

DEMANDS OF ELECTORAL POLITICS FORCE MITT ROMNEY TO SEE EYE-TO-EYE WITH OBAMA ON STUDENT LOANS



Bowing to the demands of electoral politics and fear of alienating the youth, Mitt Romney made a complete turnaround from his earlier posture regarding student loans and said on Monday that he supported President's Obama's proposal to extend the existing interest rate levels on federal student loans. He said, "Particularly with the number of college graduates that can't find work and can only find work well beneath their skill level, I fully support the effort to extend the low interest rate on student loans. There was some concern that that would expire halfway through the year and I support extending the temporary relief on interest rates on students as a result of student loans obviously, in part because of the extraordinarily poor conditions in the job market." This sudden change of heart, contradicts his earlier position, when only a month ago he had told Ohio voters that the government had no business to be in education loans and went on to say, "It would be popular for me to stand up and say, 'I'm going to give you government money to pay for your college,' but I'm not going to promise that and don't expect the government to forgive the debt that you take on." Romney sudden turnaround is also being seen as an attempt to weaken the impact, of Obama's appearances at three universities, of North Carolina, Colorado and the University of Iowa, on Tuesday and Wednesday, during which he is expected to talk to students directly about his proposal to keep the rate at 3.4 percent and how the Republicans were opposing it, because Romney was more interested in giving tax-benefits to the rich. President Obama had won these three states narrowly in the last elections. Romney alienating of the youth could ensure the youth propelling Obama to the presidency yet again. Romney's support will dilute Obama's effort and at best he can say, that it was an afterthought and that the Republican's were pushed into supporting it by him. Obama had made a determined push to induce lawmakers into extending the current 3.4 percent interest rate on federal student loans. If new legislation does not come into force, the rate will double to 6.8 percent on July 1, as the current rates are set to expire in June. The Obama campaign dismissed Romney's support as election rhetoric and said that his support for Representative Paul Ryan's budget plan is the real indicator where the interest rates are headed. It argued that the Ryan plan would effectively double the interest on student loans. However, Romney support for the plan has now put the ball in the Obama court and they have to resolve the matter before the deadline expires. Romney followed his support for keeping the subsidized rates, by telling the youth that he was their best bet. "I think young voters in this country have to vote for me if they're really thinking of what's in the best interest of the country and what's in their personal best interest," Romney said. Ironically, neither of the candidates have stated where the estimated \$6 billion annual cost, that will come in the wake of keeping the loan rates at 3.4 percent, will come from. With both leaders supporting the issue, the pressure has increased on the house members to find ways and measures to offset these losses.