama was in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania on Tuesday, personally campaigning for the passage of his legislation despite the Senate more than likely voting against the package. Pennsylvania is a state that will prove to be huge in Obama's re-election to the White House in 2012. The Senate was scheduled to vote on Tuesday to determine whether or not to proceed with the legislation, which would require a 60-vote supermajority that many view is out of reach. Obama met up with his presidential jobs council of corporate and labor leaders in the city to demonstrate to those in attendance that he and his staff are working to create jobs despite the tough economy. While in Pittsburgh, Obama and his staff was also planning to outline a plan to speed-up environmental and other regulatory approvals for 14 public works projects being planned across the country. Once his visit to Pittsburgh was complete, Obama was traveling to Florida to meet with unemployed construction workers in Orlando while attending two political fundraisers. The Obama Council on Jobs and Competitiveness has created a 50-page report that outlines overhauls that will please Democrats and irritate Republicans alike. Some of the overhauls include liberalized immigration, greater spending on infrastructure, less restrictive regulations and a more business-friendly tax system. The list is led by pleas for improvement to the country's ports, airports, bridges, roads, electric grids and water and wastewater systems. The report states, "If Washington can agree on anything, it should be this — and it should be now." The Jobs Council has 27 members and is headed by General Electric Chairman and CEO Jeffrey Immelt. The council also includes AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka, AOL co-founder Steve Case, and Facebook chief operating officer Sheryl Sandberg. The jobs bill created by Obama urges spending \$30 billion on the modernization of schools and spending \$50 billion on road and bridge projects across the country. On Monday, the Obama Administration announced that 14 public works projects will receive accelerated environmental and permit reviews in order for the projects to be under federal review within 18 months after completion. Two of those projects include replacing the Tappan Zee Bridge over the Hudson River in New York and a wind generation project the San Bernardino National Forest in California. Other public works projects include the following:

- Highway connector in Provo, Utah
- A 14-mile rail transit line in and around Baltimore
- An Interstate 95 bridge over the Merrimack River in Massachusetts
- A light rail project extension near Los Angeles International Airport
- A series of oil and gas wells and pipelines in the Dakota Prairie and Little Missouri National Grasslands in North and South Dakota.

"We are sympathetic to the political sensitivities around the topic of immigration reform," the council report states. "But when it comes to driving job creation and increasing American competitiveness, separating the highly skilled worker component is critical. We therefore call upon Congress to pass reforms aimed directly at allowing the most promising foreign-born entrepreneurs to remain in or relocate to the United States."