



Immigration Updates



Negative



1nc UQ

Will pass – cooperation key to resolve remaining hurdles

Roarty 2/21 (Alex, politics writer for National Journal,

<http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2013/02/theres-reason-to-be-optimistic-about-congress-seriously/273393/>

What eventually passes and what doesn't will come down to the individual pieces of legislation. Observers believe that **immigration reform, already being crafted by a bipartisan group** of eight senators in the upper chamber, **has the greatest chance for passage**, because of the high stakes involved for the GOP. **But many caution that success will still hinge on the yet-to-be determined details.** Murkier still are the chances of passing gun-violence measures -- particularly banning assault rifles or high-capacity magazines, and strengthening background checks -- not to mention a grand bargain on deficit reduction.¶ What, exactly, would qualify as successful bipartisanship this year? Certainly, **passing comprehensive measures on immigration, guns, and deficit reduction will need** a shocking, even historic level of **cooperation among the bickering parties.** But perhaps **congressional approval of even one of those issues**, while turning down the volume of usual partisan rancor, **might qualify as a success**, at least relative to recent sessions. Especially if lower-profile but still important items, such as the farm bill, can pass quietly into law without much wrangling between the parties. That might be all anyone can reasonably hope for on Capitol Hill.¶ It won't be Clinton and Gingrich redux, but even a faint echo of that period would stand out these days. **"I'm not looking for heaven on earth,"** Glickman said. **"But I am more optimistic."**



2nc UQ wall

CIR on track to quick passage but Obama's PC key to sustain consensus

Milani 2/8 (Kate, "Muñoz Interview: White House Expects Broad Immigration Bill", <http://blogs.wsj.com/washwire/2013/02/08/white-house-expects-broad-immigration-bill/>)

The White House point woman on immigration, Cecilia Muñoz, predicted a comprehensive overhaul would pass this year, and said she expects the Senate to move quickly on legislation now in the works. The director of the White House's Domestic Policy Council, speaking to David Wessel on WSJ.com's weekly Seib & Wessel video show, said this year is different than past, unsuccessful attempts because a broad swath of constituencies back reform and there is already consensus between the White House and Congress over major policy points. The president would like the Senate to move forward with an immigration bill in the next four weeks to six weeks, she said. "The country understands that the system is broken and it needs to be fixed... And frankly the Latino community sent a pretty strong message in the election that I think Republicans are responding to," Ms. Muñoz said. President Barack Obama has released his own set of principles for legislation, and applauded a bipartisan Senate proposal. Both call for new border-security measures, a tougher employer-verification system and a path to citizenship for the 11 million people now in the country illegally. But the White House rejected a Senate proposal to require that border security measures be in place before people can qualify for citizenship. There are some more minor differences between the White House and Senate, too. For instance, Mr. Obama's principles for immigration would allow gay and lesbian Americans to sponsor their same-sex partners for visas, which many Republicans oppose and the Senate framework doesn't include. Since the 2012 election, many Republicans have shown new interest in immigration legislation, though some stop short of endorsing citizenship for all illegal immigrants here now. On Tuesday, House Majority Leader Eric Cantor (R., Va.) came out for the principles behind the Dream Act, which would give a path to citizenship to people brought to the U.S. illegally as children. A short time ago, the White House would have welcomed such high-level GOP support for the Dream Act, but with a broader bill in sight, Ms. Muñoz said it would not be enough today. "We need a comprehensive bill. The Dream Act by itself doesn't fix what's broken in our immigration system," she said. In any case, Ms. Muñoz said the biggest obstacle to overhauling immigration law is not policy-related. "By and large there's a consensus on what the big pieces are of immigration reform," said Ms. Muñoz. "The biggest obstacle is political will and just making sure we get over the finish line."

Will pass but sustained bipartisanship is key

Olugbemiga 2/19 – graduate student in George Washington University's Graduate School of Political Management (Ayobami, "Mr. President, your silence on immigration reform will be golden", <http://communities.washingtontimes.com/neighborhood/elections-fastbreak/2013/feb/19/mr-president-your-silence-immigration-reform-will-/>)

WASHINGTON, D.C., February 19, 2013 — Sometimes the political environment requires a president to act and act quickly, perhaps even unilaterally. There are other times when the moment calls for the president to use his bully pulpit to lead and call on Congress to act.

However, in some unique circumstances when Congress is already trying to act, a president should practice silence. With that in mind, President Obama should take a backseat to the "Gang of 8" on immigration reform. The Gang of 8 is a group of eight senators who came together to provide a bipartisan solution for immigration reform. The four Democrats are: Senators Dick Durbin (D-IL), Robert Menendez (R-NJ), Chuck Schumer (R-NY), and Michael Bennet (R-CO). The four Republicans are: Senators Marco Rubio (R-FL), Jeff Flake (R-AZ), John McCain (R-AZ), and Lindsey Graham (R-SC). In a rare moment of bipartisanship in Congress, these eight senators unveiled their framework for immigration reform at a press conference in January. Their plan calls for expanding visas for high-tech workers, creating an employment verification system that will prevent the hiring of undocumented workers, tightening security along the Mexican border, and providing a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants. Their press conference on Capitol Hill came a day before President Obama's



immigration speech.¶ Their strategy to deliberately preempt the president is noteworthy because the indirect message was: Get out of the way Mr. President, we will lead on this issue.¶ Senators are men and women of pride like everyone else. They want to prove to the American public that they are competent. They do not like that their institution has only a 14 percent approval rating. Many of them are tired of watching President Obama scold them. “You know, Malia and Sasha generally finish their homework a day ahead of time. They don’t wait until the night before. They’re not pulling all-nighters. They’re 13 and 10. You know, Congress can do the same thing...” President Obama said at a press conference on the debt ceiling in 2011.¶ Members of Congress generally do not like to see their president condescendingly suggest that his 10 and 13 year old daughters have more discipline than they do. So whenever they can, they will try to advance an agenda before he does, which is what the Gang of 8 is doing on immigration reform.¶ Meanwhile, instead of focusing on constructive ways to help them reach a solution, the Obama administration was busy preparing an alternative immigration reform proposal, as if the White House proposal will magically become law if the Gang of 8 fails.¶ The backup proposal was leaked and obtained by USA Today.¶ President Obama’s Chief of staff Denis McDonough defended the plan: “We’ll be prepared in the event that the bipartisan talks going on the Hill – which by the way we’re aggressively supporting – if those do not work out, then we’ll have an option we’re ready to put out there,” McDonough said Sunday on NBC’s “Meet The Press.”¶ Having a backup plan is always wise, but President Obama’s attempt to re-insert himself into the immigration reform debate seems self-serving. He wants sole ownership of the immigration issue. He needs it for his legacy. He would like to dominate the conversation with his big speeches and TV appearances so he can take full credit when the job is done, and remind the public that he is still in charge – the big boss calling the shots and running the show. It is a positioning strategy, and presidents often need to position themselves as leaders.¶ But at this critical juncture, **the best form of leadership Obama can offer** the Gang of 8 **is** silence. He can **work the phones and offer to help but he should not be patronizing or overbearing. Doing so will intensify partisanship and make deal-making more difficult.**¶ If members of Congress had not taken the initiative to reform the immigration system, then it would have been incumbent on the president to lead. But **the Senate is already moving on the issue. The Gang of 8 is already making progress. Their blueprint is not much different from what President Obama is talking about. They are slowly building trust, and the prospect of a bipartisan package looks promising.**¶ If President Obama wants to take full credit for immigration reform, he can do so after the signing ceremony. But what the Gang of 8 need from him right now is his silent encouragement.¶ So, please, Mr. President, get out of the way and let the “Gang of 8” finish the job.

Will pass – momentum and bipartisanship emerging

CSM 2/12 <http://www.csmonitor.com/Commentary/Opinion/2013/0212/Immigration-reform-Congress-Obama-and-public-are-not-so-far-apart>

In spite of some disagreement among lawmakers on the best path forward, **momentum for US immigration reform continues to grow** – **and is moving in one clear direction.** A bipartisan group of senators unveiled a framework for reform a few weeks ago, and shortly thereafter President **Obama announced his own policy push on immigration**, which he is expected to touch upon again in his State of the Union address Tuesday. In the House, a range of ideas are being floated, but **a bipartisan bill is expected to emerge soon.**¶ Both the Senate and White House proposals are remarkable for what they share, particularly with respect to providing a pathway to citizenship for the 11 million undocumented immigrants in this country. And despite some important differences, they are even more remarkable for establishing a united front on what kinds of solutions are seen as reasonable and politically viable in the coming debate over immigration reform.¶ In short, the two plans, particularly the Senate proposal, show how **policymakers aren’t as far apart on policy as politics might have us believe. And they chart a way to bring lawmakers together** – particularly on the pivotal issue of citizenship.

Obama’s push ensures passage but maintaining bipartisan consensus is key

Economic Times 1/28 (“US lawmakers optimistic about immigration reform”, <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/nri/visa-and-immigration/us-lawmakers-optimistic-about-immigration-reform/articleshow/18212224.cms>)

WASHINGTON: **Leading Democratic and Republican senators said** on Sunday **there were encouraging signs in the push to overhaul US immigration laws - a top priority for President Obama’s second term** - and they would introduce their plan this week.¶ **With Obama set to begin his push for immigration reform with a speech in Las Vegas on Tuesday, a group of** three Democratic and three Republican **senators have been working for weeks on a plan.**¶ One of those senators, Republican John McCain of the border state of Arizona, said on ABC’s “This Week” program that the group still had hard work ahead but that he was pleased with the progress and that the principles of a comprehensive plan would be put forth this week.¶ McCain said the plan was much like a 2007 immigration proposal that died during the presidency of George W. Bush. That plan included a path to citizenship for



undocumented immigrants, tighter borders, a guest worker program and requirements for employers to verify workers' immigration status.¶ The immigration issue was largely pushed aside during Obama's first term as economic concerns weighed more heavily, but the president, who had overwhelming backing from Hispanic voters in his 2012 re-election, cited it as part of his agenda when sworn in for a second term last week.¶ McCain said **the political aspect of immigration reform should sway any Republicans** who object to a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants.¶ "We are losing dramatically the Hispanic vote, which we think should be ours, for a variety of reasons, and we've got to understand that," he said.¶ McCain said change also was needed because "we can't go on forever with 11 million people living in this country in the shadows in an illegal status. We cannot forever have children who were born here, who were brought here by their parents when they were small children, to live in the shadows, as well."¶ Democrat Dick Durbin of Illinois, another member of the six-person Senate group, said on "Fox News Sunday" that work remained to be done but that the progress was encouraging.¶ "We are trying work our way through some very difficult issues but we are committed to a comprehensive approach to finally in this country having an immigration law that we can live with," he said. "We have virtually been going for maybe 25 years without a clear statement about immigration policy. That's unacceptable in this nation of immigrants."¶ Senator Robert **Menendez**, a Democrat from New Jersey who is also a member of the immigration group, said on "This Week" that he **was cautiously optimistic because of the bipartisan spirit that has prevailed in the recent reform effort.**¶ "I see things that were once off the table for agreement and discussion being on the table with a serious pathway forward," he said.¶ Senator Bob **Corker** of Tennessee, a Republican who is not a member of the group, **said he had spoken with one of its members, who said he was "very optimistic" about reform.**

Will pass – it's a top priority and capital key to passage

Rosalind S. Helderman and David Nakamura 1/25 "Senators nearing agreement on broad immigration reform proposal", Washington Post, http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/senators-nearing-agreement-on-broad-immigration-reform-proposal/2013/01/25/950fb78a-6642-11e2-9e1b-07db1d2ccd5b_story.html

A working group of senators from both parties **is nearing agreement on broad principles for overhauling** the nation's immigration laws, **representing the most substantive bipartisan effort toward major legislation in years.**¶ The three Democrats and three Republicans, who have been meeting quietly in recent months, plan to announce a final agreement as early as next Friday.¶ The move would amount to **the first tentative step toward comprehensive immigration reform after long-standing gridlock on the issue.** The new effort was spurred in large part by the growing influence of Latino voters who strongly backed President Obama and other Democrats in November.¶ **Obama has** also **called immigration reform** one of **his top legislative priorities** and is launching his own public campaign on the issue next week in Nevada. But a significant number of Americans, particularly within the Republican Party, remain opposed to laws that would make it easier for illegal immigrants to stay in the country or obtain legal status.¶ The senators are expected to call for normalizing the status of the nation's 11 million undocumented immigrants, including allowing those with otherwise clean criminal records to obtain legal work permits, officials said. The group is also likely to endorse stricter border controls and a better system for employers to verify the immigration status of workers.¶ It was not clear, however, whether the final agreement will offer guidance on perhaps the thorniest issue in the immigration debate: what mechanism illegal immigrants could use to pursue full citizenship.¶ **"We have basic agreement on many of the core principles,"** Senate Majority Whip Richard J. Durbin (D-Ill.), a member of the group, said this week. "Now we have to draft it. It takes time."¶ Other senators involved in the talks are Democrats Charles E. Schumer (N.Y.) and Robert Menendez (D-N.J.) and Republicans Lindsey O. Graham (S.C.), John McCain (Ariz.) and Marco Rubio (Fla.).¶ Two others, Sens. Jeff Flake (R-Ariz.) and Michael F. Bennet (D-Colo.), have also been involved in some of the discussions.¶ Congressional aides stress that a final agreement has not yet been reached. But the **negotiations mark the most in-depth immigration talks involving members of both parties since** a similar attempt broke down in **2010** without producing a bill.¶ **McCain**, who spearheaded an earlier failed effort in 2007, **said Republican attitudes have dramatically shifted since the party's losses at the polls** in November. Obama won more than 70 percent of the vote among Latinos and Asians, **and a growing number of GOP leaders believe that action on immigration is necessary to expand the party's appeal to minority groups.**¶ "Obviously, it's had a very distinct impression," said McCain, who lost his own bid for the White House in 2008. "It's time to move forward on this."¶ **But,** he added, "I **don't claim that it's going to be easy.**"¶ **The accelerated pace signals that immigration reform is expected to be one of Congress's highest priorities,** and it comes as the White House prepares to launch its own public campaign on the issue.¶ Obama will travel to Las Vegas on Tuesday to speak about the need to "fix the broken immigration system this year," the administration announced Friday. Nevada has a rapidly growing number of Hispanic voters, who overwhelmingly supported Obama's reelection.¶ **Obama** also met with members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus on Friday, and aides said he **vowed that immigration reform will be his "top priority."**¶



"What has been absent in the time [since] he put principles forward is a willingness by Republicans to move forward with comprehensive immigration reform," White House press secretary Jay Carney said Friday. "He hopes that dynamic has changed and there are indications what was once a bipartisan effort to push forward . . . will again be a bipartisan effort to do so." Past efforts begun amid similarly high hopes have sputtered. In 2007, a bill crafted in the Senate died after failing to win support of 60 members despite backing from President George W. Bush. Many Republicans, and some centrist Democrats, opposed that effort because it offered a path to citizenship for illegal immigrants. In 2010, extended negotiations between Graham and Schumer broke down without producing legislation. The timetable would aim for a bill to be written by March or April and potentially considered for final passage in the Senate as early as the summer. Proponents think a strong bipartisan vote in the Senate would make it easier to win adoption in the GOP-held House. The working group's principles are expected to address stricter border control, better employer verification of workers' immigration status, new visas for temporary agriculture workers and expanding the number of visas available for skilled engineers. They would also include a call to normalize the status of the nation's 11 million illegal immigrants and help young people who were brought to the country illegally as children become citizens. But obstacles abound. For instance, Rubio has said he thinks immigrants who came to the country illegally should be able to earn a work permit but should be required to seek citizenship through existing avenues after those who have come here legally. Many Democrats and immigration advocates fear Rubio's approach would result in wait-times stretching for decades, creating a class of permanent legal residents for whom the benefits of citizenship appear unattainable. They have pushed to create new pathways to citizenship specifically available to those who achieve legal residency as part of a reform effort. It is not yet clear whether the Senate group will endorse a mechanism allowing such people to eventually become citizens — something Obama is expected to champion. Schumer said it would be "relatively detailed" but would not "get down into the weeds." A source close to Rubio said he joined the group in December at the request of other members only after they agreed their effort would line up with his own principles for reform. As a possible 2016 presidential contender widely trusted on the right, Rubio could be key to moving the bipartisan effort. Rubio and other Republicans have said they would prefer to split up a comprehensive immigration proposal into smaller bills that would be voted on separately, but the White House will pursue comprehensive legislation that seeks to reform the process in a single bill. "I doubt if there will be a macro, comprehensive bill," said Sen. Johnny Isakson (R-Ga.), who supported the 2007 effort. "Anytime a bill's more than 500 pages, people start getting suspicious. If it's 2,000 pages, they go berserk." But Schumer said Friday that a single package will be key for passage. "We'll not get it done in pieces," he said. "Every time you do a piece, everyone says what about my piece, and you get more people opposing it." Eliseo Medina, secretary treasurer of the Service Employees International Union, which spent millions recruiting Hispanic voters last year, said **immigration advocates expect Obama to be out front on the issue.** **"The president needs to lead and then the Republicans have a choice,"** Medina said. **"The best way to share the credit is for them to step up and engage and act together with the president."**

Obama is ramping up push for immigration reform --- it's a top priority and quick action expected

Meckler, 1/25 (Laura, Dow Jones Top North American Equities Stories, "Obama May Talk Immigration Overhaul Next Week," Factiva,

WASHINGTON--President Barack **Obama will travel to Las Vegas next week for a speech that that could serve as the starter's gun for the drive to overhaul immigration laws.** Mr. **Obama has said that overhauling national immigration policy is one of his top priorities** for 2013, and he has laid out what he hopes to see in the

legislation. But **the speech, set for Tuesday, is meant to "help prod the process along," said one of the people familiar with his plans.** "He is using the megaphone that he has to say, 'You guys need to act on this,'" this person said. A second person confirmed Mr. Obama's plans. A White House official said that Mr. Obama would travel to Las Vegas but would not discuss the topic of his remarks. The speech comes as a group of eight senators working on immigration legislation nears a self-imposed February deadline for putting out principles for a bill. The group hopes to have legislative language by March and to pass a bill through the Senate by August. The process is expected to move more slowly in the House, where some Republicans have expressed interest in similar legislation and others are vocally opposed. The senators' plan is expected to include the same elements that Mr. Obama has long supported: stepped up border security, a better system that employers use to verify that potential hires are in the U.S. legally, more visas for high-tech workers, a temporary worker program for lower-skilled workers and a path to citizenship for some 11 million people now in the U.S. illegally. It was unclear how specific Mr. Obama would be next week about what elements he wants in an immigration bill. During his first term, he laid out his principles publicly, though it has been some time since the president spoke about them in detail. **The White House also has prepared legislative language**, and some have urged that the president send it to Capitol Hill as a way of moving the legislative process forward. But others argue that putting specific legislation forward could derail the process, potentially causing political problems for some Republicans involved who want distance between their work and the White House. One person familiar with events said that **the White House has told allies that the purpose of the speech is to show that Mr. Obama is engaged in the issue and not just sitting back, waiting for Congress to act.** "He wants to try and influence the process and move it forward," said Angela **Kelley, an immigration expert** at the liberal think tank Center for American Progress. **"He wants to nudge this along."** White House Press Secretary Jay **Carney said** Thursday that Mr. **Obama wanted to work with**



people from both parties to move legislation to his desk. ¶ **"I think you can expect him to** be true to his word, which is to **take up this issue very early in his second term,**" he said. ¶ He said the White House put out details of what the president would like to see in a bill long ago. "He does absolutely believe that we need to do this in a comprehensive way," Mr. Carney said of the president. ¶ Many, though not all, Democrats have supported a multi-pronged immigration bill, but other issues took precedence. Before the November election there was little support or urgency among Republican lawmakers for a broad immigration bill. But after Mr. Obama won reelection with overwhelming support from Hispanics, many Republicans said they would support the effort, giving it new life in Congress.

Immigration reform is likely to pass --- it is Obama's top priority

Fifield, 1/23 (Anna, Financial Times, "The road to recognition; Immigration; There is growing optimism across the spectrum - from business and unions to Latino groups and religious bodies - that a broken system will finally be fixed," Factiva

Now Mr **Obama says he will try again, placing immigration reform at the top of his legislative agenda.** ¶

"Our journey is not complete until we find a better way to welcome the striving, hopeful immigrants who still see America as a land of opportunity, until bright young students and engineers are enlisted in our workforce rather than expelled from our country," Mr Obama said during his second inaugural address . **He can expect formidable opposition.** ¶ Immigration is one of the most highly charged political issues, as exemplified by the efforts of states such as Arizona, Alabama and Georgia to take matters into their own hands. Those states have passed tough anti-illegal immigrant laws aimed at deterring undocumented workers, and farms in Alabama and Georgia in particular have reported acute labour shortages as a result. ¶ Republican leaders in states such as these can be expected to push back hard against

comprehensive reform. ¶ **Yet despite immigration reform's troubled history, there is growing optimism from**

across the spectrum - from business and unions to Latino groups and religious leaders - that this is

the year in which the broken immigration system will be fixed. ¶ "This is a moment," says Steve Case, the co-founder of AOL who now runs Revolution, a start-up fund, and has long pushed for more high-skilled visas for engineers and scientists. ¶ "There is desire on the part of the White House to deal with it in a comprehensive way and the business community also wants to have it dealt with. Now is the time," Mr Case says. ¶ Mr **Obama is expected to outline a plan soon for immigration reform that would**

include the "big enchilada" of creating a pathway to citizenship for the 11m undocumented people

already in the US, as well as a requirement for them to pay fines and back taxes. ¶ The plan will include provisions on border security and penalties for companies that knowingly hire and exploit illegal immigrants. It will also deal with business concerns about difficulties hiring both high- and low-skill workers. ¶ **While there are plenty of roadblocks in the way** - not least a Congress where "bipartisan" has become a slanderous term - **a unique confluence of events makes the chances better than ever this year** ¶ First,

the presidential election served as a wake-up call to Republicans. After an ugly primary campaign in which candidates tried to outdo each other in their hostility to illegal immigrants, the Republicans realise they are swimming against the demographic tide. Hispanics are the fastest-growing part of the US population and their number is expected to triple by 2050. Already, there are about 60,000 Latinos turning 18 - the voting age - every month. ¶ Republicans acknowledge that they cannot afford to alienate such a large chunk of the population . Last year Mitt Romney, the Republican presidential candidate, won only 27 per cent of the demographic to Mr Obama's 71 per cent. A sizeable number of Republicans have indicated a willingness to overhaul the system, and Marco Rubio, the Florida senator, is leading an effort to craft a less generous alternative to the president's reforms. Many people remain opposed to a pathway to citizenship for illegal immigrants and favour incremental reform rather than one big package. ¶ Second, the number of people stopped on the Mexican border is at its lowest level since 1972, when illegal immigration had not even become a pressing political issue. ¶ The number of those detained has dropped from about 1m in 2007 to 340,000 last year, the result of much stronger enforcement but also of the weak US economy and job market. ¶ "The soft economy has really reduced the pressure at the border so we should take advantage of that," says John Engler, the president of the Business Roundtable, a group of more than 200 chief executives. "The time to do this is now." ¶ Third, **there is a coalition of "strange bedfellows",** as

one participant called it, **forming to push for comprehensive reform.** Encouraged by Chuck Schumer, a Democratic senator, and Lindsey Graham, a Republican senator, representatives from the US Chamber of Commerce, the big business lobby group, and the AFL-CIO, the biggest federation of unions, have met regularly over the past year to hash out a compromise deal. Both groups agree on the need to create a pathway to citizenship, a mechanism for ensuring employers abide by the laws and continued border controls. ¶ **The theory is that this will inevitably be sufficiently bipartisan to win the backing of majorities in both the Republican-controlled Congress and the Democratic-led Senate.** ¶ There are a clutch of other conversations going on, with the Business Roundtable and the SEIU union also involved, as well as evangelical Christian and Jewish leaders and, of course, Latino and immigrant groups. ¶ The last big push for immigration reform came in 2006, during the final years of the Bush administration, and was a bipartisan effort led by John McCain, the Republican, and the late Ted Kennedy, a Democrat. ¶ But supporters of immigration reform suffered internal divisions - notably within the labour movement over an expanded guest worker programme, weakening the effort to convince lawmakers to pass the bill.

Conservatives attacked the bill for providing a pathway to citizenship for people in the US illegally. ¶ The effort failed in 2007 because it could not win the votes it needed in the Senate. Six years on, are the prospects any better? Analysts and interest groups say yes. ¶ Labour unions have overcome their disagreements, having been through an 18-month consultation that resulted in a shared immigration policy framework. ¶ "There



was a unanimous consensus that we should not and could not walk into any legislative battle divided because if the legislators saw the labour movement was divided they would not listen to anyone," says Ana Avendano, director of immigration action at the AFL-CIO. Immigrant advocacy groups are now more established while networks of day labourers and domestic workers have formed. Talks among this unlikely coalition are likely to continue for six or so more weeks, during which time it will become clear whether they can forge an agreement. Economic arguments will be at the forefront of the debate. Economists generally agree that immigration is a net positive to the US, a factor that cannot be ignored as baby boomers retire and pressure builds on government healthcare and pension systems. The legislative programme ushered through by Ronald Reagan in 1986 showed that comprehensive immigration reform would raise wages, increase consumption, create jobs and generate additional tax revenue, says Raúl Hinojosa-Ojeda, a University of California professor. Even though those reforms were implemented during a recession and high unemployment, they still helped raise wages and spurred increases in educational, home, and small-business investments by newly legalised immigrants, Prof Hinojosa-Ojeda wrote in a study for the Cato Institute, a libertarian think-tank generally supportive of Republican ideas. Immigration reform would add at least \$1.5tn to the gross domestic product over a decade, he estimated. Businesses say they need more certainty. "My members wouldn't be as interested in this issue as they are if it didn't hurt them," said Randel Johnson, the Chamber of Commerce's vice-president of labour, immigration and employee benefits. Mr Johnson cites agriculture as a sector where business is crying out for a "stabilised, legalised" workforce. Advocates such as Mr Case are calling for an overhaul of the way H-1B high-skilled visas are allocated. "Any organisation or nation is only as good as its talent," he says. "That's certainly true in the business context and even more so in start-ups, where there is such a fight for talent." Mr Case has long been lobbying for an end to the caps that he says force about 20,000 foreigners who graduate with science, technology, engineering and maths degrees to leave the country every year. He wants to eliminate the caps and create a new Stem visa category. Bills have been introduced by lawmakers on both sides of the aisle that would award green cards to the top graduates, but failed to pass. At the other end of the spectrum, the current system allows employers to sponsor foreign "guest workers" for temporary or seasonal work, or to hire highly skilled workers in "speciality occupations". But the numbers of visas is set by Congress and employers complain that the numbers are not adjusted for reality. There is widespread agreement that this system is not working well, but there is disagreement about how to fix it - just as there was in 2006. Unions say the "guest worker" programme creates a second class of employee and are pushing for any new arrivals to have full rights and privileges. "We need an employment system that meets the real needs of the labour market so that when there are actual shortages, business can bring in workers and the workers will have full rights," Ms Avendano says, citing the UK's Migration Advisory Committee as an example of a system for managing flows. Groups such as the Chamber of Commerce think an overhauled guest worker programme must be a central part of any comprehensive reform package. "Some parts of the union movement believe there ought to be this commission that would set how many plumbers we need," says Mr Johnson. "But the data in an economy this big is never going to be good." The question will be whether the parties can overcome such differences and form a coalition strong enough to withstand the slings and arrows of Congress. **"The architecture of an immigration reform solution is being designed and manufactured,"** says Richard Land, a leader in the influential Southern Baptist Convention and a strong proponent of reform. **"All we need now is some political leadership in Washington."**

Immigration will pass by the summer – PC is key and no thumpers -

Chris Weignat 1/23 Political writer and blogger with the Huffington Post, "Handicapping Obama's Second Term Agenda," http://www.huffingtonpost.com/chris-weigant/obama-second-term_b_2537802.html

Realistically, Obama's only going to have anywhere from a few months to (at most) a year and a half to get anything accomplished. Which is why he is right to push his agenda immediately, as evidenced by his inaugural speech. **But even he must realize that he's not going to get everything he wants, so it will be interesting to see what makes it through Congress and what dies an ignoble legislative death. There is reason for hope. Obama begins from a position of strength, politically.** His job approval ratings have been consistently over 50 percent since he was re-elected -- a range Obama hasn't seen since 2009. As mentioned, the Republican presence in both houses of Congress has shrunk. More importantly, though, the House Republicans are visibly chastened (or even "shaken") by the election's outcome. This has already allowed Obama to rack up two early victories in the endless budget debates -- and in both, Obama got almost everything he asked for, did not give up much of anything, and held firm on some very bold negotiating tactics. **Obama won the fight over the fiscal cliff,** which resulted in the first rise in income tax rates in two decades, and the only thing he had to budge on was the threshold for these higher taxes. Today, the House Republicans passed a "clean" rise in the debt ceiling, after Obama swore over and over again that he "was not going to negotiate" on the issue at all. **The score so far is: Obama two, House Republicans zero** (to put it in sporting terms). Of course, the Republicans only extended the debt ceiling for a few months, but this shouldn't really worry anyone, because a longer-term extension will doubtlessly be a part of any sort of grand bargain on the budget talks. **The Republicans,** very wisely, **realized they were playing a losing game and decided to reshuffle the deadlines on the calendar.** Rather than being faced with the debt ceiling



crisis first, and then two budgetary crises, they **have moved the debt ceiling problem to the end of the list**. Which means the next big fight Obama faces is going to be another haggle over the budget. This is going to be a tough battle, and Obama is bound to disappoint some of his supporters in the midst of it. Some sacred cows are going to wind up as hamburger, although at this point it's hard to see which ones. The real measurement of success here will be whether the House Republicans and Obama can come to terms with a budget for the next year or year-and-a-half. Long-term budget stability has been largely absent from Washington for a while now, so if any agreement can be reached perhaps it'll help the economy recover a lot faster throughout 2013 and 2014. In the long run, that will be a positive thing, no matter what such a budget agreement actually contains. One safe bet for what will be in it, though, is a long-term extension of the debt ceiling. **Budget battles are going to happen no matter what else does -- that's another safe bet. What is more interesting, though, is handicapping which of Obama's agenda items will actually see some action.** **There are three major initiatives that Obama is currently pushing: action on global warming, comprehensive immigration reform, and gun control. Obama did mention other issues in his speech, but these are the big three for now.** Gay marriage, for instance, is in the hands of the Supreme Court right now, and no matter how they rule it's hard to see any legislative action (good or bad) happening on it immediately afterwards. Gun control will likely be the first of these debated in Congress. Vice President Biden laid out a wide array of possible actions Congress could take on the issue, all of which Obama then backed. While the Newtown massacre did indeed shift public opinion dramatically on the overall issue, the biggest initiative is not likely to become law. **An assault rifle ban** is very important to some Democrats, but the way I read it is that this was included to have something to "trade away" in the negotiations. If Obama gets most of the other gun control initiatives -- closing loopholes on background checks, much better tracking of weapons, and all the other "small bore" (sorry about that pun) ideas -- then he will at least be able to say he accomplished something at the end of the day. Perhaps this is pessimistic, but the mechanics of banning "assault weapons" become very tricky, when you have to actually define what they are in legal language. And such a ban may not get universal Democratic backing anyway, so I fully expect this **will be shelved at some point in exchange for support for all the other initiatives. Without such a ban,** the prospects for other meaningful **gun control legislation** get a lot better, though, and I think that a bill **will eventually pass.** **The second big agenda item is immigration reform. President Obama holds virtually all the cards, politically, on this one.** All Republicans who can read either demographics or polling numbers know full well that this may be their party's last chance not to go the way of the Whigs. Their support among Latinos is dismal, and even that's putting it politely. Some Republicans think they have come up with a perfect solution on how to defuse the issue, but they are going to be proven sadly mistaken in the end, I believe. The Republican plan will be announced by Senator Marco Rubio at some point, and it will seem to mirror the Democratic plan -- with one key difference. Republicans -- even the ones who know their party has to do something on the immigration problem -- are balking at including a "path to citizenship" for the 11 million undocumented immigrants who are already in America. The Republicans are trying to have their cake and eat it too -- and it's not going to work. "Sure," they say, "we'll give some sort of papers to these folks, let them stay, and even let them work... but there's no need to give them the hope of ever becoming a full citizen." This just isn't going to be good enough, though. There are essentially two things citizens can do which green card holders cannot: serve on juries, and vote. The Republicans are not worried about tainted juries, in case that's not clear enough. Republicans will bend over backwards in an effort to convince Latinos that their proposal will work out just fine for everyone. Latinos, however, aren't stupid. They know that being denied any path to citizenship equals an effort to minimize their voice on the national political stage. Which is why, as I said, Obama holds all the cards in this fight. Because this is the one issue in his agenda which Republicans also have a big vested interest in making happen. Obama and the Democrats will, I believe, hold firm on their insistence on a path to citizenship, and I think **a comprehensive immigration bill will likely pass some time this year, perhaps before the summer congressional break.** The path to citizenship it includes will be long, expensive and difficult (Republicans will insist on at least that), but it will be there. On gun control, I think Obama will win a partial victory. On immigration, I think he will win an almost-total victory. **On global warming, however, he's going to be disappointed.** In fact, **I doubt -- no matter how much "bully pulping" Obama does -- that any bill will even appear out of a committee in either house of Congress.** This will be seen as Obama's "overreach" -- a bridge too far for the current political climate. Anyone expecting big legislative action on global warming is very likely going to be massively disappointed, to put it quite bluntly. In fact, Obama will signal this in the next few months, as he approves the Keystone XL pipeline -- much to the dismay of a lot of his supporters. Of course, I could be wrong about any or all of these predictions. I have no special knowledge of how things will work out in Congress in the immediate future. I'm merely making educated guesses about what Obama will be able to achieve in at least the first few years of his second term. **Obama has a lot of political capital right now, but that could easily change soon.** The House **Republicans** seem almost demoralized right now, and Obama has successfully splintered them and called their bluff on two big issues already -- but they **could regroup and decide to block everything** the White House wants, and damn the political consequences. **Unseen issues will pop up** both on the domestic and foreign policy stages, as they always do. **But, for now, this is my take on how the next few years are going to play out in Washington.** Time will tell whether I've been too optimistic or too pessimistic on any or all of Obama's main agenda items. We'll just have to wait and see.



Immigration reform will pass – top priority and national GOP support

Kevin Freking 1/20 Boston.com,

<http://www.boston.com/news/politics/2012/president/candidates/obama/2013/01/20/obama-adviser-optimistic-immigration-reform/Wjj0yJsCqKYaiKr0FTvu3N/story.html>

A top White House adviser said Sunday **the stars seem aligned for Congress to pass a comprehensive immigration overhaul this year**, but he sounded less confident about prospects for toughening the nation's gun laws. ¶ White House Senior Adviser David Plouffe made the rounds on Sunday talk shows, outlining the president's agenda for the months ahead. He said past presidents have been able to make significant progress during their second terms, noting that President Ronald Reagan pushed through more tax cuts and that President Bill Clinton helped transform budget deficits into budget surpluses. ¶ He said Obama's focus will be on improving the economy, saying the president believes the best way to do that is to invest in education and manufacturing while also seeking what he called "balanced deficit reduction." ¶ Republicans agreed to let tax cuts expire this year for those workers whose incomes exceed \$400,000 a year, but Plouffe said that future negotiations on reducing the deficit will have to include more tax revenue as well as spending cuts and changes to entitlement programs. ¶ "We've dealt with the tax rate issue. Now it's about loopholes," Plouffe said on ABC. "And I think the country would be well-served by tax and entitlement reform, because it'll help our economy." ¶ Beyond the economy and the budget, **Plouffe indicated that two social issues will be a focus at the outset of the president's second term: immigration and gun control.** ¶ On gun control, he mixed statements of optimism with an acknowledgement of political realities. Republicans control the House, and even some Democrats in the Senate have been extremely cautious in addressing the issue. ¶ "It's going to be very, very hard," Plouffe said on CBS's "Face the Nation." ¶ Republican Sen. John Barrasso of Wyoming underscored that point. He said he doubted supporters could get 60 votes in the Senate for legislation allowing universal background checks for gun purchasers and for limiting gun magazines to 10 rounds and under. ¶ "The debt and spending. That's where people are focused. That's the big anxiety of this country," Barrasso said on CNN. ¶ Sen. Roy Blunt, R-Mo., would not answer whether he could support background checks for every gun purchase. Without getting into specifics, he advocated for better information-sharing to prevent some people with mental health problems from buying guns. ¶ "Let's do things that will make a difference here, rather than take one more opportunity to go at an old agenda," Blunt, a gun-rights advocate, said on Fox News

Sunday. ¶ **When it comes to overhauling the nation's immigration laws**, Plouffe said he believes **there's broader support from Republicans** nationally than there is from Republicans in Congress. Still, "the stars are aligned" for a bill to include beefing up border security as well as giving those already in the U.S. illegally a path to citizenship. He cited **business organizations and religious leaders as key players backing a comprehensive immigration bill**.

Obama is pushing Comprehensive Immigration Reform and it will pass – it's top of the agenda

Sandra Hernandez, LA Times Staff, 1/19/13, "Who stands to lose more if immigration reform fails?", <http://www.latimes.com/news/opinion/opinion-la/la-ol-immigration-reform-obama-20130118,0,5616515.story>

As President **Obama's second term gets underway, there is a growing debate about whether comprehensive immigration reform will remain a priority given the ambitious agenda he has outlined, including the need to address the budget, tax reform, climate change and gun violence.** So far, **the White House continues to say that immigration reform is on the front burner. More important, the administration is acting as if it is a priority. This week, for example, administration officials met with key members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus to discuss how to push forward legislation.** Also this week, Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.), **who heads up the Senate Judiciary Committee, announced that the committee would probably take up the issue** next month. And **already, some bipartisan discussions are underway.** Outside Washington, business and religious **leaders say they consider immigration reform a top legislative priority and are launching a grass-roots drive to build support.** Yet some advocates and observers remain skeptical that federal lawmakers will actually move forward with new laws. Why? Well, for starters because **any type of effort to overhaul the immigration system will require support from moderate Republicans, such as** Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.). He concedes that his party needs to improve its standing with Latino voters, who overwhelmingly cast their ballots for Obama, even in states that traditionally vote for a Republican candidate. But just how far Rubio and others are willing to go on the most vexing aspect of immigration reform remains a question. **Rubio and other moderates have signaled their support for legislation that would provide legal status to** so-called Dreamers, or **young undocumented immigrants who were brought to the United**



States unlawfully as children. And **those same lawmakers will likely back plans to provide more visas for high-skilled workers and foreign students who earn advanced degrees from U.S. universities in math, science and engineering.** But those GOP lawmakers may fall short of supporting legislation that would provide a path to citizenship for the estimated 11 million undocumented immigrants already here. The party's conservative base has traditionally opposed such efforts because some argue it's little more than amnesty that rewards immigrants who broke the rules. But **I disagree with those who believe immigration reform is once again doomed.** I think **both parties understand they would pay a high price with Latino voters.**

Immigration reform will pass – bipartisan push

David S Jones, Global Immigration Blog, **1/22/13**, "Momentum Grows for Comprehensive Immigration Reform", <http://www.globalimmigrationblog.com/2013/01/articles/us-immigration/momentum-grows-for-comprehensive-immigration-reform/>

Lawmakers return to Washington for the 113th Congress with comprehensive immigration reform once again moving to the front burner. Comments and **proposals are being fielded by prominent political figures**, including former President George W. Bush <http://trailblazersblog.dallasnews.com/2012/12/george-w-bush-debate-immigration-policy-with-a-benevolent-spirit.html/> and Senator Marco Rubio <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323442804578235844003050604.html>. **These and similar calls for Congress to finally address the country's immigration system, widely criticized as "broken" on both sides of the aisle, seem to be resonating with the White House**, at least mildly http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/citing-rubios-ideas-on-immigration-reform-white-house-sees-hope-for-bipartisan-deal/2013/01/15/d83f4102-5f48-11e2-9940-6fc488f3fecdd_story.html. **The growth of bipartisan support for comprehensive immigration reform may move the Administration and Congress to initiate a new push to enact immigration reform legislation as early as this March.** Senate **Majority Leader Harry Reid recently noted publicly that a bipartisan group of senators, led by Democratic Sens. Chuck Schumer and Dick Durbin and Republican Sens. John McCain and Lindsey Graham, have been crafting an immigration package** and that this **was to be "first thing" on the Senate's agenda.** While the exact scope and language is still being discussed, **all indications are that the Administration is looking to pass comprehensive legislation that addresses multiple elements of immigration reform.** Key elements of any comprehensive solution **include: mandatory verification of legal status of newly hired workers, additional visa numbers for highly skilled immigrants and creation of a temporary guest-worker program.** Reform legislation also is **expected to address the approximately 11 million individuals currently residing in the U.S. without legal status.**

Immigration reform will pass – it's a top priority, but push will be key

Stacy Kaper and Rebecca Kaplan, National Journal, **1/21/13**, "What Obama Wants and What Congress Will Give Him", <http://www.nationaljournal.com/congress/what-obama-wants-and-what-congress-will-give-him-20130121>

Immigration reform: **The president has made no secret of the fact that he is going to make comprehensive immigration reform a top priority of his second term.** **There is some bipartisan support, especially in the Senate, for legislation, but** several **sticking points remain.** Lawmakers disagree on whether there should be a path to citizenship or merely legal status for illegal immigrants, and whether it should be presented as a comprehensive bill or several smaller pieces of legislation. And for immigration reform to pass in the House, Speaker John Boehner might have to violate the Hastert rule and bring legislation to the floor without the majority backing of his conference. **Obama voiced support for one specific policy, arguing that immigration reform would be incomplete "until bright young students and engineers are enlisted in our workforce rather than expelled from our country."** **Easing the path to citizenship for high-skilled workers enjoys broad bipartisan support in the House and Senate,** but will get caught up in the debate about the size of legislation.



Will pass

Associated Press, Arkansas Online, 1/20/13, "Obama adviser optimistic on immigration reform", <http://www.arkansasonline.com/news/2013/jan/20/obama-adviser-optimistic-immigration-reform/?f=latest>

WASHINGTON — **A top White House adviser said the stars seemed aligned for Congress to pass comprehensive immigration reform this year.** Speaking Sunday on CNN's "State of the Union," **David Plouffe said support for reform is strong among lawmakers, the business community and the American people.** He said **there's** quote, **"no reason" immigration reform shouldn't move through Congress this year.**

Immigration reform will pass – enjoys support from tech lobbies and has bipartisan support

Jennifer **Martinez** 1/21 The Hill, <http://thehill.com/blogs/hillicon-valley/technology/278323-obama-makes-call-for-high-skilled-immigration-reform-in-inaugural-address>

President **Obama made** a brief **mention** about **the need for high-skilled immigration reform during his inaugural address** at the United States Capitol on Monday.¶ **Obama has made clear that passing comprehensive immigration legislation will be a policy priority** during his second term. **It's expected that** a measure aimed at **boosting the number of visas available to foreign-born graduates** of U.S. universities with master's degrees and Ph.D.s in engineering, math and science fields **will be included in forthcoming immigration legislation.**¶ In his speech, Obama argued that foreign-born engineers and graduates with advanced degrees should be able to stay in the U.S. and join the workforce rather than be forced to return to their home countries.¶ "Our journey is not complete until we find a better way to welcome the striving, hopeful immigrants who still see America as a land of opportunity; until bright young students and engineers are enlisted in our workforce rather than expelled from our country," Obama said.¶ **The issue is a cornerstone policy priority for tech giants** such as Microsoft and Intel, which argue that they struggle to fill positions for engineering and research jobs because most applicants don't have the requisite skills for these positions. Tech companies also argue that they want to keep this talent in the U.S. rather than lose it to competitors abroad.¶ Obama has advocated for high-skilled immigration reform before. During the presidential debates last year, Obama noted that immigrants in the U.S. have founded some of the most prominent American tech companies, such as Google and Intel.¶ **High-skilled immigration legislation has typically enjoyed bipartisan support**, but past efforts to pass such measures have been tangled up in the larger immigration debate. **The momentum for passing a comprehensive immigration package has ramped up** after Obama received roughly 70 percent of the Hispanic vote during the 2012 election.¶ Sen. Marco **Rubio** (R-Fla.) **is working with** Sen. Orrin **Hatch** (R-Utah) **to put forward immigration legislation, which is expected to include a high-skilled immigration** measure. In an interview with The Wall Street Journal this month, Rubio said bringing more high-skilled labor into the U.S. would be beneficial to the economy.

Obama pushing and efforts are already underway to build a compromise

Espo, 1/4 (David, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, 1/4/2013, "MORE FISCAL CLASHES LOOM A NEW CONGRESS BEGINS, STILL DIVIDED OVER FEDERAL DEFICIT," Factiva

While neither Mr. **Boehner** nor Mr. **Reid** mentioned immigration in their opening-day speeches, Mr. **Obama is expected to highlight the issue in the first State of the Union address** of his new term. **Lawmakers are already working toward a compromise they hope can clear both houses.**

Will Pass – Obama will use visa increase to get GOP support for comprehensive reform

Bloomberg Business Week 1/21 <http://www.businessweek.com/articles/2013-01-21/the-hard-line-on-immigration-hidden-in-obamas-inaugural-speech>

President **Obama's** second **inaugural address was heavy on the theme of unity.** He used the word "together" seven times in the 15-minute speech. **But tucked inside was a prelude to a contentious fight he'll soon have with**



Republicans—the battle over reforming the nation’s **immigration** laws.¶ Obama couched his comments about the issue in uplifting language: “Our journey is not complete until we find a better way to welcome the striving, hopeful immigrants who still see America as a land of opportunity,” he said. “Until bright young students and engineers are enlisted in our workforce, rather than expelled from our country.”¶ On the surface, there’s nothing controversial about that. Increasing the number of visas for highly-skilled immigrants is one of the few policy goals Obama and the GOP agree on. That reflects a big change in Republican thinking in recent months, as party leaders saw support among Hispanics drop in the face of tough anti-immigrant rhetoric. When Mitt Romney talked about immigrants during the Republican primaries, he focused on undocumented workers, suggesting they should “self-deport.” By the summer, he had softened his tone, saying he wanted to “staple a green card to the diplomas” of all foreign math and science grads who study at U.S. universities.¶ **If visas** for highly-skilled workers **were the only issue on the table, Democrats and Republicans could solve it fairly quickly.** The GOP would need a little time to convince the staunchest conservatives to sign on. Democrats would have to win over unions, but that might not be too difficult because most science and engineering grads work in fields with few union jobs, anyway.¶ **But that’s not the way it’s going to happen.** What **Obama** didn’t say in his speech, and the thing Republicans will latch onto in the days ahead, is that he **wants to tie the popular idea of raising visas for skilled workers to making broader changes in immigration law**—**to which that Republicans strongly object.**¶ Last week, administration officials—speaking anonymously, of course—“leaked” to reporters some of the details of Obama’s immigration plan. For the first time, the White House made clear that the president won’t agree to raise the visa caps for highly skilled immigrants unless it’s part of an overall reform plan that includes a path to citizenship for many of the estimated 11 million immigrants living illegally in the U.S.¶ These immigrants aren’t the “bright young” future job-creators Obama lauded in his speech. Most work dirty jobs for low wages, and many lack high-school diplomas. They’re the undocumented workers that Republican governors in Arizona, Georgia, Alabama, and other states have driven away with tough anti-immigration laws.¶ **Obama’s insistence on an everything-at-once approach puts Republicans in a difficult position as the party struggles to settle on a policy that its different factions can rally around.** For many House Republicans from Southern and border states, such words as “legalization” and “citizenship” are non-starters. But increasingly, party leaders and other prominent conservatives—House Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio), Senator Marco Rubio (R-Fla.), Charlie Spies, counsel for the pro-Romney Restore Our Future super PAC, even Bill O’Reilly—are advocating for a compromise—yet to be defined—between “throw them out” and “let them stay.”¶ **This means that skilled would-be immigrants** hoping for the door to open could be in for a long wait. They’ve **become the essential bargaining chip in** what will likely be a tense, **protracted negotiation**—not just **between Democrats and Republicans**, but among Republicans themselves.

Will pass – compromise coming

Wand 1/21 <http://www.wandtv.com/story/20639869/senator-durbin-closer-to-passing-immigration-reform>

Senator Dick Durbin says **the chances are good that the U.S. Senate will pass immigration reform.**¶ Durbin says that he is one of three Democrats working with three Republicans to draft an immigration bill. He says all six senators agree that the legislation should include “The Dream Act” making college affordable for undocumented immigrants.¶ Durbin explains that **the bill will need support** of the Hispanic Caucus and Republicans, **so compromise is necessary.** He was not able to speculate about the prospects of approval in the republican-controlled house.

Immigration reform will pass – Obama and the GOP will come together despite budget battles – must have space for agreement – the plan prevents it

Reuters 1/4 http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/01/04/obama-second-term-plans_n_2411168.html

Obama has **promised to pursue** a broad second-term agenda focused on comprehensive **immigration reform**, bolstering domestic energy production, fighting climate change and gun control. **After the “fiscal cliff” deal, he** said he **would not curtail his agenda because of the looming budget fights.**¶ **“We can** settle this debate, or at the very least, **not allow it to be so all-consuming all the time that it stops us from meeting a host of other challenges** that we face,” Obama said on New Year’s Day before boarding a flight to Hawaii to resume a holiday interrupted by the fiscal cliff fight.¶ “It’s not just possible to do these things; it’s an obligation to ourselves and to future generations,” he said.¶ PRIMED FOR A FIGHT¶ Republicans are primed for the coming fight, believing they have more leverage against Obama than during the fiscal cliff battle. Failure to close a deal on the debt ceiling could mean a default on U.S. debt or another downgrade in the U.S. credit rating like the one after a similar showdown in 2011.¶ A failure to reach agreement on a government funding bill could mean another federal shutdown like brief ones in 1995 and 1996.¶ Republicans say they will not back an increase in the federal debt ceiling without significant spending cuts opposed by many Democrats, particularly to popular “entitlement” programs such as the government-funded Medicare and Medicaid healthcare plans for the elderly and poor.¶ “When you look at what’s coming down the pike, it will make the fiscal cliff look like a day in Sunday school,” said Democratic strategist Chris Kofinis.¶ “You’re talking about a battle



that's going to last weeks or months. If they get a deal, it's going to be ugly, it's going to be brutal. Once you get past that, where do you find the will to address other issues? It's going to be very hard," he said. ¶ **Administration officials promise to move quickly in** January in **pursuit of** new legislation on gun control and **immigration**. The gun control effort will be led by Vice President Joe Biden, who was appointed to develop a response to the deadly Connecticut school shootings in December. ¶ But what seemed to be fresh momentum for new measures such as a ban on assault rifles after the mass killing in Connecticut could be stalled by a protracted focus on the seemingly never-ending budget showdowns. ¶ **Obama** also **plans to introduce comprehensive immigration legislation this month**. Republicans will have fresh incentive on the issue after Hispanics soundly rejected Republican presidential contender Mitt Romney in the November election, giving Obama more than 70 percent of their vote. ¶ But a Senate Republican leadership aide said economic issues would be the prime concern of Congress for months, pushing back consideration of gun control and immigration. The aide blamed Obama. ¶ "The lack of leadership on spending and debt has put us behind on a number of other issues. That is not something that can be resolved quickly," the aide said. ¶ When blocked in Congress, Obama has shown a willingness to use executive orders and agency rules to make policy changes. During last year's campaign, Obama ordered an end to deportations of young undocumented immigrants who came to the country as children and had never committed a crime. ¶ This week, the Department of Homeland Security changed its rules to make it easier for undocumented immigrants to get a waiver allowing them to stay in the country as they seek permanent residency. ¶ **With Republicans motivated to improve their standing with Hispanics, there is a chance Congress will work with the White House to pass an immigration bill** that both bolsters border security and offers a pathway to legal status for undocumented immigrants who pay their back taxes and fines. ¶ **Finding the rare sweet spot where Obama and Republicans** actually **agree on an issue could be the key to** second-term **legislative success.**

Passage likely – GOP support and momentum – prefer experts

MacAskill 1/6 (Ewen, "Barack Obama readies for host of reforms on Washington return", <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/jan/06/barack-obama-second-term-reforms>)

Norman **Ornstein, a widely respected analyst at** Washington's **American Enterprise Institute**, cautioned that second terms were usually less productive than first terms. Ornstein identified potential problems as "the continuing hold on the GOP [Grand Old Party] by the radical right, and the continuing dysfunction **in our politics**", and also the high expectations among the Democratic base. ¶ Ornstein, author of one of the best-received political books of the year, It's Even Worse Than It Looks, quickly **qualified** this gloomy assessment to add: "But that is not a surefire prediction that Obama will have a mediocre second term. **The election produced a new momentum for comprehensive immigration reform**, which would be a major advance. There is, obviously, a new dynamic on gun control." ¶ Obama appears emboldened by his election victory, his confidence apparent around the White House and in his dealings with Republicans in Congress. ¶ The broad outlines of his second term are already taking shape. When he initially jotted down his list of aims, gun control was not on it. Now it is a central issue, with proposed legislation planned for early this year – opening the way for confrontation with the gun lobby as well as members of Congress, predominantly the Republican party. ¶ The start of the new Congress on 3 January was accompanied by a blizzard of proposed gun laws from Democrats, which include bans on automatic and semi-automatic weapons, a ban on large-capacity magazines (restricting the number of bullets to around half-a-dozen or so), and plugging loopholes that allow sales at gun shows without background checks. ¶ **Republicans are coming round to the prospect of immigration reform, having been punished by Latino voters.** A path to citizenship for the estimated 12 million undocumented immigrants may be a step too far for many Republicans but they could put into legislation the Dream Act, building on Obama's executive order legalising the position of young Latinos brought to the US illegally by their parents. ¶ Other priorities for a second term on the domestic front include steering the economy towards full recovery and consolidating healthcare reforms introduced in the first term but not due to start until 2014. ¶ On the foreign front, the biggest challenge remains Iran and the prospect of direct talks between the US and Iran, as reported in the New York Times before the election and denied at the time by the White House, seem in the offing. There is Syria, Israel-Palestine and winding down the war in Afghanistan. Also outstanding is his failure to fulfil pledge to close Guantánamo. He will also face pressure to reduce the number of drone strikes. ¶ If he manages to secure some foreign policy successes – adding to first-term achievements that include healthcare reform, ending the use of torture, recognition of gay service personnel in the military, and ending the war in Iraq – he could be well on his way to going down in history as one of the better Democratic presidents, up there with LBJ and Bill Clinton. ¶ Tom **Mann, a political analyst at the Brookings Institution and author of many books on the presidency and Congress**, including co-authoring It's Even Worse Than It Looks, **predicts Obama has a "decent chance" of achieving something on** gun violence and **immigration.**



Obama will push this month, will pass

Tom Kludt, "Report: Obama to Make Push for Immigration Reform this Month," TPM LIVEWIRE, 1--3--13, <http://livewire.talkingpointsmemo.com/entry/report-obama-to-make-push-for-immigration-reform>

President Barack **Obama is prepared to use his political capital to pursue immigration reform this month**, according to a report published Wednesday in the Huffington Post. ¶ The report cited an anonymous official in the Obama administration, who suggested that **the president is unlikely to be deterred by the protracted fiscal cliff debate that will be revisited in the coming months**. As such, **the administration will reportedly move quickly on both immigration reform** and gun control. ¶ The report also quoted an unnamed Senate Democratic aide, who gauged the likelihood of immigration reform to pass Congress. **Citing the fiscal cliff deal that passed the House of Representatives this week with a combination of Republican and Democratic votes, the aide expressed confidence that House Speaker John Boehner (R-OH) will be able to overcome expected opposition from the conservative wing** of his caucus. ¶ "He already did it with this fiscal issue, so I would not be surprised if when it came down to it he puts up a bill that **he just allows to go through with a combination of Democratic and Republican votes, without worrying about a majority of the majority**," the aide said.

Obama's push ensures passage but it could still be derailed – turns and solves their economy impacts

Koba 1/7/13 (Mark, "Why Immigration Reform May Happen This Year", 2k13, <http://www.cnbc.com/id/100351691>

A long-awaited **overhaul of U.S. immigration law has a good chance of happening this year**, bringing major changes to the millions of people living here illegally—and perhaps **giving the economy a boost**. ¶ While details are sketchy right now, the **Obama administration last week announced it is launching a major effort to push reforms through Congress soon**. ¶ A major goal is to expand the guest worker program to allow more foreign nationals to legally work in the U.S. But the biggest hurdle may be whether to grant amnesty to millions of illegal immigrants in the U.S.—or deport them. ¶ Analysts say that unlike failed attempts in the past, **they expect reform to get done this time—and it could end up being beneficial for the still sluggish economy**. (Read more: Bleak Global Economy) ¶ **If there's a way to bring millions of people legally into our system, they'd be paying more taxes and spending more money and creating more jobs**," said Michael Wildes, managing partner of the immigration law firm Wildes & Weinberg. **It would be a big boost to the economy** and any kind of amnesty provision that includes fees from illegal immigrants would help fill the treasury. ¶ Others agree that **this is the year something will get done**. ¶ "I think **some type of reform will happen soon**," said Jim Witte, director of the Institute for Immigration Research at George Mason University. "There are traditional allies among Democrats but **there's also a growing conservative coalition of businesses and law enforcement who want immigration reform** as well." (Read more: Disney To Layoff Workers?) ¶ It's estimated that some 40 million people in the U.S. are immigrants, according to the Census Bureau, with anywhere from 7 million to 20 million of them in the country illegally. ¶ Economic activity produced by illegal immigrant spending employs about 5 percent of the total U.S. workforce, according to a study by UCLA. The research indicates illegal immigrants produce a total of \$150 billion of economic activity each year. ¶ And billions of dollars from illegal worker paychecks flow into and support the Social Security system—some \$7.2 billion in 2009 alone, that they will be unable to collect. ¶ "The irony is that illegal immigrants are not entitled to many of the benefits they pay for," said Jamie Longazel, a professor of sociology at the University of Dayton. "The reality is that many people receive benefits on the backs of those who suffer." ¶ How to integrate them—or not—into the country could be the a stumbling block to any reform. But the idea of deporting millions of people isn't realistic, said Christine Greer, an assistant professor of political science at Fordham University. ¶ "We can't just pick up and move some 15 million people and their families out of the country," Greer said. "It's not feasible to do that. Besides, many kids came here with parents and had no choice. Some of the kids don't even speak the language of their native land." ¶ But it's not just illegal immigration that's at stake. Some analysts have argued that since the late 1990s, **the U.S. needs to find a way to allow more workers—most specifically skilled tech workers—to enter legally**. There are nearly one million people working in the U.S. under the current guest worker programs that allow U.S. employers to sponsor non-U.S. citizens in the country with temporary visas. ¶ That number is not big enough, said Scott Cooper, managing attorney at the immigration law firm of Fragomen, Del Rey, Benson & Lowey. (Read more: Why End of Stimulus May Not Be All Bad) ¶ **The U.S. needs more skilled workers from abroad and be more receptive to the contributions they make economically**," said Cooper. **"We're limiting our economy by not letting more in."** ¶ "We need go beyond the current quota of 140,000 legal immigrants per year and allow more qualified people with math and science skills to enter the U.S.," said Ted Ruthizer, a lawyer who teaches immigration law and policy at Columbia University. said. **"The Job market is screaming for them."** ¶ But not everyone sees an economic rainbow with immigrants, legal or not. (Read more: US May Get Messy Again: Roubini) ¶ "Their contribution is large, but I think it's hard to accurately say what impact immigrants have on the economy, especially when it comes to the earnings and spending of illegal immigrants," said Jim Witte. ¶ "You can say that some competition from illegal workers may depress the wages of legal workers. On the other hand you can also say that cheaper illegal labor frees up people at higher skill levels to put their talents to a higher value," Witte said. ¶ Business groups, like the U.S. Chamber of Commerce have called for tighter border security but also say they advocate establishing provisional visas for lesser skilled workers, having sufficient numbers of visas for the highly skilled and for agriculture workers. "These changes would allow employers to hire immigrants in accordance with the demands of the economy, when U.S. workers are unavailable," according to the chamber's web site. ¶ For the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), who contend that immigrants are a drain on the economy, any reforms must include not only stricter border controls but tougher laws limiting any kind of immigration -- with amnesty for no one. ¶ "We blame the business community as well as others because we're bringing in people who have poor job skills, are poorly educated and relegated



to the lower rung on the economic ladder," said Ira Mehlman, a spokesman for FAIR. "We end up paying for all their health care they take away jobs from Americans." (Read more: Health Insurance Rates Rise)¶ The last attempt at reform came in 2007 from President George W. Bush who advocated an expanded guest worker program that would tighten security along the southern border while allowing about 11 million illegal immigrants to work legally in the country temporarily before forcing them to return home. But the measure failed to get any support in Congress.¶ That lack of action spurred some states, like Arizona and Alabama, to pass their own stringent and controversial immigration laws.¶ **What's different now on**

the national level--and why reform is likely to become law in the months ahead -- is a shift in the political scene, said Scott Cooper.¶ "The recent presidential election changed things with the immigration vote going so strongly to Obama," Cooper said. "So that's why I think

there will be reform because **the Republicans need it to win elections and Obama has to give something to the immigration groups that voted for him.**"¶ Despite what many consider the best chances in decades for reform, **getting it done won't be**

easy.¶ "I'm not optimistic about any reform package because of the extent to which current policy reflects corporate interests for cheap labor and the fact that most politicians lack the courage to stand up to those who spout ant-immigration sentiment," said Jamie Longazel.¶ Immigration reform is hard to do anytime because of the many misconceptions about it, said Evie P. Jeang, founder and managing partner of the Ideal Legal Group, an immigration and labor law firm.¶ "The myths are that immigrants steal jobs, commit more crimes, mooch off our health care and don't pay taxes," said Jeang. "The studies have shown that's not true. Even unlawful immigrants pay more in taxes that they use in welfare services."¶ **But there are**

reasons for optimism. A so called bi-partisan 'Gang of Eight' of U.S. senators has been meeting since the first week of December to discuss reform. They include Democrats Chuck Schumer, Dick Durban and Bob Menendez as well as Republicans Lindsey Graham, Mike Lee and John McCain.¶ Schumer said he and Graham are reviving talks about an immigration reform proposal they started in 2010. (Read more: Most Stressful Jobs)¶ President **Obama has moved in pieces on immigration**, despite having deported record numbers of illegal immigrants in his first term--some 409,849 from October 2011 through September 2012, the fourth consecutive fiscal year that the number increased.¶ Obama issued an executive order on January 2, making it easier for illegal immigrants to obtain permanent residency if they have immediate relatives who are U.S. citizens.¶ And before the November election, Obama issued a directive that grants people who'd be eligible for the DREAM Act -- a law that would give certain illegal immigrants between 16 and 30 legal standing --a reprieve from

deportation and work-authorization papers.¶ Whether a reform bill includes deportation mandates, amnesty provisions or a broader guest worker program, **expect a hard**

fight in Washington, said Christine Greer.¶ **However,** Greer said, **something will get done.**



2nc UQ – top priority

Top priority

Sanchez 2/8 (Humberto, “Immigration Advocates Bullish on Obama's State of the Union”, http://www.rollcall.com/news/immig_ration_advocates_bullish_on_obamas_state_of_the_union-222283-1.html?zkPrintable=true)

Assured and galvanized by his speech last week in Las Vegas, **immigration overhaul advocates don't expect to hear anything new** on the issue **from** President Barack **Obama in his State of the Union** address Tuesday. ¶ “I am going to predict **he is going to say nothing different**, and it's going to be not as extensive as Las Vegas because he is going to cover a range of topics,” said Frank Sharry, executive director of left-leaning immigration advocacy group America's Voice on a conference call with reporters Friday. ¶ “Sometimes in the past we have breathlessly counted the number of words and where it was in the speech,” Sharry continued. **“The fact that he went to Las Vegas and threw down the way he did has really mobilized and motivated many of us in the immigration reform movement.”** ¶ In his speech, Obama made the case for why changes are needed and laid out what he wants to see in the measure, including a path to citizenship, an overhauled legal immigration system, a goal of reducing the hiring of undocumented workers, and continued securing of the border. ¶ “We want him to mention it, but **he has already proven that this is his top legislative priority** for the first six months of this year,” Sharry said. “We are pretty confident that **we are in a good position to move forward.**”

Obama will push immigration – 3 weeks

LA Times 1/21 <http://www.latimes.com/news/politics/la-pn-axelrod-immigration-reform-coming-early-in-obamas-agenda-20130121,0,2596253.story>

WASHINGTON -- **While fiscal battles have dominated** discussions of President Obama's second term, a top advisor said Monday that **the president will push forward with immigration reform** early on -- possibly as soon as the State of the Union speech **in three weeks**. ¶ Speaking shortly after the inauguration ceremony, senior advisor David Axelrod suggested **Obama carries the goodwill of the American public** with him as he sets out on his second term. ¶ “I think the country likes this president. I think they support this president. Now he has four years to finish the work he's begun,” Axelrod told reporters as he walked through the halls at the Capitol. “We've got a foundation on which to build and he has a chance to build on it.” Axelrod suggested congressional **Republicans should reconsider their opposition to the president's agenda**, as polls show Americans have grown tired of the cycle of brinkmanship. ¶ Several top Republicans panned Obama's inauguration speech on Monday, suggesting Obama did not signal a willingness to reach across the aisle to find common ground on issues. Arizona Sen. John McCain of Arizona, a former Republican presidential nominee, was among those lobbing a note of criticism. ¶ “Really? I'm surprised because Sen. McCain is usually so receptive to what the president has to say,” Axelrod said, in a sarcastic reference to the 2008 combatants' routine disagreement. ¶ The longtime Obama advisor defended the president's approach. ¶ “I think he did reach out in the sense that he made the point that we always have achieved what we achieved as a country by working together and we have to work together now,” Axelrod said. “You hear in the speech what you want to, I suppose. But I don't believe that it was a particularly political speech. I think it was a speech about the values and principles that should unite us -- and I hope they do.” ¶ **Axelrod declined to prioritize the top few issues** on the president's agenda, **but suggested immigration is gaining in importance** as the budget battles consume the early months ahead. ¶ **“I expect you're going to see immigration surface early** in the year,” he said. “We have certain immutable deadlines relative to the fiscal discussion, but I do believe **he's going to move quickly on immigration** as well -- he's got a State of the Union in three weeks.” ¶ So perhaps an immigration message at that time? ¶ “Early means early.”

Immigration comes first – it's where Obama is focusing

FOX News, 1/21/13, “Obama warns against steep spending cuts, presses for immigration bill in inaugural address”, <http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2013/01/21/obama-official-swearing-in-monday-but-celebrations-second-term-in-full-swing/>

More immediately, Obama has stated that Congress must increase the debt ceiling to keep the country from defaulting on its bills and that he will not negotiate on the issue. However, **the White House has already put Congress on notice that**



budget talks could be delayed because Obama will miss the legal Feb. 14 deadline to submit his plan. **Despite having to deal with those issues** right away, **Obama appears committed to addressing immigration reform in the early months**, purportedly **in a one-step, comprehensive package**.

None of your thumpers matter – Immigration is the only thing Obama will be able to spend capital on

Todd J. **Gillman**, Washington Bureau, **1/19/13**, “Analysis: Barack Obama appears to bring new toughness to second term”, <http://www.dallasnews.com/news/politics/headlines/20130119-analysis-barack-obama-appears-to-bring-new-toughness-to-second-term.ece>

Divided government and tight budgets are likely to keep Obama from achieving much in the way of new agenda items. He'll spend much of the next few years fending off cuts to Social Security and warding off threats to undermine his signature health care reforms. **One of the few major areas where Obama may find it easier to reach accommodation with Republicans is immigration**. **It's a rare issue on which Republicans have a strong electoral incentive to take many of the same steps sought by Democrats, because Latino voters overwhelmingly supported Obama and GOP strategists are keenly aware of the risk of long-term alienation of that growing bloc.**

Top priority – but new issues will cause crowd-out

González 1/4/12 (and Dan Nowicki, “Cliff” fight, gun control pushing immigration reform out of spotlight”, <http://www.azcentral.com/news/politics/articles/20130103immigration-reform-at-crossroads.html>,

In an interview Sunday on NBC's “Meet the Press,” **Obama reiterated** that **“fixing our broken immigration system is a top priority.”** “We’ve talked about it long enough,” he said. **The overwhelming support Obama received from Latino voters in November** also **prompted many Republicans to call for immigration reform** in a bid to rehabilitate their party's negative image with Latinos. **But immigration reform has a long history of being sidetracked by other issues**. Health-care reform and fixing the economy knocked immigration reform off the table in 2009 and 2010. Now, spending cuts and gun control are threatening to derail immigration reform again. That's because **the window to pass immigration legislation is short**, analysts and immigration-reform advocates say. **If nothing happens this year, immigration reform may become too politically radioactive to tackle leading up to the 2014 congressional midterm election** and then the **2016 presidential election**.

Top priority – will invest all his PC

Peterson 1/3/13 (Hayley, “Obama will introduce broad immigration reform as early as January”, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2256426/Obama-introduce-broad-immigration-reform-early-January.html>

Now, with his second election behind him, Obama is again pushing to make immigration a top priority for his administration. **'Fixing our broken immigration system is a top priority,' he said** on NBC's 'Meet the Press' last week. **Obama also said** during the interview he would act quickly on **passing new restrictions on firearms in 2013.** **'I'm going to be putting forward a package and I'm going to be putting my full weight behind it,'** he said. **'I'm going to be making an argument to the American people about why this is important and why we have to do everything we can to make sure that something like what happened at Sandy Hook Elementary does not happen again.'**



2nc top of docket

Immigration first, Obama pushing, capital key

ABC NEWS, "Analysis: 6 things Obama Needs to Do for Immigration Reform," 1--2--13,
http://abcnews.go.com/ABC_Univision/News/things-president-obama-immigration-reform/story?id=18103115#.UOYgd5PjIJ8

On Sunday, President Barack **Obama said** that **immigration reform is a "top priority" on his agenda** and that he would introduce legislation in his first year. To find out what he needs to do to make reform a reality, we talked to Lynn Tramonte, the deputy director at America's Voice, a group that lobbies for immigration reform, and Muzaffar Chishti, the director of the New York office of the Migration Policy Institute, a think tank. Here's what we came up with. 1. Be a Leader During Obama's first term, bipartisan legislation never got off the ground. The president needs to do a better job leading the charge this time around, according to Chishti. "He has to make it clear that it's a high priority of his," he said. "He has to make it clear that **he'll use his bully pulpit and his political muscle to make it happen, and** he has to **be open to using his veto power.**" His announcement this weekend is a step in that direction, but he needs to follow through. 2. Clear Space on the Agenda Political priorities aren't always dictated by the folks in D.C., as the tragic Connecticut school shooting shows us. While immigration had inertia after the election, the fiscal cliff and gun violence have been the most talked about issues around the Capitol in recent weeks. **The cliff could recede from view now that Congress has passed a bill, but** how quickly **the president** can resolve the other issues on his agenda **could determine whether immigration reform is possible** this year. "There's only limited oxygen in the room," Chishti said.

Yes Obama will push.

Oman Observer, 1-1-2013, p. main.omanobserver.om/node/136439

President Barack **Obama is pledging to focus in his second term on immigration reform**, boosting economic growth through infrastructure repair and energy policies that nod to environmental protection. The president is mired in a difficult fight with congressional Republicans to avoid sharp spending cuts and steep tax increases collectively referred to as the "fiscal cliff." However, **he** still **has a** longer-term **to-do list for his remaining four years in office**, he said in an interview on NBC's Meet the Press that was broadcast on Sunday. Obama, who won re-election in November after a campaign in which he succeeded in painting himself as a strong advocate for the middle class and those aspiring to join it, also promised in the interview to make a run at passing gun control legislation in the first year of his second term. **"Fixing our broken immigration system is a top priority," he said. He renewed a pledge to introduce legislation in the first year of his second term to get it done.** Immigration reform is a sensitive subject for the president, who failed to fulfil his promise to revamp the system during his first term. Latino voters were a critical part of the coalition that helped get him re-elected, a fact that may soften political opposition from Republicans, who are eager to bolster their support with that demographic group.



A2 thumper – generic

Immigration is top priority

Sun Times 2/15

“Latino experts see possibilities, pitfalls in immigration reform effort”, 2013,

<http://www.suntimes.com/news/18233818-418/latino-experts-see-possibilities-pitfalls-in-immigration-reform-effort.html>

Experts from the local Latino community and beyond **met** Thursday **to voice** both **optimism and caution about the nation’s plans for immigration reform.** ¶ **“We are at a moment for comprehensive immigration reform unlike anything we’ve seen in recent history,”** said Sylvia Puente, executive director of the Latino Policy Forum. ¶ In his State

of the Union address on Tuesday night, President Barack **Obama said immigration reform is a top priority.** ¶ **A**

bipartisan group of eight senators, including Sen. Dick Durbin (D-Ill.), **is working to fix the immigration system.**

The record number of Latino voters turned out in November’s election, and Republicans, who lost Hispanic voters, are now taking a serious look at an immigration overhaul.

Top priority

Sanchez 2/8 (Humberto, “Immigration Advocates Bullish on Obama’s State of the Union”,

http://www.rollcall.com/news/immig_ration_advocates_bullish_on_obamas_state_of_the_union-222283-1.html?zkPrintable=true

Assured and galvanized by his speech last week in Las Vegas, **immigration overhaul advocates don’t expect to hear anything new** on the issue **from** President Barack **Obama in his State of the Union** address Tuesday. ¶ “I am going to predict **he is going to say nothing different**, and it’s going to be not as extensive as Las Vegas because he is going to cover a range of topics,” said Frank Sharry, executive director of left-leaning immigration advocacy group America’s Voice on a conference call with reporters Friday. ¶ “Sometimes in the past we have breathlessly counted the number of words and where it was in the speech,” Sharry continued. **“The fact that he went to Las Vegas and threw down the way he did has really mobilized and motivated many of us in the immigration reform movement.”** ¶ In his speech, Obama made the case for why changes are needed and laid out what he wants to see in the measure, including a path to citizenship, an overhauled legal immigration system, a goal of reducing the hiring of undocumented workers, and continued securing of the border. ¶ “We want him to mention it, but **he has already proven that this is his top legislative priority** for the first six months of this year,” Sharry said. “We are pretty confident that **we are in a good position to move forward.**”

Top priority – comes before everything, including gun control

AP 1/26 (“Obama, senators launching immigration push”,

<http://www.newsday.com/news/nation/obama-senators-launching-immigration-push-1.4514347>

President Barack **Obama will launch a campaign next week aimed at overhauling** the nation’s flawed **immigration** system and creating legal status for millions, as a bipartisan Senate group nears agreement on achieving the same goals. ¶

The proposals from Obama and lawmakers **will mark the start of** what is expected to be **a contentious** and emotional **process** with deep political implications. Latino voters overwhelmingly backed Obama in the 2012 election, leaving Republicans grappling for

a way to regain their standing with an increasingly powerful pool of voters. ¶ **The president will press his case for**

immigration changes during a trip to Las Vegas Tuesday. The Senate working group is also aiming to outline its proposals next week, according to a Senate aide. ¶ Administration officials say **Obama’s** second-term immigration **push will be a continuation of the principles he outlined during his first four years in office** but failed to act on. He is expected to revive his little-noticed 2011 immigration “blueprint,” which calls for a **pathway to citizenship** for illegal immigrants that includes paying fines and back taxes; increased **border security**; mandatory **penalties for businesses that employ unauthorized immigrants**; and



improvements to the legal immigration system, including giving green cards to high-skilled workers and lifting caps on legal immigration for the immediate family members of U.S. citizens.¶ "What has been absent in the time since he put those principles forward has been a willingness by Republicans, generally speaking, to move forward with comprehensive immigration reform," White House press secretary Jay Carney said. "What he hopes is that that dynamic has changed."¶ The political dynamic does appear to have shifted following the November election. Despite making little progress on immigration in his first term, Obama won more than 70 percent of the Latino vote, in part because of the conservative positions on immigration that Republican nominee Mitt Romney staked out during the GOP primary. Latino voters accounted for 10 percent of the electorate in November.¶ The president met privately Friday morning with the Congressional Hispanic Caucus to discuss his next steps on immigration. Among those in the meeting was Rep. Linda Sanchez, D-Calif., who said **Obama told lawmakers "immigration reform is his number one legislative priority."**¶ **That could bump back** the president's efforts to seek legislation enacting **stricter gun laws**, another issue he has vowed to make a top second term priority.



A2 thumper – budget

Obama controls spin – avoids blame and ensures GOP backs down

Walsh 2/21 (Kenneth, A longtime chief White House correspondent for U.S. News & World Report, “Obama Winning the War Over the Sequester”, <http://www.usnews.com/news/blogs/Ken-Walshs-Washington/2013/02/21/obama-winning-the-war-over-the-sequester>,

President **Obama has the upper hand** in his battle with congressional Republicans over who should be **blamed** if draconian budget cuts take effect next week.¶ One reason for Obama's success is that the **president and his strategists are adept at making dramatic appeals to voters and using the presidential bully pulpit to shape the political narrative**, while **the GOP lacks a compelling message** and a charismatic leader to rally around.¶ If there is a sequester, as the upcoming automatic budget cuts are called, Obama's campaign-style approach will get more intense as the administration announces more potential cuts in popular programs in an effort to pressure the GOP into agreeing to a compromise.¶ Democratic strategists say **the Republicans, if they persist in opposing any further tax increases, will deepen the public impression that they are zealous curmudgeons who can only say no and mainly want to protect the rich and big corporations**.¶ A new poll by the Pew Research Center bolsters Obama's position. Nearly half of Americans would blame the GOP if the cuts took place while fewer than one third would blame Obama. And 79 percent say additional tax increases should be part of a budget deal, which is Obama's position. Only 19 percent agree with the Republicans that the deficit should be reduced solely with spending cuts.¶ A separate Bloomberg poll shows that 55 percent of Americans approve of Obama's job performance while only 35 per cent give a positive rating to the GOP.¶ Obama argues that he will accept more spending cuts if the Republican-controlled House and the Democratic-controlled Senate agree to more tax increases on the affluent. So far, all sides are at loggerheads. If they can't find a compromise, \$85 billion in spending cuts will automatically take effect March 1.¶ **Obama and his allies have been issuing a series of dire warnings about what would happen in the event of a sequester, attempting to put the GOP on the defensive**. In one of eight interviews with local television anchors Wednesday, Obama told WJZ of Baltimore, "I don't know why it is in this town folks leave stuff to the last minute. You know, there's no other profession, no other industry, where people wait until the 11th hour to solve these big problems."

Won't be a fight – Obama has upper-hand

Lauter 2/20 (David, <http://www.latimes.com/news/politics/la-na-pn-obama-poll-20130220,0,2912355.story>

WASHINGTON -- President **Obama goes into** a busy spring of **legislative battles holding the upper hand** over congressional Republicans **on key issues**, a newly released poll shows.¶ **In the fight over automatic spending cuts** that are scheduled to begin March 1, **Obama has a dual advantage**: Almost **half of Americans surveyed** said they would **blame the GOP** if the cuts took place, compared with fewer than one-third who said they would blame Obama. Moreover, **an overwhelming majority, 79%, say that additional tax increases should be part of any new deficit reduction deal**, compared with only 19% who side with the Republican position that the deficit should be reduced solely with spending cuts.



A2 thumper – guns

Won't be a fight and public pushes, not Obama

AP 2/5 ("Obama stands firm on gun control despite long odds",

<http://www.lewistownsentinel.com/page/content.detail/id/288266/Obama-stands-firm-on-gun-control-despite-long-odds-.html?isap=1&nav=5016>

Obama also **was** more **upbeat on the prospects** of universal background checks, including for purchases at gun shows. ¶ "The good news is that **we're starting to see a consensus emerge** about the action Congress needs to take," he said. "The vast **majority of Americans**, including a majority of gun owners, **support** requiring **criminal background checks** for anyone trying to buy a gun. **There's no reason why we can't get that done.**" ¶ **He urged Americans to call their members of Congress to push for his entire package** of stronger gun controls. "Tell them now is the time for action."

Immigration will pass and guns will not thump it

News Times 1/19 <http://www.newstimes.com/local/article/Immigration-reform-suddenly-approachable-4208125.php>

Ironically, **the success of the domestic agenda** in his second term -- which, as of **now, appears centered on immigration reform** and gun control -- **depends on playing to both red states and the blue ones**. ¶ Neither immigration nor gun control had a significant place in Obama's first-term agenda. ¶ Indeed, at their core, both are public safety programs -- messy and dark and generally removed from the "hope" that got him to the White House. But in the span of a few weeks, the 2012 presidential election and the massacre at Newtown provided the impetus for a renewed push for both comprehensive immigration reform and comprehensive gun controls. ¶ The question now is whether the White House can do both, and that has proponents of immigration reform very anxious. Pro-immigration forces had the president's ear in November. Hispanics are now over 10 percent of the total electorate, twice as big a portion as just 20 years ago, and they gave Obama over 70 percent of their votes. ¶ But then all those children were killed in Newtown, and immigration reform became a lesser priority. The moral obligation to address gun violence fell quickly on Obama and Vice President Joe Biden. Their announcement last week of sweeping legislative and administrative changes was driven by a near-universal revulsion at what happened in Connecticut. ¶ A CBS News/New York Times poll released last Thursday showed that, among Democrats, 93 percent support background check for gun purchasers; among Republicans, it's 89 percent. These numbers are more than a mandate; they make some kind of change a foregone conclusion. ¶ **The political reality today is that immigration reform and gun control can occur simultaneously, because they are being driven by different forces.** This is hopeful news for those who believe we should be judged as a nation both by how we treat our newest citizens and protect our youngest ones. ¶ **With Republicans now eager to engage in a discussion on immigration reform**, to undo some of the damage of their past resistance, **Obama can leave much of the impetus for immigration to the red states** and promote gun control via the blue ones. ¶ The last part is already happening: Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick, Maryland Governor Martin O'Malley, and New York Governor Andrew Cuomo either are pushing, or have already passed, state legislation in tandem with the White House's gun-control effort. Democrats in conservative states, like Senator Mary Landrieu of Louisiana and Majority Leader Harry Reid on Nevada, will need the White House to stay engaged on gun control, if only to provide them with cover. ¶ Meanwhile, as Republicans become more recalcitrant on gun control -- and the lunacy of the NRA's media campaign continues -- they will need to find an issue that makes them seem kinder and gentler. Enter immigration reform. ¶ **The Republicans know that their future rests on embracing a more diverse electorate. They need immigration reform as much as it needs them.** This pressure is felt most acutely by state-level Republican leaders aiming for 2016, such as Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal. ¶ Hints of this strategy were apparent last week, when the White House complimented Florida Republican Senator Marco Rubio for conceding, in a Wall Street Journal interview, that he would support a path for citizenship for 11 million illegal immigrants. The Obama administration can afford to be gracious to Rubio, the GOP's rising star and a likely 2016 presidential candidate. They had stolen his thunder last summer when they stopped deportations of young, illegal immigrants (the DREAMers) before Rubio could get a similar proposal out.

Immigration 1st – comes before everything, including gun control

AP 1/26 ("Obama, senators launching immigration push",

<http://www.newsday.com/news/nation/obama-senators-launching-immigration-push-1.4514347>

President Barack **Obama will launch a campaign next week aimed at overhauling** the nation's flawed **immigration** system and creating legal status for millions, as a bipartisan Senate group nears agreement on achieving the same goals. ¶



The proposals from Obama and lawmakers **will mark the start of** what is expected to be a **contentious** and emotional **process** with deep political implications. Latino voters overwhelmingly backed Obama in the 2012 election, leaving Republicans grappling for a way to regain their standing with an increasingly powerful pool of voters. ¶ **The president will press his case for immigration** changes during a trip to Las Vegas Tuesday. The Senate working group is also aiming to outline its proposals next week, according to a Senate aide. ¶ Administration officials say **Obama's second-term immigration push will be a continuation of the principles he outlined during his first four years in office** but failed to act on. He is expected to revive his little-noticed 2011 immigration "blueprint," which calls for a **pathway to citizenship** for illegal immigrants that includes paying fines and back taxes; increased **border security**; mandatory **penalties for businesses that employ unauthorized immigrants**; and **improvements to the legal immigration system**, including giving **green cards to high-skilled workers** and **lifting caps on legal immigration for the immediate family members** of U.S. citizens. ¶ "What has been absent in the time since he put those principles forward has been a willingness by Republicans, generally speaking, to move forward with comprehensive immigration reform," White House press secretary Jay Carney said. "What he hopes is that that dynamic has changed." ¶ The political dynamic does appear to have shifted following the November election. Despite making little progress on immigration in his first term, Obama won more than 70 percent of the Latino vote, in part because of the conservative positions on immigration that Republican nominee Mitt Romney staked out during the GOP primary. Latino voters accounted for 10 percent of the electorate in November. ¶ The president met privately Friday morning with the Congressional Hispanic Caucus to discuss his next steps on immigration. Among those in the meeting was Rep. Linda Sanchez, D-Calif., who said **Obama told lawmakers "immigration reform is his number one legislative priority."** ¶ **That could bump back the president's efforts to seek** legislation enacting **stricter gun laws**, another issue he has vowed to make a top second term priority.

Won't be a fight or effect immigration

Hopkins 1/20 (Cheyenne, "Plouffe Predicts Passage of Gun Control, Immigration Changes", <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-01-20/plouffe-predicts-passage-of-gun-control-immigration-measures.html>,

President Barack Obama's proposed **immigration law** changes **and gun control** measures **should be able to pass Congress**, said David Plouffe, Obama's senior political adviser. ¶ **Newtown has changed the debate**, Plouffe said on CNN's "State of the Union" today, referring to the Connecticut town where 20 schoolchildren and 6 educators were killed last month. "Sadly, it took a tragedy like that, but you're seeing **a lot of people** -- by the way Democrats and Republicans -- **think differently about this issue** since this tragedy." ¶ Enlarge image Obama Takes Oath at White House to Begin Second Term ¶ U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts administers the oath of office as U.S. President Barack Obama is sworn in for a second term in the Blue Room of the White House in Washington, D.C. on Sunday. Photographer: Brendan Smialowski/Pool via Bloomberg ¶ Obama was officially sworn in today, as required by the Constitution, in a small ceremony at the White House. He will take the oath a second time tomorrow in a public event on the steps of the U.S. Capitol. Chief Justice John Roberts will administer both oaths. ¶ Vice President Joe Biden was also sworn in today for a second term by Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor at his residence at the Naval Observatory in Washington. Later, Obama and Biden laid a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknowns in Arlington National Cemetery. ¶ Obama has staked out a second term agenda of overhauling immigration, gun control and the tax code. **Plouffe took an optimistic stance, saying that the time has come for both immigration change and gun control.** ¶ Republican Reaction ¶ U.S. Senator Roy Blunt, a Republican from Missouri, said he wants to see a detailed gun control plan from Obama. ¶ "Let's do things better rather than take an opportunity to go after an old agenda," Blunt said today on "Fox News Sunday" program. "There has to be a plan that could possibly work or the president won't get it done." ¶ Senator John Barrasso, a Republican from Wyoming, said the president's plan won't pass Congress and he doubts Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid will bring it to the floor. ¶ "He has six Democrats up for election in two years in states where the president received fewer than 42 percent of the vote," Barrasso said on CNN's "State of the Union." Democrats control the Senate with 53 seats to 45 Republican seats. The two independent senators caucus with the Democrats. ¶ "He doesn't want his Democrats to have to choose between their own constituencies and the president's positions," Barrasso. He said the president is focusing too much on gun control and ignoring mental health and violence in society. ¶ Economic Wreckage ¶ Obama's first term was largely consumed by repairing economic wreckage from the 2008 financial crisis and getting his health care law passed. His second term is starting with efforts to reach a compromise with Congress on raising the debt ceiling and cutting deficit spending. ¶ A Republican plan for a short-term debt ceiling increase, giving the Treasury Department three more months of borrowing capacity, is "progress," Plouffe said on the "Fox News Sunday" program. "We don't think short-term is smart for the economy" because it doesn't offer certainty, he said on Fox. ¶ The debt limit has been periodically raised since its creation in 1917, when Congress and President Woodrow Wilson authorized the Treasury to issue long-term securities to help finance entry into World War I. Since 1960, Congress has raised or revised the limit 79 times, including 49 times under Republican presidents, according to the Treasury Department, noting the U.S. never has defaulted on its obligations. ¶ Three Months ¶ "Three months is no way to run the economy or railroad or anything else so that's not ideal," Plouffe said on CBS's "Face the Nation" program. Still, "it's a significant moment that the Republican party now has moved off their position that the only way they're going to pay their



bills is if they get the correct kind of concessions.”¶ The Senate will pass a budget this year, U.S. Senator Charles Schumer, a Democrat from New York, said on NBC’s “Meet the Press” program.¶ “It’s going to have revenues in it and our Republican colleagues better get used to that fact,” Schumer said.¶ House Republicans last week said they plan to vote on a three-month extension of U.S. borrowing authority in an effort to force the Democratic-led Senate to adopt a budget.¶ Financing for government agencies is scheduled to lapse in March. Congress faces two other fiscal deadlines in the next 90 days, and House Republicans plan to use those debates -- rather than the struggle over the debt limit -- to try to force spending cuts.¶ The last time Congress fought over the ceiling, Obama signed an increase on Aug. 2, 2011, the day that the Treasury warned U.S. borrowing authority would expire.¶ Credit Rating¶ Standard & Poor’s cut the nation’s credit rating. Still, Treasury bond investors -- who most directly bear the risk of any government default -- haven’t shown alarm. Yields on 10-year U.S. Treasury notes declined to 2.56 percent on Aug. 5, 2011, the day of the S&P downgrade, and continued to fall.¶ Yields on 10-year Treasuries, a benchmark for everything from mortgages to corporate borrowing costs, are down from more than 5 percent in 2007, before the financial crisis of 2008.¶ Treasury 10-year notes rose last week for a second week for the first time since November as the absence of a resolution to the impasse the U.S. debt ceiling sustained demand for the safest securities. The 10-year note yield fell this week three basis points, or 0.03 percentage point, to 1.84 percent, according to Bloomberg Bond Trader pricing.¶ Plouffe said Congress has the votes to pass Obama’s agenda.¶ “We’re confident and that’s one reason we want to stay in communication with the American people because I think they are going to demand action here,” Plouffe said on CNN.¶ Gun Control¶ The Dec. 14 shooting in a Connecticut grade school thrust gun control to the top of Obama’s second-term agenda. This past week, he unveiled the most ambitious gun-control proposals in decades, announcing a \$500 million package of legislation and executive actions aimed at curbing firearms violence.¶ The president called on Congress to require background checks for all gun buyers, ban high-capacity ammunition clips, and reinstate a ban on sales of assault weapons. Obama also signed 23 executive actions aimed at circumventing congressional opposition to new gun restrictions, including several designed to maximize prosecution of gun crimes and improve access to government data for background checks.¶ Plouffe said **the president should be able to get the 60 votes in the Senate and the 219 votes in the House needed to pass a gun control bill.**¶ Assault Weapons¶ “If you look at high-capacity magazines, assault weapons, universal background checks, progress we can make on mental health and school safety, **all of these things enjoy enormous support** of the American people, **both Democrats and Republicans**,” Plouffe said on ABC’s “This Week with George Stephanopoulos.”¶ “Putting together the legislative coalition is going to be hard, obviously, but **we’re very confident**. I do think **things have changed** since Newtown,” Plouffe said.¶ Obama’s call has put him in conflict with the National Rifle Association, which opposes the restrictions and has called for armed guards in every school. The gun lobby last week released an ad saying Obama’s own daughters are protected by armed guards at school and calling the president an “elitist hypocrite.”¶ Obama’s inaugural address tomorrow and State of the Union speech on Feb. 12 will set the tone as he pushes for action.¶ Plouffe said **there is no reason** “that **immigration reform shouldn’t pass**.”¶ “Obviously **the legislative process has to work its way through** but this is the **moment**,” Plouffe said. “**The stars seem to be aligned** to finally get comprehensive immigration reform.”

Immigration will pass by the summer – PC is key and no thumpers -

Chris **Weignat 1/23** Political writer and blogger with the Huffington Post, “Handicapping Obama's Second Term Agenda,” http://www.huffingtonpost.com/chris-weigant/obama-second-term_b_2537802.html

Realistically, Obama's only going to have anywhere from a few months to (at most) a year and a half to get anything accomplished. Which is why he is right to push his agenda immediately, as evidenced by his inaugural speech. **But even he must realize that he's not going to get everything he wants, so it will be interesting to see what makes it through Congress and what dies an ignoble legislative death. There is reason for hope. Obama begins from a position of strength, politically. His job approval ratings have been consistently over 50 percent since he was re-elected** -- a range Obama hasn't seen since 2009. As mentioned, **the Republican presence in both houses of Congress has shrunk. More importantly, though, the House Republicans are visibly chastened (or even "shaken") by the election's outcome.** This has already allowed Obama to rack up two early victories in the endless budget debates -- and in both, Obama got almost everything he asked for, did not give up much of anything, and held firm on some very bold negotiating tactics. **Obama won the fight over the fiscal cliff**, which resulted in the first rise in income tax rates in two decades, **and** the only thing he had to budge on was the threshold for these higher taxes. Today, the House Republicans passed a "clean" rise in **the debt ceiling**, after Obama swore over and over again that he "was not going to negotiate" on the issue at all. **The score so far is: Obama two, House Republicans zero** (to put it in sporting terms). Of course, the Republicans only extended the debt ceiling for a few months, but this shouldn't really worry anyone, because a longer-term extension will doubtlessly be a part of any sort of grand bargain on the budget talks. **The Republicans**, very wisely, **realized they were playing a losing game and decided to reshuffle the deadlines on the calendar.** Rather than being faced with the debt ceiling crisis first, and then two budgetary crises, they **have moved the debt ceiling problem to the end of the list.** Which



means the next big fight Obama faces is going to be another hagggle over the budget. This is going to be a tough battle, and Obama is bound to disappoint some of his supporters in the midst of it. Some sacred cows are going to wind up as hamburger, although at this point it's hard to see which ones. The real measurement of success here will be whether the House Republicans and Obama can come to terms with a budget for the next year or year-and-a-half. Long-term budget stability has been largely absent from Washington for a while now, so if any agreement can be reached perhaps it'll help the economy recover a lot faster throughout 2013 and 2014. In the long run, that will be a positive thing, no matter what such a budget agreement actually contains. One safe bet for what will be in it, though, is a long-term extension of the debt ceiling.

Budget battles are going to happen no matter what else does -- that's another safe bet. What is more interesting, though, is handicapping which of Obama's agenda items will actually see some action.

There are three major initiatives that Obama is currently pushing: action on global warming, comprehensive immigration reform, and gun control. Obama did mention other issues in his speech,

but these are the big three for now. Gay marriage, for instance, is in the hands of the Supreme Court right now, and no matter how they rule it's hard to see any legislative action (good or bad) happening on it immediately afterwards. Gun control will likely be the first of these debated in Congress. Vice President Biden laid out a wide array of possible actions Congress could take on the issue, all of which Obama then backed. While the Newtown massacre did indeed shift public opinion dramatically on the overall issue, the biggest initiative is not likely to become law. **An assault rifle ban** is very important to some Democrats, but the way I read it is that this was included to have something to "trade away" in the negotiations. If Obama gets most of the other gun control initiatives -- closing loopholes on background checks, much better tracking of weapons, and all the other "small bore" (sorry about that pun) ideas -- then he will at least be able to say he accomplished something at the end of the day. Perhaps this is pessimistic, but the mechanics of banning "assault weapons" become very tricky, when you have to actually define what they are in legal language. And such a ban may not get universal Democratic backing anyway, so I fully expect this

will be shelved at some point in exchange for support for all the other initiatives. Without such a ban,

the prospects for other meaningful **gun control legislation** get a lot better, though, and I think that a bill **will eventually pass.**

The second big agenda item is immigration reform. President Obama holds virtually all the cards, politically, on this one.

All Republicans who can read either demographics or polling numbers know full well that this may be their party's last chance not to go the way of the Whigs. Their support among Latinos is dismal, and even that's putting it politely. Some Republicans think they have come up with a perfect solution on how to defuse the issue, but they are going to be proven sadly mistaken in the end, I believe. The Republican plan will be announced by Senator Marco Rubio at some point, and it will seem to mirror the Democratic plan -- with one key difference. Republicans -- even the ones who know their party has to do something on the immigration problem -- are balking at including a "path to citizenship" for the 11 million undocumented immigrants who are already in America. The Republicans are trying to have their cake and eat it too -- and it's not going to work. "Sure," they say, "we'll give some sort of papers to these folks, let them stay, and even let them work... but there's no need to give them the hope of ever becoming a full citizen." This just isn't going to be good enough, though. There are essentially two things citizens can do which green card holders cannot: serve on juries, and vote. The Republicans are not worried about tainted juries, in case that's not clear enough. Republicans will bend over backwards in an effort to convince Latinos that their proposal will work out just fine for everyone. Latinos, however, aren't stupid. They know that being denied any path to citizenship equals an effort to minimize their voice on the national political stage. Which is why, as I said, Obama holds all the cards in this fight. Because this is the one issue in his agenda which Republicans also have a big vested interest in making happen. Obama and the Democrats will, I believe, hold firm on their

insistence on a path to citizenship, and I think **a comprehensive immigration bill will likely pass** some time this

year, perhaps before the summer congressional break. The path to citizenship it includes will be long, expensive and difficult (Republicans will insist on at least that), but it will be there. On gun control, I think Obama will win a partial victory. On immigration, I think he will win an almost-total victory.

On global warming, however, he's going to be disappointed. In fact, **I doubt -- no matter how much "bully pulping" Obama does -- that any bill will even appear out of a**

committee in either house of Congress. This will be seen as Obama's "overreach" -- a bridge too far for the current political climate. Anyone expecting big legislative action on global warming is very likely going to be massively disappointed, to put it quite bluntly. In fact, Obama will signal this in the next few months, as he approves the Keystone XL pipeline -- much to the dismay of a lot of his supporters. Of course, I could be wrong about any or all of these predictions. I have no special knowledge of how things will work out in Congress in the immediate future. I'm merely making educated guesses about what Obama will be able to achieve in at least the first few years of his second term.

Obama has a lot of political capital right now, but that could easily change soon. The House

Republicans seem almost demoralized right now, and Obama has successfully splintered them and called their bluff on two big issues

already -- but they **could regroup and decide to block everything** the White House wants, and damn the political

consequences. **Unseen issues will pop up** both on the domestic and foreign policy stages, as they always do. **But, for now,**

this is my take on how the next few years are going to play out in Washington. Time will tell whether I've been too optimistic or too pessimistic on any or all of Obama's main agenda items. We'll just have to wait and see.



A2 thumper – NLRB

More ev to support this distinction – Obama’s legislative prioritization ensures passage

Gomez, 1/25 (Alan, “Obama, members of Congress start immigration push,”

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2013/01/25/obama-immigration-congress-legislation/1865129/>,

Obama has vowed to make immigration a 'top legislative priority.' The push to overhaul the nation's immigration laws is officially underway. President Obama met with Hispanic members of Congress at the

White House on Friday and is planning a speech in Las Vegas on Tuesday to "redouble the administration's efforts to work with Congress to fix the broken immigration system this year," according to a White House statement.

Obama insisted that he would lead on the issue, and emphasized that any changes to the nation's immigration laws would include an "earned pathway to citizenship" for the nation's 11 million illegal immigrants. Republicans have insisted that the country fully secure the borders and enact tight restrictions on businesses from hiring illegal immigrants before granting any new rights to people illegally living in the country.

STORY: Jeb Bush pushes comprehensive immigration strategy After Friday's meeting, members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus — all Democrats — said they were enthusiastic by the president's commitment to moving on an immigration bill.

"The president is the quarterback and he will direct the team, call the play and be pivotal if we succeed," said Rep. Luis Gutierrez, D-III., one of the House members who will be shepherding the bill through Congress.

Both Republicans and Democrats have discussed the need to tackle immigration this term, but there are many disagreements over what it will look like and how to proceed. Republicans, including Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida, have insisted that they approach it piece by piece. A bipartisan group of senators plan on introducing a bill on Tuesday focused on increasing the number of visas for high-skilled immigrants with degrees in the STEM fields — science, technology, engineering and mathematics — according to The Hill. Meanwhile, many Democrats support a "comprehensive" bill that would address all the issues at once. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid filed Senate Bill No. 1 as the "Immigration Reform that Works for America's Future Act," a symbolic, but telling indication of how important the issue will be in the new Congress. Another bipartisan group of senators is almost ready to unveil their own comprehensive immigration plan, according to The Washington Post.

Whatever the approach, members feel the stars are finally aligned to tackle an issue that eluded George W. Bush during his White House years and Obama during his first term in office.

"Immigration reform is not a matter of 'if' but 'when,'" said Rep. Xavier Becerra, D-Calif., chairman of the House Democratic Caucus. "After today's meeting, it's clear that President Obama is determined to fix our long broken immigration system."

Get real – the decision was a joke and won't stick

AP 1/26 (White House: Ruling won't affect other Obama picks, <http://www.pal-item.com/article/20130126/UPDATES/130126003/White-House-Ruling-won-t-affect-other-Obama-picks>,

The Justice Department hinted that the administration would ask the Supreme Court to overturn the decision, which was rendered by three conservative judges appointed by Republican presidents.

"We disagree with the court's ruling and believe that the president's recess appointments are constitutionally sound," the statement said.

The court acknowledged that the ruling conflicts with what some other federal appeals courts have held about when recess appointments are valid, which only added to the likelihood of an appeal to the high court.



PC key

PC is key and finite

Nakamura 2/20 (David, "In interview, Obama says he has a year to get stuff done", 2013, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/post-politics/wp/2013/02/20/in-interview-obama-says-he-has-a-year-to-get-stuff-done/>)

President **Obama[s]** said Wednesday he's **eager to move quickly to enact his second-term agenda, acknowledging** that **he has a severely limited time frame** before the political world begins thinking about the next election cycle in 2014 and beyond.¶ Obama told a San Francisco television station that **he wants to "get as much stuff done as quickly as possible."**¶ "Once we get through this year, then people start looking at the mid-terms and after that start thinking about the presidential election," Obama said during a brief interview with KGO, an ABC affiliate. "The American people don't want us thinking about elections, they want us to do some work. America is poised to grow in 2013 and add a lot of jobs as long as Washington doesn't get in the way."¶ **Obama's remarks were an acknowledgement that a second-term president's ability to use his political capital faces rapidly diminishing returns, highlighting the high stakes of his bids to strike deals with Congress on** issues from tax reform, budget cuts, **immigration reform** and gun control.

Obama is making a commitment to work with Congress to pass immigration reform --- it's a top priority and capital is key

Gomez, 1/25 (Alan, "Obama, members of Congress start immigration push," <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2013/01/25/obama-immigration-congress-legislation/1865129/>)

Obama has vowed to make immigration a 'top legislative priority.'¶ **The push to overhaul the nation's immigration laws is officially underway.**¶ President **Obama met with Hispanic members of Congress** at the White House on Friday **and is planning** a speech in Las Vegas on Tuesday to **"redouble the administration's efforts to work with Congress to fix the broken immigration system this year,"** according to a White House statement.¶ **Obama insisted that he would lead on the issue** and emphasized that any changes to the nation's immigration laws would include an "earned pathway to citizenship" for the nation's 11 million illegal immigrants. Republicans have insisted that the country fully secure the borders and enact tight restrictions on businesses from hiring illegal immigrants before granting any new rights to people illegally living in the country.¶ STORY: Jeb Bush pushes comprehensive immigration strategy¶ After Friday's meeting, **members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus** — all Democrats — **said they were enthusiastic by the president's commitment to moving on an immigration bill.**¶ **"The president is the quarterback and he will direct the team, call the play and be pivotal if we succeed,"** said Rep. Luis **Gutierrez**, D-Ill., one of the House members who will be shepherding the bill through Congress.¶ **Both Republicans and Democrats have discussed the need to tackle immigration this term, but there are many disagreements over what it will look like and how to proceed.**¶ Republicans, including Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida, have insisted that they approach it piece by piece. A bipartisan group of senators plan on introducing a bill on Tuesday focused on increasing the number of visas for high-skilled immigrants with degrees in the STEM fields — science, technology, engineering and mathematics — according to The Hill.¶ Meanwhile, many Democrats support a "comprehensive" bill that would address all the issues at once. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid filed Senate Bill No. 1 as the "Immigration Reform that Works for America's Future Act," a symbolic, but telling indication of how important the issue will be in the new Congress. Another bipartisan group of senators is almost ready to unveil their own comprehensive immigration plan, according to The Washington Post.¶ **Whatever the approach, members feel the stars are finally aligned** to tackle an issue that eluded George W. Bush during his White House years and Obama during his first term in office.¶ "Immigration reform is not a matter of 'if' but 'when,'" said Rep. Xavier Becerra, D-Calif., chairman of the House Democratic Caucus. "After today's meeting, it's clear that President Obama is determined to fix our long broken immigration system."



Capital key

DALLAS MORNING NEWS, editorial, "Actions Must Match Obama's Immigration Pledge," 1--2--13, <http://www.dallasnews.com/opinion/editorials/20130102-editorial-actions-must-match-obamas-immigration-pledge.ece>

President Barack **Obama** said all the right things Sunday about immigration reform. The president told NBC's Meet the Press that he **is serious about getting Congress to overhaul the laws governing immigrants**. He even declared that he will introduce an immigration bill this year. This newspaper welcomes that announcement. Texans particularly understand the unique challenges that an outdated immigration system presents. Even though the flow of illegal immigrants into the U.S. has subsided in the last few years, the many holes in the system leave families, schools, businesses and law enforcement struggling. And those are just some of the constituents challenged by flawed immigration laws. The president's words to NBC's David Gregory are only that — words. **What will really matter is whether he puts his muscle into the task** this year. We suggest that Obama start by looking at the example of former President George W. Bush. Back in 2006 and 2007, the Republican and his administration constantly worked Capitol Hill to pass a comprehensive plan. They failed, largely because Senate Republicans balked. But the opposition didn't stop the Bush White House from fully engaging Congress, including recalcitrant Republicans. **Obama may have a similar problem with his own party**. The dirty little secret in the 2006 and 2007 immigration battles was that some Democrats were content to let Senate Republicans kill the effort. **Labor-friendly Democrats didn't want a bill**, either. And they may not want one this year. **That reluctance is a major reason the president needs to invest in this fight**. He must figure out how to bring enough Democrats along, while also reaching out to Republicans. In short, the nation doesn't need a repeat of the process through which the 2010 health care legislation was passed. Very few Republicans bought into the president's plan, leaving the Affordable Care Act open to partisan sniping throughout last year's election. **If the nation is going to create a saner immigration system, both parties need to support substantial parts** of an answer. The new system must include a guest worker program for future immigrants and a way for illegal immigrants already living here to legalize their status over time. Some House Republicans will object to one or both of those reforms, so Speaker John Boehner must be persuasive about the need for a wholesale change. But **the leadership that matters most will come from the White House**. The president has staked out the right position. Now he needs to present a bill and fight this year for a comprehensive solution. Nothing but action will count.

Capital's key

Michael **Shifter**, President, Inter-American Dialogue, "Will Obama Kick the Can Down the Road," REVISTE IDEELE, 12--27--12, <http://www.thedialogue.org/page.cfm?pageID=32&pubID=3186>

Not surprisingly, **Obama has been explicit that reforming** the US's shameful and broken **immigration** system will be a top priority in his second term. There is every indication that **he intends to use some of his precious political capital** — especially in the first year — to push for serious change. The biggest lesson of the last election was that the "Latino vote" was decisive. No one doubts that it will be even more so in future elections. During the campaign, many Republicans -- inexplicably -- frightened immigrants with offensive rhetoric. But the day after the election, there was talk, in both parties, of comprehensive immigration reform. **Despite the sudden optimism** about immigration reform, there is, of course, no guarantee that it will happen. **It will require a lot of negotiation and deal-making. Obama will have to invest a lot of his time and political capital -- twisting some arms, even in his own party**. Resistance will not disappear. There is also a chance that something unexpected could happen that would put off consideration of immigration reform. Following the horrific massacre at a Connecticut elementary school on December 14, for example, public pressure understandably mounted for gun control, at least the ban of assault weapons. But a decision to pursue that measure -- though desperately needed -- would take away energy and time from other priorities like immigration.

Political capital key to immigration.

ABC News, 1-2-2013, p. abcnews.go.com/ABC_Univision/News/things-president-obama-immigration-reform/story?id=18103115#.UOUq8onjkax

On Sunday, President Barack **Obama said that immigration** reform **is a "top priority"** on his agenda **and that he would introduce legislation** in his first year. To find out what he needs to do to make reform a reality, we talked to Lynn Tramonte, the deputy director at America's Voice, a group that lobbies for immigration reform, and Muzaffar Chishti, the director of the New York office of the Migration Policy Institute, a think tank. Here's what we came up with. 1. Be a Leader **During Obama's first term, bipartisan legislation never got off the ground. The president needs to** do a better job



leading **the charge** this time around, according to Chishti. **He has to make it clear that it's a high priority** of his," he said. **He has to make it clear that he'll use his bully pulpit and his political muscle to make it happen**, and he has to be open to using his veto power." His announcement this weekend is a step in that direction, but **he needs to follow through.**

Political capital key to immigration reform.

American Prospect, 12-29-2012

Address Immigration While **Obama was unable to make good on his promise of passing**

comprehensive immigration reform in his first two years in office thanks to Republican stonewalling after passage of the Affordable Care Act, the president was able to offer some administrative relief to those left in legal limbo by our dysfunctional immigration system. In June of this year, the administration announced it would stop deporting undocumented immigrants who had been brought to the country through no fault of their own; before age 16; had graduated from high school, earned a GED, or served in the military; and had no criminal record. The move was widely seen as an effort to provide relief for undocumented youth after the DREAM Act, which would have given undocumented youth brought to the country by their parents a path to citizenship, failed to pass the Senate in 2010. The Department of Homeland Security also suspended its 287(g) program, which authorized local law-enforcement officials like Arizona's notorious Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio to enforce federal immigration laws. But none of these administrative measures scratches the surface of the problems with the immigration system, which include overburdened courts, deplorable conditions in immigrant-detention centers, draconian family-unification policies, insufficient work Visas and arbitrary Visa caps, years-long administrative delays, and per-country caps that do not reflect current economic and humanitarian demands. The dysfunction in our immigration system is largely the reason there are 12 million undocumented immigrants currently living in the U.S.

Buoyed by his re-election and with key Republicans eager to soften their image with Latino voters, Obama has a prime opportunity to modernize our outdated and dysfunctional **immigration system.**

Doing so is both savvy politically and **necessary from an economic and humanitarian standpoint: it will** redound to the president and his party's advantage; serve to **meet the needs of the agriculture and technology sectors, which rely heavily on immigrant labor; and provide humanitarian relief for those fleeing poverty** in their home countries. **While the president is sure to face stalwart opposition from hard-line anti-immigrant legislators, he only needs to rally his party behind him and win over** the support of **a critical mass of Republicans. Immigrant-rights groups are** rightly **pushing for the president to undertake** comprehensive immigration **reform** in 2013, **before his political capital begins to wane** and he **slips into the lame-duck twilight** of his presidency.

Obama's push ensures passage of comprehensive immigration reform

Babington 12/24 (Charles, "Obama Agenda Provides Long Work List To Tackle When He Returns", 2012, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/12/24/obama-agenda_n_2359400.html, CMR)

Americans' affinity for firearms runs deep, and **many political activists think Obama could have** more **sweeping success with immigration changes.** **He won a big majority of Hispanics' votes in both his elections. The trend alarms Republican strategists who fear their party won't win another presidential election until it repairs its bad relations with Latinos.** **With Democrats and Republicans increasingly aware of Hispanics' growing political clout, this might be an historic opportunity,"** Troy said. **Chris Dolan, a political scientist at Lebanon Valley College in Pennsylvania, agrees.**

He said he **expects Obama to be "incredibly ambitious** on comprehensive immigration reform." The effort, Dolan said, could "build a lasting Democratic support group. You can't do that with gun control." **Still, opposition** to granting citizenship to illegal immigrants **runs deep in many circles**, especially the Republican Party's base. Bids for "comprehensive immigration reform" have gone nowhere in Congress in recent years. Several advocacy groups want Obama to make the most of his executive powers to enact measures that don't require congressional action. **The Migration Policy Institute** earlier this year made several suggestions regarding immigrants. They included "establishing uniform enforcement priorities," defining "what constitutes effective border control," and "allowing applicants for immigrant visas to file in the United States." Now that Obama has won re-election, however, the advocacy group wants him instead to **push a broader agenda** through Congress. **"With the issue teed up for possible action,"** said Doris Meissner, a former commissioner at the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, **antagonizing congressional Republicans with executive actions "would not be politically smart."** **The political climate for sweeping immigration**



changes "is **significantly better**" Meissner said, "but that does not mean it will happen." ¶ Even with a full plate of challenges and a hostile party controlling the House, she said, "I think

Obama absolutely has to go big on immigration.



YES political capital

Obama has political capital

Palm Beach post 1/29 <http://www.palmbeachpost.com/news/news/national-govt-politics/obama-wants-immigration-reform-quickly-promises-co/nT9ft/>

One day after a bipartisan group of U.S. senators proposed an overhaul of immigration law, President Barack **Obama said** Tuesday that **he expects Congress to move promptly on** that **legislation** or he will put his own plan on the table.¶ Obama spoke at a high school in Nevada, a state he carried in the November election with the overwhelming support of Latino voters.¶ “If Congress is unable to move in a timely fashion, I will send up a bill based on my proposal and insist that they vote on it right away,” he said, bringing enthusiastic applause from his audience.¶ Florida’s GOP Sen. Marco Rubio, one of the eight members of the Senate group that presented its proposal Monday, fired back at Obama soon after.¶ “The president’s speech left the impression that he believes reforming immigration quickly is more important than reforming immigration right,” Rubio said. “A reform of our immigration laws is a consequential undertaking that deserves to be subjected to scrutiny and input from all involved.”¶ That exchange foreshadows what is expected to be a contentious debate.¶ The framework for the new immigration law offered by the eight senators — four Republicans and four Democrats — calls for augmented security at the nation’s borders, including the increased use of drones to monitor illegal border crossings, a demand of Republicans.¶ But the plan also detailed a pathway to citizenship for about 11 million undocumented persons in the country now, a demand of Democrats. The plan calls for enacting standards that would take years for immigrants to meet.¶ Despite the agreement, members of Congress on both sides are warning that the path to passage will not be easy.¶ “His threat of putting something of his own on the table is definitely meant to get them moving,” said David Abraham, an expert on immigration law at the University of Miami School of Law. “But, that said, he much prefers to have this be a Senate initiative and a bipartisan effort (and) not have to spend his own political capital getting this done.”¶ And **Obama does have political capital**,

especially **on the immigration issue**. The bipartisan effort on a new immigration agenda was provoked by the November elections when Obama beat GOP presidential candidate Mitt Romney 71-26 percent among Hispanic voters. The GOP had taken a hard line on overhauling immigration during the campaign, but GOP leaders are now saying that they need to attract more Latino voters and admit that they are supporting immigration reform as a way of doing so.

PC High—reelection

Jeff Fong, 1/24/2013. (MA, Political Science, San Jose State University) Policy Mic. “Obama’s Inauguration Will Be the Highlight of His Second Term” <http://www.policymic.com/articles/24030/obama-s-inauguration-will-be-the-highlight-of-his-second-term>

The president is entering his second term with good field position and decent political capital — at least **compared to the Republicans as a party**. The fight, however, is going to be messy wherever pockets of the opposition have circled the wagons. **What’s likely going forward is the political system** continuing to seize up as it operates under an intense partisan divide, and one that **features a less-than cohesive Republican Party**. To return to the original metaphor, **it certainly is all downhill from here for the president. The hardest work is over** but there are still some serious cracks in the **pavement he’ll have to avoid on the way down**.

Obama is steamrolling

Joan **Walsh** (Salon’s editor at large) **1/21** “Obama II: Older, wiser, stronger”, http://www.salon.com/2013/01/21/obama_ii_older_wiser_stronger/

But he’s never had a month like this last one. **In** January alone, over **the final three weeks of his first term, the president faced down three of the most toxic forces in American politics** — call them the three Ns: the National Rifle Association, Norquist (as in Grover) and the neocons — **and won crucial battles**, if not the war.¶ On Jan. 2 he signed a deal that raised top tax rates on the wealthiest Americans, winning the first GOP votes for a tax hike since 1990, despite their solemn vow otherwise to Norquist. On Jan. 7, he appointed former Sen. Chuck Hagel his Secretary of Defense despite once-fatal charges that he’s anti-Israel — or worse, anti-Semitic — from neocon bullies. On Jan. 16, he rallied the nation behind a gun control agenda and issued 23 “executive actions” that shouldn’t be controversial but are, thanks to the way the NRA has controlled gun politics in the last 20 years.¶ **And after** flatly **refusing to negotiate over a debt-ceiling** deal again, on Friday **he won a big battle with House GOP** dead-enders. The overmatched Republican leadership announced it would back lifting the ceiling for three months, and if they caved this time it’s hard to see them mounting a challenge in April.¶ A president who began his first term trying tirelessly to compromise with people who despise him completed it by finally standing up to them. It



no doubt helped that **in November he became the first president since Dwight Eisenhower to win 51 percent of the vote twice**. Just in January, **Obama faced down menacing political forces other presidents have ducked or placated**. As he takes the oath of office a second time (well, the fourth time, technically) on the nation's official holiday honoring Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., it's hard not to be optimistic. **If Obama keeps up his January pace, his second term will make even more history than his first**.

PC High: same sex marriage support

Rick Sanchez, 1/24/2013. "Rick Sanchez: Is President Obama Smarter than an 11th Grader?" Fox News Latino. <http://latino.foxnews.com/latino/opinion/2013/01/24/rick-sanchez-is-president-obama-smarter-than-11th-grader/#ixzz2lySqF2Vb>

Now let's move on to gay rights, or more specifically, **same sex marriage**. It **is very much an issue where the president has collected enormous amounts of political capital for a variety of reasons, including coming out in support of same sex couples' right to marry** in May of last year and now becoming the first president to mention gays **in an inaugural speech** and bring the matter front and center. Obama presently owns the issue, and it's not like the LGBT community is looking for an excuse to vote Republican. So why make waves? In the end, this is one that will be decided by the courts, not the White House. And the president would be smart to not interfere.



YES political capital – A2 Assault Weapons

PC Spent on Assault Weapons gets regenerated. Kills opposition.

Anthony **Gregory**, 1/24/2013. (Research Fellow at the Independent Institute; Author of forthcoming 'The Power of Habeas Corpus') "The Bellicosity of a Democrat's Second Term" HUFFPO
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/anthony-gregory/democratic-presidents-war_b_2522143.html

But what could be the motive? Here is my fear: **Obama**, like most progressive Democrats before him, probably wants to go down in history as a truly great president. Meanwhile, he **is spending lots of political capital on gun control measures he knows will face major resistance** and can hurt his party. **What better way to win back support from the center and neutralize the conservatives than to** take a cue from the Democratic Party's playbook and **save the big explosions for Act II?** **His progressive supporters** might say they won't stand for it, but **historically**, they **either looked the other way or, more often, lined up enthusiastically** when their president decided it was time for war. Indeed, we have already seen the opposition to militarism, indefinite detention, and even torture decline on the mainstream left every year Obama's been in power.

Obama won't push assault weapons. Won't lose PC

Rick **Moran**. 1/25/2013 "What the...? Proposed 'assault weapon' ban includes shotguns, handguns"
http://www.americanthinker.com/blog/2013/01/what_the_proposed_assault_weapon_ban_includes_shotguns_handguns.html#ixzz2lybs7FJg

There aren't many Democratic Senators or House members who are vulnerable in 2014 - and the list is long - who will sign on to this political suicide pact. I haven't heard of a single Republican who will vote for it, and there might be as many as 12 Democratic Senators and 60 House members who wouldn't vote for it either. Those numbers may shrink if the president does any serious arm twisting but I can't see Obama spending any political capital to try and pass an assault weapons ban. Verdict: **Feinstein's bill is DOA.**



YES political capital – A2 Same Sex Marriage

Obama won't spend PC on gay marriage

Goldstein, **Nancy**. **1/24/2013**. "Obama, civil rights is about legislation, not alliteration" THE GUARDIAN. [Nancy Goldstein is a writer and commentator whose work has appeared in the Guardian, the Washington Post, Salon, the Nation and National Public Radio. She also co-edited The Gender Politics of HIV/Aids in Women (1997)] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2013/jan/24/obama-legislation-alliteration-lgbt-rhetoric>

Cynical, me? No indeed. **The Obama who boomed** on Monday **that "our journey is not complete until our gay brothers and sisters are treated like anyone else** under the law – for if we are truly created equal, then surely the love we commit to one another must be equal as well" **sent out his press secretary the very next day to assure us that the president won't be expending any political capital to make his rhetoric a reality**. **When it comes to audacity, Obama's real legacy is not one of hope, but of feigned helplessness. There's plenty he could do about LGBT inequality in America if he wanted to, Congress be damned.**



YES Public Popularity

Public popularity is high – agenda

Mark **Murray**, Senior Political Editor at NBC News, **1/17/13**, “NBC/WSJ poll: Public lowers expectations heading into Obama's 2nd term”, http://firstread.nbcnews.com/_news/2013/01/17/16570498-nbcwsj-poll-public-lowers-expectations-heading-into-obamas-2nd-term?lite, acc. 1/25/13

As President Barack **Obama is set to begin his second term next week, he finds himself with a job approval rating above 50 percent and with majorities supporting his general direction** on gun control and immigration, **according to a new** NBC News/Wall Street Journal **poll**. But he also confronts an American public holding mixed attitudes about the next four years, concerns about the economy and a belief that tougher times lie ahead. It's a stark reversal from four years ago, when Obama's first inauguration – despite taking place in the midst of the Great Recession – contained high expectations and seemed more like a “coronation,” says Democratic pollster Peter D. Hart, who conducted the survey with Republican pollster Bill McInturff. “If 2009 was all about hope, 2013 is about the ability to cope,” Hart adds of the public's lower expectations about the economy and reducing partisanship in Washington. General support for Obama's gun, immigration agenda In the poll, **52 percent of adults approve of the president's overall job performance**, which is down one point from last month. In addition, **49 percent approve of his handling of the economy, versus 48 percent who disapprove**. What's more, **the public appears to be receptive to the broad outlines of his top agenda items for a second team**.

Public popularity is high

Robert B. **Reich**, former Secretary of Education, **1/25/13**, “Obama's debt-limit strategy lies with the GOP”, <http://www.tennessean.com/article/20130125/COLUMNIST0150/301250003/Robert-B.-Reich-Obama-s-debt-limit-strategy-lies-with-the-GOP>, acc. 1/25/13

The timing may be right for such a strategy. **The president is riding a wave of post-election popularity. A recent Gallup poll showed him with a 56 percent job approval rating, his highest rating in more than three years**.

As the economy recovers, so will Obama's approval

Kornacki 1-21 (Steve, Salon.com “Obama's Best Days are probably ahead” access google http://www.salon.com/2013/01/21/obamas_best_days_are_probably_ahead/)

Obviously, **the biggest** single **factor in** determining **Obama's second term popularity will be the economy**. **As it improves**, and especially if the pace of improvement accelerates, **his numbers** should **rise**. **Following through on** his promise of **an** orderly **end to the Afghanistan war** in the next two years **should also help** Obama's standing. Avoiding high-profile scandals, one of his first-term strengths, will also help his numbers. And then there's the opposition. Obama talked during the campaign of breaking the Republican fever, and while that hasn't happened yet, the last month has brought some genuinely encouraging signs. **The president may well notch the sort of big bipartisan deals he so eagerly sought in his first term. Voters love idea of bipartisanship**; if they're suddenly exposed to lots of noise about Obama striking deals with Republicans that both sides seem to like, there should be a polling benefit. In other words, the idea that **Obama's approval rating might climb well into the 50s and maybe even cross the 60 percent mark in his second term** is quite plausible. This would be good for Obama's legacy, of course, but it would also have a dramatic impact on the next presidential race.

America loves a winner - Obama's approval is resilient – fiscal cliff proves

Hagler '12 (Frank Hagler, Policy Mic, “Obama Approval Rating is Strong, Despite Fiscal Cliff Muck-Ups” <http://www.policymic.com/articles/21530/obama-approval-rating-is-strong-despite-fiscal-cliff-muck-ups> access google)



If President Obama's approval ratings are any indication, **America sure does love a winner**. According to the Rasmussen Daily Presidential Tracking Poll, **55% of Americans approve of Obama's** job performance. Staggeringly **Obama's approval** rating **has been above 50% every day since the November 2**. Obama's approval rating was at 50% on election day and it has climbed 5 points to its current level. But nothing has changed so why **is Obama polling better now** than he did during the election season? Could it be related to the unemployment rate? Unemployment has stayed below 8% for three consecutive months. In September when unemployment dropped below 8% for the first time in 43 months, Obama's opponents accused the government of cooking the books. Now that it has stayed under 8% these conspiracy theorists have gone silent. Obama's approval rating and the unemployment rate were the key performance indicators used to attack Obama's re-election plans. There was a constant stream of articles and pundit analysis documenting the statistical anomaly of re-electing a president with an approval rating below 50% and an unemployment rate above 8%. It seems that there should be equal time given to the president's current numbers, 55% approval rating and 7.7% unemployment rate. **The Gallup Poll also supports the notion that America loves a winner. On election day, Obama's approval rating was 52%. It is now 57%**. Obama's approval rating is at a 52 week high for 2012 and is 16 points higher than the 52 week low of 42% he hit in January 2012. Talking Points Memo noted that Obama's post-election approval rating "calls to mind the bullish days of his first year in office before a stagnant economy and protracted disputes with Congressional Republicans took a toll on his approval rating." That is not a good sign for his 2013 approval rating. Obama is still engaged in that same fight as evidenced by his inability to get a budget deal done with House Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio). The two leaders have until January 1 to get a deal done and avoid the fiscal crises that will be brought on by automatic tax increases and spending cuts. Obama cut his holiday vacation short to return to Washington and work on a deal. Obama appears to be right back where he started in 2009. Unemployment is at the same place it was when he took office in his first term, the economy has stabilized and things have gotten better, but we are not in full recovery yet and the fiscal cliff threatens to throw us back into a recession. **His approval numbers indicate that some people are still hoping that he can make a change in the way politics are done in Washington**. There is the possibility that he can break the gridlock and lead a bipartisan government. If Obama fails to get a deal done the Bush tax cuts will expire, raising taxes on all Americans. Additionally extended unemployment benefits will also expire putting millions of Americans in jeopardy. If Obama fails to get a deal done and unemployment begins to tick up then the ride he is enjoying from his post-election bump in approval ratings will be short lived. Next week the December unemployment numbers will be released. It will probably stay below 8% given the current trend, however the January 2013 report to be released in February will be telling because it will show whether the 4th quarter 2012 numbers were skewed by seasonal employment. TPM said "all it took was a victorious election for Obama to earn higher marks for his job performance." All it will take is a repeat of 2012 –like government gridlock to reverse that trend.

Obama's popularity boosted by gun control efforts

Enten '12 (The Guardian, "Gun control fate tied to presidential popularity", access google <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2013/jan/25/fate-gun-control-tied-presidential-popularity>) **Want to know how people feel about President Obama's gun control plan?** Simply **ask whether they approve** or disapprove **of how the president and his administration are doing their job. The two questions are nearly perfectly linked**, and that could have major consequences for the future of gun control legislation. **The latest** ABC/Washington Post **polls prove the strong relationship**. Many individual gun proposals are highly popular. In fact, seven tested gun measures, including background checks and bans on assault weapons and semi-automatic handguns, have majority support ranging from 51% to 88%. **When you attach Obama's name by calling it "Barack Obama's proposals"**, the Post discovered that 53% **of Americans favor the proposals – nearly identical to Obama's approval rating of 55%** in a separate Post poll last week. Gallup found the same, with 53% in favor of Obama's gun control plan, compared to his monthly approval rating of 52%.



Hegemony 1nc

Key to hegemony – both hard and soft power

Nye 12/10/12 (Joseph S. Nye, a former US assistant secretary of defense and chairman of the US National Intelligence Council, is University Professor at Harvard University, <http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/obama-needs-immigration-reform-to-maintain-america-s-strength-by-joseph-s--nye>)

The United States is a nation of immigrants. Except for a small number of Native Americans, everyone is originally from somewhere else, and even recent immigrants can rise to top economic and political roles. President Franklin Roosevelt once famously addressed the Daughters of the American Revolution – a group that prided itself on the early arrival of its ancestors – as “fellow immigrants.”¶ In recent years, however, US politics has had a strong anti-immigration slant, and the issue played an important role in the Republican Party’s presidential nomination battle in 2012. But Barack Obama’s re-election demonstrated the electoral power of Latino voters, who rejected Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney by a 3-1 majority, as did Asian-Americans.¶ As a result, several prominent Republican politicians are now urging their party to reconsider its anti-immigration policies, and plans for **immigration reform will be on the agenda at the beginning of**

Obama’s second term. Successful reform will be an important step in preventing the decline of

American power.¶

Fears about the impact of immigration on national values and on a coherent sense of American identity are not new. The nineteenth-century “Know Nothing” movement was built on opposition to immigrants, particularly the Irish. Chinese were singled out for exclusion from 1882 onward, and, with the more restrictive Immigration Act of 1924, immigration in general slowed for the next four decades.¶ During the twentieth century, the US recorded its highest percentage of foreign-born residents, 14.7%, in 1910. A century later, according to the 2010 census, 13% of the American population is foreign born. But, despite being a nation of immigrants, more Americans are skeptical about immigration than are sympathetic to it. Various opinion polls show either a plurality or a majority favoring less immigration. The recession exacerbated such views: in 2009, one-half of the US public favored allowing fewer immigrants, up from 39% in 2008.¶ Both the number of immigrants and their origin have caused concerns about immigration’s effects on American culture. Demographers portray a country in 2050 in which non-Hispanic whites will be only a slim majority. Hispanics will comprise 25% of the population, with African- and Asian-Americans making up 14% and 8%, respectively.¶ But mass communications and market forces produce powerful incentives to master the English language and accept a degree of assimilation. Modern media help new immigrants to learn more about their new country beforehand than immigrants did a century ago. Indeed, most of the evidence suggests that the latest immigrants are assimilating at least as quickly as their predecessors.¶ While too rapid a rate of immigration can cause social problems, over the long term, **immigration strengthens US**

power. It is estimated that **at least 83 countries and territories currently have fertility rates that are below**

the level needed to keep their population constant. Whereas most developed countries will experience a shortage of people as the century progresses, **America is one of the few that may avoid demographic decline and maintain its share of world population.**¶

For example, to maintain its current population size, Japan would have to accept 350,000 newcomers annually for the next 50 years, which is difficult for a culture that has historically been hostile to immigration. In contrast, the Census Bureau projects that the US population will grow by 49% over the next four decades.¶ **Today, the US is the world’s third most populous country; 50 years from now it is still likely to be third** (after only China and India). **This is**

highly relevant to economic power: whereas nearly all other developed countries will face a growing **burden of providing for the older generation, immigration could help to attenuate the policy problem for the US.**¶

In addition, though studies suggest that the short-term economic benefits of immigration are relatively small, and that unskilled workers may suffer from competition, **skilled immigrants can be important to particular sectors – and to long-term growth.** **There is a strong correlation between the number of visas for skilled applicants and patents filed in the US.**

At the beginning of this century, Chinese- and Indian-born engineers were running one-quarter of Silicon Valley’s technology businesses, which accounted for \$17.8 billion in sales; and, in 2005, immigrants had helped to start one-quarter of all US technology start-ups during the previous decade. Immigrants or children of immigrants founded roughly 40% of the 2010 Fortune 500 companies.¶ **Equally important are immigration’s benefits for America’s soft power.** **The fact that people want to come to the US enhances its appeal, and immigrants’ upward mobility is attractive to people in other countries.** **The US is a magnet, and many people can envisage themselves as Americans, in part because so many successful Americans look like them.** Moreover, **connections between immigrants and their families and friends back home help to convey accurate and positive information about the US.**¶ Likewise, **because the presence of many cultures creates avenues of connection with other**



countries, it helps to broaden Americans' attitudes and views of the world in an era of globalization.

Rather than diluting **hard and soft power, immigration enhances both**.[¶] Singapore's former leader, Lee Kwan Yew, an astute observer of both the US and China, argues that China will not surpass the US as the leading power of the twenty-first century, precisely because the US attracts the best and brightest from the rest of the world and melds them into a diverse culture of creativity. China has a larger population to recruit from domestically, but, in Lee's view, its Sino-centric culture will make it less creative than the US.[¶] That is a view that Americans should take to heart. **If Obama succeeds in enacting immigration reform in his second term, he will have gone a long way toward fulfilling his promise to maintain the strength of the US.**

Extinction

Barnett 11 (Thomas P.M., Former Senior Strategic Researcher and Professor in the Warfare Analysis & Research Department, Center for Naval Warfare Studies, U.S. Naval War College American military geostrategist and Chief Analyst at Wikistrat., worked as the Assistant for Strategic Futures in the Office of Force Transformation in the Department of Defense, "The New Rules: Leadership Fatigue Puts U.S., and Globalization, at Crossroads," March 7,

Events in Libya are a further reminder for **Americans** that we **stand at a crossroads in our continuing evolution as the world's sole full-service superpower**. Unfortunately, we are increasingly seeking change without cost, and shirking from risk because we are tired of the responsibility. We don't know who we are anymore, and our president is a big part of that problem. Instead of leading us, he explains to us. Barack Obama would have us believe that he is practicing strategic patience. But many experts and ordinary citizens alike have concluded that he is actually beset by strategic incoherence -- in effect, a man overmatched by the job. It is worth first examining the larger picture: We live in a time of arguably the greatest structural change in the global order yet endured, with this historical moment's most amazing feature being its relative and absolute lack of mass violence. That is something to consider when Americans contemplate military intervention in Libya, because if we do take the step to prevent larger-scale killing by engaging in some killing of our own, we will not be adding to some fantastically imagined global death count stemming from the ongoing "megalomania" and "evil" of American "empire." We'll be engaging in the same sort of system-administering activity that has marked our stunningly successful stewardship of global order since World War II. Let me be more blunt: **As the guardian of globalization, the U.S. military has been the greatest force for peace the world has ever known. Had America been removed from the global dynamics that governed the 20th century, the mass murder never would have ended.**

Indeed, it's entirely conceivable **there would now be no identifiable human civilization left, once nuclear weapons entered the killing equation.** But **the world did not keep sliding down that path of perpetual war. Instead, America stepped up and changed everything by ushering in our now-perpetual great-power peace.** We introduced the international liberal trade order known as **globalization** and played loyal Leviathan over its spread. **What resulted was the collapse of empires, an explosion of democracy, the persistent spread of human rights, the liberation of women, the doubling of life expectancy, a roughly 10-fold increase in adjusted global GDP and a profound and persistent reduction in battle deaths from state-based conflicts.** That is what American "hubris" actually delivered. Please remember that the next time some TV pundit sells you the image of "unbridled" American military power as the cause of global disorder instead of its cure. With self-deprecation bordering on self-loathing, we now imagine a post-American world that is anything but. Just watch who scatters and who steps up as the Facebook revolutions erupt across the Arab world. While we might imagine ourselves the status quo power, we remain the world's most vigorously revisionist force. As for the sheer "evil" that is our military-industrial complex, again, let's examine what the world looked like before that establishment reared its ugly head. The last great period of global structural change was the first half of the 20th century, a period that saw a death toll of about 100 million across two world wars. That comes to an average of 2 million deaths a year in a world of approximately 2 billion souls. Today, with far more comprehensive worldwide reporting, researchers report an average of less than 100,000 battle deaths annually in a world fast approaching 7 billion people. Though admittedly crude, these **calculations suggest a 90 percent absolute drop and a 99 percent relative drop in deaths due to war.** We are clearly headed for a world order characterized by multipolarity, something the American-birthed system was designed to both encourage and accommodate. But given how things turned out the last time we collectively faced such a fluid structure, **we would do well to keep U.S. power, in all of its forms,** deeply embedded in the geometry to come. To continue the historical survey, after salvaging Western Europe from its half-century of civil war, the U.S. emerged as the progenitor of a new, far more



just form of globalization -- one based on actual free trade rather than colonialism. America then successfully replicated globalization further in East Asia over the second half of the 20th century, setting the stage for the Pacific Century now unfolding.

Soft power solves all global problems

Nye '12 (Joseph S, University Distinguished Service Professor at Harvard and former dean of Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, "Diversifying American Power", Sept,

<http://www.internationalrelations.com/2012/09/09/joseph-s-nye-jr-diversifying-american-power/>,

The bottom chessboard is the realm of transnational relations that cross borders outside of

government control, and **it includes non-state actors** as diverse as bankers electronically transferring sums larger than most national budgets at one extreme, and **terrorists** transferring weapons or **hackers threatening cyber-security** at the

other. **It also includes new challenges like pandemics and climate change.** On this bottom board, power is widely

dispersed, and it makes no sense to speak of unipolarity, multipolarity, hegemony. The **soft power** to attract and organize cooperation

will be essential for dealing with transnational issues.¶ The problem for American power in the 21st century is that there

are more and more things outside the control of even the most powerful state. Although¶ the United States does well on military measures,

there is increasingly more going on in the world that those measures fail to capture. For example, **international**

financial stability is vital to the prosperity of Americans, **but the United States needs the cooperation of others** to

ensure it. **Global climate change** too **will affect the quality of life**, but **the United States cannot manage the**

problem alone. And **in a world where borders are becoming more porous than ever to everything from**

drugs to infectious diseases to terrorism, America must help build international coalitions and build

institutions to address shared threats and challenges. In this sense, power becomes a positive sum game. It is not enough

to think in terms of power over others. One must also think in terms of power to accomplish goals. On many transnational issues, empowering others can help us to accomplish our own goals. In this world, networks and connectedness become an important source of relevant power.

The problem of American power is less one of decline, than realizing that **even the largest country cannot achieve its aims without the help of others.**



2nc overview – hegemony

Disad outweighs –

SPEED – immigration vote coming within weeks – failure will lock-in collapse of US economic power and cultural influence, crushing global hegemony – aff impacts are long-term and solved by future policymakers

SCOPE – hegemony controls and mitigates the escalation of all global conflict – collapses causes great power nuclear war – err neg since it's the only impact supported by history and statistics

SOFT POWER TURNS CASE – our Nye evidence says it's impossible to solve _____ without cooperation from other countries – only immigration can build necessary ties

Key to hegemony – biggest, quickest internal link

Kliman '10 – visiting fellow at the Center for a New American Security [Daniel, "Immigration and American Power", May 28, <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2010/05/28/opinion/main6525992.shtml>]

President Obama's National Security Strategy released on Thursday has launched the opening salvo in a battle to recast what immigration means to the United States. The new strategy observes that **American prosperity and leadership depends on** "attracting the

premier **human capital** for our workforce." That is, **immigration equals national power**. This recasting comes at a critical moment. The United States can no longer take for granted its capacity to attract and retain foreign talent. **Successfully competing** for

the world's best and brightest **requires** urgent **immigration reform**. American power and immigration are closely interlinked. **The most dynamic sectors of the U.S. economy are heavily dependent on foreign talent**. Immigrants have founded

25 percent of public, venture-backed U.S. companies, including eBay, Yahoo, and Google. Between 1995 and 2005, foreigners from just two countries - China and India - accounted for almost 30 percent of all Silicon Valley startups. American **leadership in science and**

technology also rests on the inflow of **talent** from abroad. As fewer and fewer U.S. citizens have chosen careers in science, foreigners have stepped in to fill the gap. One-fourth of America's science and engineering workforce is foreign-born. In 2007, foreigners accounted for almost 50 percent of all science and engineering doctorates awarded in the United States. Immigration is not inevitably destined to remain a wellspring of American power. Historically, greater economic opportunity, superior universities, a relatively open immigration system, and a tolerant society rendered the United States an irresistible magnet for immigrants. But the world is rapidly changing, and the most talented immigrants may no longer stay. Home to the fastest growing major economies, Asia has become a region of opportunity for returnees who are highly educated or have overseas work experience. Asian governments have begun to actively court their expatriates. China, for example, uses world-class facilities, plentiful grant money, and prestigious titles to woo researchers living abroad. Whether America's ability to cream off the best and brightest has already declined remains uncertain. Prior to the financial crisis, the "stay rates" for foreigners receiving PhDs in science and engineering increased slightly. But a 2008 survey of foreign students enrolled in U.S. higher education found that 55 percent of Indian respondents and 40 percent of Chinese respondents wanted to return home within five years. If this snapshot is predictive, then "stay rates" for these groups are set to substantially decline. The United States cannot rest on its laurels. **Sustaining American power will**

require stepping up efforts to attract and retain foreign talent. A number of worthy proposals already exist. One would be to increase the number of H-1B visas for foreigners with critical skills. Another would be the creation of a new visa for immigrant entrepreneurs, as outlined in a Senate bill recently introduced by John Kerry and Richard Lugar. The bill would establish a visa for immigrants who raise startup funds from U.S. investors and grant them legal residence if the venture generates at least five jobs. A third would focus on foreigners in science and engineering graduate programs. Any number of measures could make the United States a more attractive long-term home for them. Hand out Green Cards with their diplomas. Automatically grant them work visas upon graduation. Or introduce a flexible visa allowing them to move between the United States and their home country for a ten-year period with an ultimate option of settling in the United States and expedited citizenship. A fourth would recognize that immigrants often return home to be closer to family. The United States could facilitate visas for family members of foreigners who work in science and technology-related industries. **The overarching**

objective of President Obama's National Security Strategy **is to renew American power**. **Promoting immigration is the most immediate way to do so**. **Other wellsprings** of American power, such as **infrastructure** and



education, **can only be moved in a positive direction over the long term**. **Major projects to upgrade America's infrastructure will take years**, while the returns from improving education will require a generation to realize. Although these goals should be pursued as well, **renewing American power starts with** welcoming **foreign talent** to America's shore.



Bioweapons 1nc

Immigration reform key to US lead on biotech innovation

Scullion '13 (Christine, "Manufacturers Take the Lead In STEM Education", January 8, <http://www.shopfloor.org/2013/01/manufacturers-take-the-lead-in-stem-education/27254>,

The U.S. the leading producer of cutting-edge products such as those on display at the Consumer Electronics Show.

Whether it's in IT, **biotech**, aerospace, medical devices or heavy machinery, **US companies will be the ones to constantly and consistently create new and better things. This future promises to be bright, but only if we have the workforce capable of pushing that leading-edge.** And **right now, that doesn't look like a very good bet. The lack of a skilled workforce is a constant threat** to manufacturing growth. In fact in a recent survey 82% of

manufacturers reported a moderate-to-serious shortage in skilled production labor. **Worker shortages abound** not only among machinists and welders but also in occupations requiring expertise in the fields of science, technology, engineering and math (**STEM**), where the unemployment rate today lies well below 4%.¹¹ **The US needs to refocus our workforce training resources and reform our immigration system to continue to grow and innovate.** Immigration reform is a serious **issue** for Manufacturers not only in the High-tech arena but across manufacturing sectors. **Without a skilled workforce** – from the PhDs to production labor, **the nation's economy will suffer and jobs will be moved overseas. Access to the right individual with the right skills at the right time will ensure that the US remains a global innovation leader.**

Biotech innovation key to solve bioterror

Chyba & Greninger, 4 - Co-Director of the Center for International Security and Cooperation (CISAC), Stanford Institute for International Studies, and an Associate Professor at Stanford University [Christopher & Alex, "**Biotechnology and Bioterrorism: An Unprecedented World**" Survival, 46:2, Summer 2004]

In the absence of a comprehensive and effective system of global review of potential high-consequence research, we are instead trapped in a kind of offence–defence arms race. Even as legitimate **biomedical researchers develop defences against biological pathogens**, bad actors could in turn engineer countermeasures in a kind of directed version of the way natural pathogens evolve resistance to anti-microbial drugs. The mousepox case provides a harbinger of what is to come: just as the United States was stockpiling 300m doses of smallpox vaccine as a defence against a terrorist smallpox attack, experimental modification of the mousepox virus showed how the vaccine could possibly be circumvented. The United States is now funding research on antiviral drugs and other ways of combating smallpox that might be effective against the engineered organism. Yet there are indications that smallpox can be made resistant to one of the few known antiviral drugs. **The future has the appearance of an eternal arms race** of measures and countermeasures. The 'arms race' metaphor should be used with caution; it too is in danger of calling up misleading analogies to the nuclear arms race of the Cold War. First, the biological arms race is an offence–defence race, rather than a competition between offensive means. Under the BWC, only defensive research is legitimate. But more fundamentally, the driver of de facto offensive capabilities in this arms race is not primarily a particular adversary, but rather the ongoing global advance of microbiological and biomedical research. **Defensive measures are in a race with nefarious applications** of basic research, much of which is itself undertaken for protection against natural disease. In a sense, we are in an arms race with ourselves. It is hard to see how this arms race is stable – an offence granted comparable resources would seem to be necessarily favoured. As with ballistic missile defence, particular defensive measures may be defeated by offensive countermeasures. **In the biological case, implementing defensive measures will require** not only **research** but drug development and distribution plans. Offensive measures need not exercise this care, although fortunately they will likely face comparative resource constraints (especially if not associated with a state programme), and may find that some approaches (for example, to confer antibiotic resistance) have the simultaneous effect of inadvertently reducing a pathogen's virulence. The defence must always guard against committing the fallacy of the last move, whereas the offence may embrace the view of the Irish Republican Army after it failed to assassinate the British cabinet in the 1984 Brighton bombing: 'Today we were unlucky, but remember we have only to be lucky once – you will have to be lucky always'.⁴⁰ At the very least, the defence



will have to be vigilant and collectively smarter than the offence. **The only way for the defence to win** convincingly in the biological arms race **would** seem to **be to succeed in discovering and implementing** certain de facto **last-move defences**, at least on an organism-by-organism basis. Perhaps there are defences, or a web of defences, that will prove too difficult for any plausible non-state actor to engineer around. Whether **such defences** exist is unclear at this time, but their exploration **should be a long-term research goal of US biodefence** efforts. Progress might also have an important impact on international public health. One of the 'Grand Challenges' identified by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in its \$200m initiative to improve global health calls for the discovery of drugs that minimise the emergence of drug resistance – a kind of 'last move' defence against the evolutionary countermeasures of natural microbes.⁴¹ **Should** a collection of such **defensive moves prove possible** **bioterrorism might ultimately succumb to** a kind of globalised **dissuasion by denial**.⁴² Non-state groups would calculate that they could not hope to achieve dramatic results through biological programmes and would choose to direct their efforts elsewhere.

Extinction – outweighs nuclear war (and warming)

Singer 1. [Clifford Singer, Director of the Program in Arms Control, Disarmament, and International Security at the University of Illinois at Urbana—Champaign. "Will Mankind Survive the Millennium?" The Bulletin of the Program in Arms Control, Disarmament, and International Security, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 13.1, http://www.acdis.uiuc.edu/research/S&Ps/2001-Sp/S&P_XIII/Singer.htm Published Spring 2001]

In recent years **the fear of the apocalypse** (or religious hope for it) **has been in part a child of the Cold War**, but its seeds in Western culture go back to the Black Death and earlier. Recent polls suggest that the majority in the United States that believe man would survive into the future for substantially less than a millennium was about 10 percent higher in the Cold War than afterward. **However** **fear of annihilation of the human species through nuclear warfare was confused with the admittedly terrifying, but much different matter of destruction of a dominant civilization. The destruction of a third or more of much of the globe's population through the disruption from the direct consequences of nuclear blast and fire damage was certainly possible. There was, and still is, what is now known to be a rather small chance that dust raised by an all-out nuclear war would cause a so called nuclear winter,** substantially reducing agricultural yields especially in temperate regions for a year or more. As noted **above mankind as a whole has weathered a number of mind-boggling disasters in the past fifty thousand years** even if older cultures or civilizations have sometimes eventually given way to new ones in the process. **Moreover the fear that radioactive fallout would make the globe uninhabitable, publicized by widely seen works such as "On the Beach," was a metaphor for the horror of nuclear war rather than reality.** The epidemiological lethal results of well over a hundred atmospheric nuclear tests are barely statistically detectable except in immediate fallout plumes. **The increase in radiation exposure far from the combatants in even a full scale nuclear exchange at the height of the Cold War would have been modest** compared to the variations in natural background radiation doses that have readily been adapted to by a number of human populations. Nor is there any reason to believe that global warming or other insults to our physical environment resulting from currently used technologies will challenge the survival of mankind as a whole beyond what it has already handily survived through the past fifty thousand years. **There are, however, two technologies currently under development that may pose a more serious threat to human survival.** The first and most immediate is **biological warfare** combined with genetic engineering. **Smallpox is the most fearsome** of natural biological warfare agents in existence. By the end of the next decade, global immunity to smallpox will likely be at a low unprecedented since the emergence of this disease in the distant past, while the opportunity for it to **spread rapidly across the globe will be at an all time high.** In the absence of other complications such as nuclear war near the peak of an epidemic, developed countries may respond with quarantine and vaccination to limit the damage. Otherwise mortality there may match the rate of 30 percent or more expected in unprepared developing countries. With respect to genetic engineering using currently



available knowledge and technology, the simple expedient of spreading an ample mixture of coat protein variants could render a vaccination response largely ineffective, but this would otherwise not be expected to substantially increase overall mortality rates. With development of new biological technology, however, there is a possibility that a variety of infectious agents may be engineered for combinations of greater than natural virulence and mortality, rather than just to overwhelm currently available antibiotics or vaccines. There is no a priori known upper limit to the power of this type of technology base, and thus the survival of a globally connected human family may be in question when and if this is achieved.

Extinction

Steinbruner 97 John D. Steinbruner, Brookings senior fellow and chair in international security, vice chair of the committee on international security and arms control of the National Academy of Sciences, Winter 1997, Foreign Policy, "Biological weapons: a plague upon all houses," n109 p85(12), infotrac

Although human pathogens are often lumped with nuclear explosives and lethal chemicals as potential weapons of mass destruction, there is an obvious, fundamentally important difference: Pathogens are alive, weapons are not. Nuclear and chemical weapons do not reproduce themselves and do not independently engage in adaptive behavior; pathogens do both of these things. That deceptively simple observation has immense implications. The use of a manufactured weapon is a singular event. Most of the damage occurs immediately. The aftereffects, whatever they may be, decay rapidly over time and distance in a reasonably predictable manner. Even before a nuclear warhead is detonated, for instance, it is possible to estimate the extent of the subsequent damage and the likely level of radioactive fallout. Such predictability is an essential component for tactical military planning. The use of a pathogen, by contrast, is an extended process whose scope and timing cannot be precisely controlled. For most potential biological agents, the predominant drawback is that they would not act swiftly or decisively enough to be an effective weapon. But for a few pathogens - ones most likely to have a decisive effect and therefore the ones most likely to be contemplated for deliberately hostile use - the risk runs in the other direction. A lethal pathogen that could efficiently spread from one victim to another would be capable of initiating an intensifying cascade of disease that might ultimately threaten the entire world population. The 1918 influenza epidemic demonstrated the potential for a global contagion of this sort but not necessarily its outer limit.



2nc overview – Bioweapons

Disad outweighs –

Failure to reform immigration ensures collapse of US biotech innovation necessary to dissuade and contain a bioterror attack

Spreads quickly causing global spread and extinction – comparative evidence, outweighs nuclear war

Ochs 2 [Richard, Chemical Weapons Working Group Member, Jun 19, http://www.freefromterror.net/other_articles/abolish.html]

Of all the weapons of mass destruction, the genetically engineered **biological weapons**, many without a known cure or vaccine, **are an extreme danger to the continued survival of life on earth**. Any perceived military value or deterrence pales in comparison to the great risk these weapons pose just sitting in vials in laboratories. **While a "nuclear winter," resulting from a massive exchange of nuclear weapons, could also kill off most of life on earth and severely compromise the health of future generations, they are easier to control. Biological weapons, on the other hand, can get out of control very easily, as the recent anthrax attacks has demonstrated.** There is no way to guarantee the security of these doomsday weapons because very tiny amounts can be stolen or accidentally released and then grow or be grown to horrendous proportions. The Black Death of the Middle Ages would be small in comparison to the potential damage bioweapons could cause. Abolition of chemical weapons is less of a priority because, while they can also kill millions of people outright, their persistence in the environment would be less than nuclear or biological agents or more localized. Hence, chemical weapons would have a lesser effect on future generations of innocent people and the natural environment. Like the Holocaust, once a localized chemical extermination is over, it is over. With nuclear and biological weapons, the killing will probably never end. Radioactive elements last tens of thousands of years and will keep causing cancers virtually forever. Potentially worse than that, **bio-engineered agents by the hundreds with no known cure could wreck even greater calamity on the human race than could persistent radiation. AIDS and ebola viruses are just a small example of recently emerging plagues with no known cure or vaccine. Can we imagine hundreds of such plagues? HUMAN EXTINCTION IS NOW POSSIBLE.**

Risk of attack is high – only counter-measures solve

Glassman '12 (James, "Expert: U.S. unprepared for bioterrorism attack", April 5, http://www.bioprepwatch.com/us_bioterror_policy/expert-u-s-unprepared-for-bioterrorism-attack/323620/)

A recent essay published in Forbes magazine supports the contention that **the United States remains woefully unprepared**, if not uninterested, **in the chances that it will face** an attack using **biological weapons**. James **Glassman, a former undersecretary of state** for public affairs and public diplomacy and the founder of the George W. Bush Institute, **said that the United States remains vulnerable** to an attack that could potentially kill hundreds of thousands of people **because it lacks** a means of producing needed medical **countermeasures**, according to Forbes. Three years ago, **a Congressional commission concluded** that **there is 50 percent chance that there will be an attack** using a weapon of mass destruction somewhere in the world **by 2013**. The Commission on the Prevention of WMD Proliferation and Terrorism declared that the weapon used would more likely be biological than nuclear. Regardless, Glassman said that the public has heard little about bioterrorism since the anthrax attacks in 2001, despite the considerable risk. **"Terrorists could spray Bacillus anthracis** from crop-dusters over football stadiums," Glassman wrote, Forbes reports. **"Or they could send intentionally infected fanatics out to spread the smallpox virus through a crowded city, doing far more damage than a brigade of suicide bombers."** Glassman pointed to last October's **Bio-Response Report Card** study, issued last year by the Bipartisan WMD Terrorism Research Center, as proof that the country needs to do more to confront the threat of bioterrorism. The report card **gave the United States a "D" grade for** its detection and diagnosis capability and for the



availability of medical **countermeasures**.¹ Glassman said that larger **biopharma**ceutical **firms** **have done little to develop countermeasures**, but small firms have filled the gap with mixed success.

**optional

And, bioweapons outweigh—spread much more, threaten the entire global population

Rita **Grossman-Vermaas**, Brian D. Finlay, and Elizabeth Turpen, Ph.D., OLD PLAGUES, NEW THREATS: THE BIOTECH REVOLUTION AND ITS IMPACT ON U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY, Henry L. Stimson Center, March 2008, p. 1.

For decades, national security and law enforcement communities in our country, and in countries around the globe, have worked diligently to address the threat posed by the deliberate spread of infectious pathogens and deadly toxins. **As potential agents of mass destruction, biological pathogens and toxins are inexpensive, readily accessible in nature, and** if weaponized effectively, **particularly dangerous**. Meanwhile, the biotechnological revolution has **broadened the availability of “dual-use”² equipment and expanded exponentially the number of individuals with the knowledge necessary to engage in nefarious biological weapons research. Although biological weapons are often put in the same category as nuclear and chemical munitions** by national security specialists, there is one fundamental and important difference: **pathogens are living organisms**. The implications of this are clear. **While the damage caused by a chemical or nuclear weapon would be a single event causing potentially devastating damage over the immediate site of its target, the release of a lethal pathogen could efficiently spread from victim to victim over time, creating a cascade of disease that could threaten the entire global population.**

Bioattack risks extinction—outweighs nuclear war

Anders **Sandberg** et al., James Martin Research Fellow, Future of Humanity Institute, Oxford University, "How Can We Reduce the Risk of Human Extinction?" BULLETIN OF THE ATOMIC SCIENTISTS, 9-9-08, <http://www.thebulletin.org/web-edition/features/how-can-we-reduce-the-risk-of-human-extinction>, accessed 5-2-10.

The risks from anthropogenic hazards appear at present larger than those from natural ones. Although great progress has been made in reducing the number of nuclear weapons in the world, humanity is still threatened by the possibility of a global thermonuclear war and a resulting nuclear winter. We may face even greater risks from emerging technologies. **Advances in synthetic biology might make it possible to engineer pathogens capable of extinction-level pandemics. The knowledge, equipment, and materials needed to engineer pathogens are more accessible than those needed to build nuclear weapons. And unlike other weapons, pathogens are self-replicating, allowing a small arsenal to become exponentially destructive.** Pathogens have been implicated **in the extinctions of many wild species**. Although most pandemics "fade out" by reducing the density of susceptible populations, pathogens with wide host ranges in multiple species can reach even isolated individuals. **The intentional or unintentional release of engineered pathogens with high transmissibility, latency, and lethality might be capable of causing human extinction**. While such an event seems unlikely today, the likelihood may increase as biotechnologies continue to improve at a rate rivaling Moore's Law.



Affirmative



No pass

Won't pass---both parties have incentives to prevent a deal

Koons 2-1 – Andy Koons, writer for the Daily Iowan, February 1st, 2013, "Koons: Immigration reform not done" www.dailyiowan.com/2013/02/01/Opinions/31576.html,

Immigration reform is not a done deal, though it should be. America's immigration system has been a travesty for decades.

Despite being a nation of immigrants, needing workers to fill unpopular jobs and needing to remain competitive in a global economy in which education and knowledge are paramount, we haven't found it in ourselves to move to a more fair pro-economic growth immigration system.

Why has it been so difficult? **Powerful forces stand against fixing immigration. Democrats benefit from Latinos refusing to vote for anti-reform Republicans, businesses appreciate low cost under-the-table labor and the conservative base treasures American citizenship and is loath to give it to what they consider "lawbreakers."** ¶ I am concerned that **current reform efforts will not be successful because those**

forces are still present. Reform is being considered now because of a single change in dynamics. National Republican leaders are stinging from Obama's substantial re-election victory and know that they have a diminishing chance of winning future national elections unless the growing Latino vote is put in play. ¶ The Latino vote will never be attainable by the right as long as national Republican nominees are pressured to position themselves against immigration reform. Is that realization by Republican leaders enough to pass reform? **The conservative base** is very skeptical about reform proposals — will they include enough border protection, be too lenient on undocumented immigrants, contain left-leaning provisions such as

allowing foreign same-sex couples a pathway to citizenship — and **don't want to hand Obama another historic win.** ¶ And make no mistake: Obama will be given credit if immigration reform passes. A big win this early in his second term will

strengthen the wind already at his back from his election. Obamacare passed after almost two years of work and sucked the president dry of electoral goodwill. If Republicans don't use immigration to sap Obama's political capital, Obama will have enough remaining momentum to take on climate change before the midterms. ¶ Don't discount the intelligence of Republican strategists either — they know that there is a real possibility that the Latino vote may never join the Republican big tent even after reforming immigration. That vote may be religious, generally, but they are also composed of a great deal of low-income workers who may feel more at home with Democrats and be against changing safety-

net policies. ¶ Republican **House members come from solidly conservative districts in which the only re-**

election threats are challenges by people more extreme than themselves. Will those members risk their seats to give party leaders a chance to win the presidency in four years? House Speaker John

Boehner hasn't had much luck leading his members so far. ¶ If we could stop politicking for a moment

and let the right thing happen, immigration reform would pass — but **politics never ends.** The best that can be hoped is that the political balance has shifted enough after Obama's re-election that Republican leaders feel vulnerable without reform and that Republican House members are receptive. I'm afraid that may be asking a lot.

Won't pass---no middle ground

Foley 2-7 – Elise Foley, writer for the Huffington Post, February 7th, 2013, "Raul Labrador: Immigration Reform With Pathway To Citizenship Won't Get House GOP Support"

www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/02/07/raul-labrador-immigration-reform_n_2638484.html, CMR

Rep. Raúl **Labrador** (R-Idaho) **warned** on Thursday that **he won't vote for a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants and neither will his fellow House Republicans, a bad sign from someone who is considered one of the more pro-reform Republicans in the chamber.** ¶ "The people that came here illegally

knowingly --- I don't think they should have a path to citizenship," he said on NPR, according to Talking Points Memo. "If you knowingly violated our law, you violated our sovereignty, I think we should normalize your status but we should not give you a pathway to citizenship." ¶ Whether the estimated 11 million undocumented immigrants currently living in the United States should be given a pathway to become citizens is shaping up to be the most contentious issue in the immigration reform debate. Democrats and some Republicans insist such a provision must be a part of any reform bill, and a bipartisan Senate group dubbed the "gang of eight" released a framework that includes one. ¶ A Quinnipiac University poll released on Thursday found that 56 percent of voters think undocumented immigrants should be allowed to stay in the United States and eventually apply for citizenship, while only 10 percent say they should be able to stay but not become citizens. Thirty percent say



undocumented immigrants should be forced to leave the country.¶ But **Republicans control the House, and many of them are opposed to such a pathway.** Labrador, a former immigration lawyer, said he thinks undocumented immigrants should receive legal status but not the ability to become a legal permanent resident or citizen.¶ He said **if Democrats push for a full pathway to citizenship, they will tank immigration reform** and it will be for political reasons.¶ **"If they want a political victory they're going to draw a fine red line and they're going to say, either a pathway to citizenship or nothing else,"** he told NPR. "They know that **the Republicans in the House are not going to be able to vote for that**, and then they're going to be able to beat us over the head in 2014, and say, look, the Republicans don't like immigrants. Which is not true."¶ Rep. Bob Goodlatte (R-Va.), who chairs the House Judiciary Committee that handles immigration reform, expressed similar concerns to USA Today earlier this week.¶ **"When [Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid] says there has to be a path to citizenship, I wonder whether he's serious about doing immigration reform,"** he said. **"You have to come at this with a willingness to look at all the options and find the common ground."**

Won't pass---no GOP support---Committee meeting proves

NYT 2-7 – New York Times, February 7th, 2013, "Immigration and the Middle Ground"

www.nytimes.com/2013/02/07/opinion/immigration-reform-and-the-false-middle-ground.html?_r=0&pagewanted=print,

The House Judiciary Committee held its first **hearing on immigration** on Tuesday, and it **was not**

encouraging.¶ In recent weeks, a bipartisan group of senators and President Obama have called for decisive action to fix the system. They seem to agree that an essential part of any overhaul should be legalizing 11 million undocumented immigrants. There are many questions over the details — when a path to green cards and citizenship should start, and how long and difficult it should be. But they agree that there should be a path to citizenship, which represents a real breakthrough in the long-stalled debate.¶ But House **Republicans aren't there yet.**

The tone at the hearing was set when the committee chairman, Representative Robert Goodlatte of Virginia, asked a witness: "Are there options that we should consider between the extremes of mass deportation and a pathway to citizenship for those not lawfully present in the United States?" **The false middle ground he and others on the committee seemed to be seeking was limbo: legal status without hope of citizenship. Or, second-class noncitizens.**¶ The witness, Mayor Julián Castro of San Antonio, responded that there was nothing extreme about turning immigrants into Americans. "If we look at our history," he said, "Congress over time has chosen that option, that path to citizenship."¶ **Republicans have been so estranged from a reasonable immigration discussion that it's not surprising they don't know what one looks like.** Since the last big bipartisan reform died in 2007,

Republicans have dug into a trench on the far right, declaring that legalization in any form is anathema.

The re-election of Mr. Obama and the dismal performance by Republicans among Hispanic voters rattled the party deeply and dislodged some Republicans from that noxious orthodoxy.¶ Judging from Tuesday's hearing, **many in the party still see immigrants as problems to be separated and contained. Republican committee members seemed willing only to discuss making Americans of small subsets, like "highly skilled" immigrants in technical fields, leaving aside most everyone else.** Representative Spencer Bachus of Alabama and some like-minded **witnesses dismissed citizenship as too "toxic" to discuss.** Their defeatism was yet more evidence of a party deeply out of step with public opinion and American history, in which waves of newcomers have been absorbed into the republic without being forced into a permanent underclass.

Won't pass

Chris Johnson, 1/23/2013 (staff writer, "Will Obama include gay couples in immigration reform?")

<http://www.washingtonblade.com/2013/01/23/will-obama-include-gay-couples-in-immigration-reform/>



Gay Rep. Jared Polis (D-Colo.), who's also been a leading advocate of immigration reform, **remains skeptical about the prospects for passing immigration reform this Congress** — with or without inclusion of UAFAs. ¶ “Immigration reform is going to be very difficult to pass,” Polis said. “The consideration of LGBT families is one of the less controversial aspects. **The most controversial aspect is the treatment of the 10 to 15 million people who are already here illegally. So, it's going to be difficult to get it through.**” If there is a vehicle to pass immigration reform, I'm going to work hard and I know that Sen. Schumer is also committed to immigration equality for gay and lesbian families.”

(--) Pathway to citizenship & fights over border security block immigration reform:

Daniel Strauss, 1/18/2013 (staff writer, “Reid: No immigration reform bill will pass Senate without pathway to citizenship,” <http://thehill.com/blogs/blog-briefing-room/news/278033-reid-no-immigration-reform-bill-will-pass-senate-without-pathway-to-citizenship>, Accessed 1/23/2013,) **Democrats want a bill to include a pathway to residency or citizenship for illegal immigrants, while Republicans have generally opposed such measures. Republicans also say strengthening border security should be a top priority in new immigration reform legislation. ¶ Reid said the emphasis in a new immigration reform bill should not be on border security.** ¶ ”

Won't pass

Kaplan, 1-16-13 (Rebecca, National Journal, “What Gets in the Way of Immigration Reform”

<http://www.nationaljournal.com/congress/what-gets-in-the-way-of-immigration-reform-20130116>)

The Gang of Eight is drafting principles. The White House says immigration reform could be in the State of the Union. Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., is planning Judiciary hearings. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce and AFL-CIO have joined hands to push for action. **There's no shortage of political will to get immigration reform done in this Congress, but attempts at an overhaul of the system have failed before, and lawmakers still have several major hurdles to overcome** this time. Here are a few: A **path to citizenship** versus legal status: This **is the single most divisive issue** that lawmakers will have to **overcome**. Democrats, in general, will demand that any legislation include a path to citizenship (this is also a priority for the AFL-CIO). Many **Republicans**, on the other hand, **remain staunchly opposed to anything resembling amnesty**. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid told a Nevada news outlet that a bipartisan group of senators “have agreed tentatively on a path to citizenship, which is the big stumbling block.” But **it remains to be seen whether that agreement would be acceptable to the entire Congress.** **Comprehensive versus piecemeal reform:** Proponents say a comprehensive package is the only way to fix the system. It's also a top priority of the president and the aim of the Gang of Eight—Sens. Michael Bennet, D-Colo., Dick Durbin, D-Ill., Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., Robert Menendez, D-N.J., John McCain, R-Ariz., Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., Mike Lee, R-Utah, and newly elected Sen. Jeff Flake, R-Ariz. But a comprehensive bill also gives everyone something to hate. Some lawmakers, such as Rep. Raul Labrador, R-Idaho, say it will be easier to tackle different reforms in smaller bills because different coalitions will support each piece. **Inclusion of a guest-worker program:** Disagreement over granting foreign workers temporary visas to work in the United States has historically separated business and labor groups, but the two are trying to find common ground this time. Jeff Hauser, spokesman for the AFL-CIO—which has opposed such programs in the past—said his group is talking to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce about ways to create a depoliticized body to manage the future flow of workers. **The Hastert Rule:** While a number of high-profile Republicans such as McCain have worked on immigration reform for years, it's still likely that legislation will have more Democratic than Republican support. But House Speaker John **Boehner has generally run the House in the style of former House Speaker Dennis Hastert, always ensuring that a majority of the majority party supports legislation before bringing it to the floor.** The rule was violated to get the fiscal-cliff legislation passed. **Redistricting** after the 2010 election **put more and more lawmakers into safe districts, meaning they have less incentive to compromise.** So it may not be possible for Boehner to get a majority of the **majority to back immigration reform.** **A crowded agenda:** The temporary nature of the deal produced to avert the fiscal cliff means that **within the first few months of the year, Congress will have to negotiate a deal to raise the debt ceiling, deal with the sequester, and fund the government.** President **Obama is also pushing gun control as**



a top priority. With limited time before legislators start focusing on their 2014 midterm races, **there might not be enough oxygen for immigration reform** to happen this year as well. Plain old politics: **There's a reason that immigration reform has failed so many times: it's a tough political nut to crack**, and can bring out ugliness and name-calling on both sides of the aisle. At a Politico Pro event Tuesday, Labrador suggested that **Obama wanted a political victory instead of a policy victory**—which may be easier if nothing gets done and Republicans get the blame. That's not the way Rep. Zoe Lofgren, D-Calif., a longtime immigration-reform advocate, sees it. "I have had Republicans say they don't want Obama to do a bill because they want flexibility, but if he doesn't do a bill, he's criticized," she said at the event. She says she's just waiting for Boehner to get the ball rolling. "It's not that tough, it's just the decision to do it," she said.

Immigration reform won't pass—basic political realities have not changed:

Elise **Foley, 1/15/2013** (staff writer, "Obama Gears Up For Immigration Reform Push In Second Term," http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/01/15/obama-immigration-reform_n_2463388.html, Accessed 1/23/2013,)

It's not clear whether the politics have changed enough for a bill to pass. Conservatives who stress the "enforcement first" approach don't think so. Mark Krikorian, executive director of the Center for Immigration Studies, rejects the findings of the Migration Policy Institute and fears that **reform might not prevent future swells in unauthorized immigration -- a key goal, after all, of any new policy and the major sticking point for Republicans in Congress. "I don't think the basic reality has changed,"** Krikorian said of immigration politics.

Amnesty concerns prevent immigration reform from passing:

Elise **Foley, 1/15/2013** (staff writer, "Obama Gears Up For Immigration Reform Push In Second Term," http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/01/15/obama-immigration-reform_n_2463388.html, Accessed 1/23/2013,)

Such concerns allow some Republicans to draw a hard line on the idea of citizenship for the undocumented. Rep. Lamar Smith (R-Texas), a key figure in the ongoing debate and the former head of the House Judiciary Committee, said on Monday that **Congress shouldn't trust the president on "mass amnesty" and that a bill including citizenship "will have a hard time" in the House.**



No pass – 1a

Public opposition and budget concerns – PC can't overcome

Porter 2/5 (Eduardo, "Immigration Reform Issue: The Effect on the Budget",

http://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/06/business/immigration-reform-issue-the-effect-on-the-budget.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0,

Despite the strong case for an overhaul, however, **changing** our **immigration** laws **may be tougher** than the president **appears to believe**. While we may have overcome some of the obstacles of 2007, **reform will** probably **face deep-seated** **opposition** from many **Americans** — including most conservative Republicans — to what they will view as a potentially large expansion of welfare.¶ President Obama's proposal is based on principles similar to those of the 2007 attempt: a path to citizenship for millions of illegal immigrants in the country, a legal channel for future immigrant workers and their families, and a plan to better enforce the nation's borders and immigration laws.¶ Yet immigration reform today means something quite different than it did in 2007. Notably, the elements needed to stop the flow of illegal immigrants north are much less important to the enterprise. The Obama administration has already spent huge amounts of money on border enforcement. Today, border policing costs about \$18 billion a year — nearly 50 percent more than it did in 2006. And deportations have soared. What's more, illegal immigration has slowed to a trickle, as Mexico has grown more robustly than the United States. The illegal immigrant population has even been shrinking in the last few years. And it may continue to do so as the Mexican population of prime migration-age people stops growing.¶ Also, many employers have already gotten some of what they wanted: the number of workers entering the United States on temporary visas for low-end jobs in agriculture and other industries has increased sharply.¶ "The discussion is in a different environment," said Gordon H. Hanson, an expert on the economics of immigration at the University of California, San Diego. "The flow of new immigrants is not the story anymore."¶ This might help the cause of reform in some ways. It could allow the discussion about work visas to focus on the highly educated workers coveted by technology companies and pre-empt the kind of argument between business and labor over visas for cheap immigrant workers that sank reform in 2007. The A.F.L.-C.I.O., for instance, has heartily embraced President Obama's plan.¶ But what supporters of an overhaul of immigration law seem to be overlooking is that these very **changes could** also **make it more difficult to build a coalition** across the political divide. If **reform is** mainly about granting citizenship to 11 million mostly poor illegal immigrants with relatively little education, it is **going to land squarely in the cross hairs of our epic battle about taxes, entitlements and the role of government in society**.¶ It's hard to say with precision what impact offering **citizenship** would have on the budget, but the chances are good that it **would cost** the government **money**. Half to three-quarters of illegal immigrants pay taxes, according to studies reviewed in a 2007 report by the Congressional Budget Office. And they are relatively inexpensive, compared with Americans of similar incomes. Their children can attend public schools at government expense — putting a burden on state and local budgets. But they are barred from receiving federal benefits like the earned-income tax credit, food stamps and Medicaid. Only their American-born children can get those.¶ Government revenue might not change much with legalization. Most illegal immigrants who don't pay taxes probably work in the cash economy — as nannies or gardeners — where tax compliance among citizens is low. Costs, of course, would increase. Once they became citizens, immigrants would be entitled to the same array of government benefits as other Americans. For Social Security and Medicare alone, offering citizenship to illegal immigrants would mean losing a subsidy worth several billion dollars a year in payroll taxes from immigrants who can't collect benefits in old age.¶ The White House and other backers of reform have made much of a 2007 Congressional Budget Office analysis concluding that the failed immigration overhaul would have increased government revenue by \$48 billion over a decade while adding only \$23 billion to direct spending on entitlements and other programs. But the report also said that including the costs of carrying out the new law would actually increase the budget deficit by \$18 billion over the decade and several billion a year after that. What's more, it noted that most of the expected new tax revenue came from new immigrant workers, not from the newly legalized population.¶ Our history suggests we could have much to gain by turning illegal immigrants into citizens and putting an end to unauthorized immigration. The last time we permitted illegal immigrants to legalize, in 1986, incomes jumped for those who took advantage of the opportunity. Their children became more proficient in English and completed more years of school — becoming more productive and paying more taxes over their lifetimes.¶ But the same history underscores how immigration sets off fears about further sharing of government resources. Ten years after the immigration reform of 1986, reeling from some public anger, Congress passed a law barring legal immigrants from means-tested government services. The same issue is likely again to be a major flash point. Professor Hanson pointed to "the older white man who sees his entitlements at risk because of the demands placed by legalization on our fiscal resources."¶ **Conservative Republicans** set on cutting government spending share those concerns. And for all their reasons to reach out to Hispanics, they **might not find making illegal immigrants legal politically advantageous**. On Tuesday, **Republicans** in the House **argued against granting citizenship to illegal immigrants at all**.¶ Hispanics are more liberal than the general population on economic matters, polls suggest, and more supportive of Big Government initiatives. Granting them citizenship would give them the vote.



Won't pass – details and time – their argument is a snap-shot

Soto 2/1/13 (Victoria DeFrancesco, Reality check on immigration reform's obstacles, <http://tv.msnbc.com/2013/02/01/reality-check-on-immigration-reforms-obstacles/>,

Now for **the bad news**: **There are** two **big and messy inter-related obstacles**—the details and time.¶ Devil is in the details.¶ The **immigration reform proposals put forward by the Senate and the president are** very **similar**. Both call for more border enforcement, a pathway to citizenship, guest worker permits, and employer enforcement. **The** one **major difference** however **is** in the detail of **when undocumented persons can be granted citizenship**.¶ Under the Senate plan eligibility of a green card is contingent on, “requiring our proposed enforcement measures be complete.” This is no minor detail. While in theory the Senate plan puts forward a path to citizenship, in practice, it's a stop gap. This condition would allow anti-immigrant forces to indefinitely postpone a pathway to citizenship by claiming that undocumented immigration hasn't been sufficiently enforced.¶ The Senate's conditional clause is what it means for the devil to be in the details. **It is over this clause that the bi-partisan chumminess of the Senate will fall apart. Democrats will not want their hands tied, and Republicans will want to look tough.**¶ Beyond the Senate, the pathway to citizenship condition will not play well with the president. **Obama** has staked out immigration as one of his legacy issues and **is not going to allow the Senate to move forward with a bill that in practice does not include a pathway to citizenship**.¶ The enforcement condition leads to the second main obstacle that could see the 2013 immigration reform never see the light of day, time.¶ A ticking time bomb.¶ **For immigration reform to become a reality it must be passed by the end of July before Congress' summer recess**. If it is not passed by then, consider immigration reform as good as dead.¶ **The House** of Representatives **will be the biggest challenge** to immigration reform **because of its Republican majority**. The closer we get to the 2014 primary season, the greater the number of GOP House members who will get skittish about voting for reform. Immigration reform will not be wildly popular with the Republican base, but at least if there is the buffer of time it will give representatives more freedom to support immigration reform.¶ If immigration reform is not passed before members of Congress go home to their districts for summer recess then we could see a replay of the disastrous Health Care Reform town halls of 2009. **Anti-immigration reform media outlets and conservative public voices** (e.g. Rush Limbaugh, the National Review) **have already started stoking public opinion against immigration reform**. Come August, **town halls could** turn amnesty into the new “death panels” and **scare the bejeezus out of all Republicans**.¶ **By design Congress is a slow-moving vehicle**. **Incrementalism**, not sweeping change, is **the name of the game**. As such, **comprehensive immigration reform faces a built-in institutional speed bump**. **Add to that the time the inter-party and inter-branch haggling that the conditional clause will take. The president** currently has **momentum**, but **it won't last**. long; more specifically, it'll last him till August



No pass – no vote

No vote till Summer

Helderman 1/26 (Rosalind S. Helderman and David Nakamura, “Obama, senators start push on immigration reform”, http://www.denverpost.com/nationworld/ci_22453721/obama-senators-start-push-immigration-reform)

Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., a veteran of the 2007 effort who is part of the current working group, said Republican attitudes have dramatically shifted since the party's defeat at the polls in November. Obama won more than 70 percent of the vote among Latinos and Asians, and a growing number of **Republican** leaders **think action on immigration is necessary** to expand the party's appeal to minority groups. ¶ "Obviously, it's had a very distinct impression," said **McCain**, who lost his own bid for the White House in 2008. "It's time to move forward on this." ¶ But he **added**, "**I don't claim that it's going to be easy**." ¶ Also included in **the** new **Senate** group are Schumer, who is chairman of the key Senate subcommittee where legislative action will begin; Graham; Robert Menendez, D-N.J.; and Marco Rubio, R-Fla.. Two others, Jeff Flake, R-Ariz. and Michael Bennet, D-Colo., have also been involved in some talks. ¶ Their **timetable would aim for a bill to be written by** March or **April** and **potentially considered for final passage in the Senate as early as the summer**.

No vote till August

Chris Johnson, 1/23/2013 (staff writer, “Will Obama include gay couples in immigration reform?” <http://www.washingtonblade.com/2013/01/23/will-obama-include-gay-couples-in-immigration-reform/>, Accessed 1/23/2013, CMR)

But while signs indicate that Obama will ask Congress to pass a UAFA-inclusive immigration reform bill, questions linger over whether the Senate will come to an agreement to pass an immigration package that would protect LGBT families. ¶ **Concurrent with the plan the White House is developing, a bipartisan group of senators has engaged in talks to craft a comprehensive bill that** according to the Times, **could be introduced as early as March** with the plan to hold **a floor vote** before **August**. **Legislation is expected to start in the Democratic-controlled Senate before moving over the Republican-controlled House for final passage.**



No pass – house blocks

House blocks – PC can't overcome

DeFrancesco 1/4 – Dr. Victoria M. DeFrancesco Soto is an NBC Latino and MSNBC contributor, Senior Analyst for Latino Decisions and Fellow at the Center for Politics and Governance at the LBJ School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas, at Austin (“Opinion: Immigration reform will not be easy, but it’s not impossible”, <http://nbclatino.com/2013/01/04/opinion-immigration-reform-will-not-be-easy-but-its-not-impossible/>)

Unlike in his first administration, **the president** seems to be on board and ready for **rolling up his sleeves** and getting into immigration reform, but that **won't cut it**. **The problem** for immigration reform in 2013 **is rooted in Capital Hill**. **The president's support** is a necessary condition for any major policy overhaul, but it **is not a sufficient condition**.[¶] Let's just assume the president can arm-wrestle the Senate Democrats and a few Senate Republicans into supporting his immigration reform. **Two out of three won't cut it**.[¶] **The Republican-controlled House** is what **stands in the way** of immigration reform. More specifically, **the GOP's split mindset** regarding Latinos and immigration is what **will** likely **prevent the president from crossing off immigration reform from his 2013 to-do list**.[¶] There are **moderate GOP voices**, such as that of Jeb Bush, that are calling for Republicans to not just go along, but lead in an immigration overhaul effort. These are the folks who see the demographic handwriting on the wall and recognize that the Republican Party cannot survive by alienating the fastest-growing segment of the electorate. However, those voices **are few and far between**.



2ac – kiss of death

Obama's backing off immigration now – presidential push makes it not pass

Koppelman 1-29 [Alex, The New Yorker, "WILL OBAMA SAVE IMMIGRATION REFORM OR KILL IT?", <http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/newsdesk/2013/01/will-obama-save-immigration-reform-or-kill-it.html>]

There's one other thing that's different, though: now, thanks in large part to the Hispanic vote, Barack Obama is President. That will make working for a bill harder for the Republicans who want to see something passed. **It's one thing to give up on some of the same principles** the G.O.P.'s base fought so hard for just a few years ago, **but doing so in partnership with Obama is something else entirely.** **The President's endorsement—his very presence—can suddenly make almost any proposal toxic for a great many Republicans, and anyone who works with him may have some explaining to do** come primary season. As a result, before Obama had so much as landed in Las Vegas to deliver his speech, **even those Republicans who are in favor of reform were criticizing him for what he would say** in it. "The President has an important decision to make... when he gives his speech," Senator Marco Rubio, the Florida Republican, said during an appearance he made on Rush Limbaugh's radio show on Tuesday. "He can either decide that he wants to be part of a solution or he can decide he wants to be part of a political issue and try to trigger a bidding war. I'm not gonna be part of a bidding war to see who can come up with the most lenient path forward... if he's gone to Las Vegas to give a speech and try to trigger a bidding war, then, no, it doesn't bode well. There won't be a solution." **It's not often that you see a politician building the explanation for why he might come to oppose his initiative just one day after he announced it**, but that is exactly what Rubio, who was part of the group of eight senators who released their ideas for reform, seemed to be doing. This may be bluster on Rubio's part, an attempt to provide himself some cover in case he does decide to run for President in 2016 and needs to explain to Republican primary voters why he essentially sided with Obama. Or it might not be: what Rubio was referring to are some very real differences between the senators' proposal and Obama's on the question of border security, and whether it has to be a precursor to citizenship for illegal immigrants. By all indications, though, and despite Rubio's preëemptive fighting stance, **it seems that Obama might be ready to compromise in order to get something done, and not just on policy.** **The White House knows that the President's involvement could harden the opposition, and it appears to be working to minimize that effect.** His critics will note the campaign-esque appearance of his big speech, delivered in a swing state to a cheering crowd, and in passionate tones. They won't be wrong to do so, but that's form, not substance, and on substance he's given up serious ground. **Reform has been a priority of Obama's ever since the 2008 campaign, but he's not taking the lead—he let those eight senators do that, and then he largely adopted their proposal instead** of putting out a detailed one of his own. **Simply diminishing the number of Obama's fingerprints that are on this initiative does not ensure that it will pass**, of course. **Even if it does pass, it's hardly a guarantee of good policy, as we saw all too clearly when the President stepped back during the fight over the stimulus and let Congress dictate terms on purely political grounds. But if immigration reform is to be done, this may be the only way to do it.**

Congress will do immigration alone – Obama's involvement is a kiss of death

Weingarten, 1-16-13 (Elizabeth, New America Foundation, "President Obama's Next Steps on Immigration" <http://intheworld.newamerica.net/blog/2013/01/president-obamas-next-steps-immigration>)

Tamar Jacoby, the president of ImmigrationWorks USA, **hopes** President **Obama doesn't introduce a** comprehensive immigration reform **bill in the next few months**, as The New York Times reported he would. Why? **"If this is seen [in Congress] as President Obama's project alone, you won't get enough Republicans voting to pass it,"** explained Jacoby, also a New America Schwartz Fellow. But to Jacoby's relief, **a group of senators from both sides of the aisle are also seizing the reins on immigration reform.** The senators, including Republican Sen. Marco Rubio, are meeting behind-the-scenes to draft a comprehensive bill that will likely share many of President Obama's policy tenets. The story behind this crew: Senator Chuck Schumer (D-NY) and Senator Lindsay Graham (R-SC) started talking about a bipartisan bill early in President Obama's first term. But talks stalled after issues like the tanking economy took legislative precedence. The senators resumed discussions after this year's election. To Jacoby, it's critical the group



succeed because of the divisive atmosphere in Congress today. **"In the olden days, a President from one party could propose a bill, and you could get enough members from another party to pass it,"** Jacoby said. **"It doesn't work that way anymore** – not for now, anyway." Regardless of party affiliation, any successful legislation must share a few key sweet spots, Jacoby said: A path to citizenship or legal status for the 11 million illegal immigrants currently living in the country, an easier way for high-skilled workers to enter and stay in the country, and better immigration enforcement both on the border and in the workplace. But legislators often leave out what Jacoby thinks are two of the most important pieces of the puzzle: a way for unskilled workers to enter the U.S. legally, and a better integration strategy once immigrants are here. The economy needs those unskilled workers, but they have no legal pathway to enter the U.S. And once immigrants are inside the U.S. – we do a poor job of teaching them English and how to become an American, says Jacoby. Of course, various members of Congress have agitated for comprehensive immigration reform for years. What makes 2013 any riper for change? As anyone who cast a vote or read a newspaper during the 2012 election season knows - the Latino vote propelled the issue to the forefront of public discourse and debate. Though Latinos alone didn't elect President Obama and defeat Gov. Mitt Romney, both parties finally recognized that it was a huge and growing voting bloc. But immigration reform isn't just about shoring up the Latino vote or providing a pathway to legalization, Jacoby cautions. "That's one of the biggest misconceptions – this isn't a favor we're doing for Latinos. This is for us – for all Americans. It's about the U.S. economy and U.S. competitiveness." **Her advice for President Obama: Keep up the pressure to advance legislation, but don't take over the process.** "That could potentially be the **kiss of death**," she said.



1ar – kiss of death

Current budget fights prove Obama's PC will backfire – spills over to immigration failure

Stanage 1/6/13 (Niall, and Amie Parnes, "Obama to draw on public support in new round of economic battles", <http://thehill.com/homenews/administration/275759-obama-will-draw-on-public-support-in-negotiating-with-gop#ixzz2HD1BtgBH>,

President **Obama intends to take a confrontational approach** with Republicans in future **economic battles** by using the same campaign-style events the White House saw as effective in the "fiscal-cliff" fight. Many in Obama's party believe that he got the upper hand in the recent deal to avoid the mixture of across-the-board tax hikes and spending cuts, and that the aggressive approach helped build his public case. Sources close to Obama say he can fend off Republicans for several reasons: his successful reelection; polling suggesting public support for many of his positions; and division among Republicans on Capitol Hill. Jen Psaki, who served as a press secretary during both of Obama's presidential campaigns, said that the biggest lesson the president learned from his first term was "the power of the American people" and "the importance of having the will of the American people behind you." In practical terms, "that means taking the argument on the road, taking the time, as he did before the fiscal-cliff deal, to explain the stakes... and to use real-world examples of how certain fights impact the middle class," she added. Yet **there are risks to the approach** as well. A Jan. 31 rally Obama held at the White House during which supporters cheered the president on as he scolded Republicans angered the GOP just as sensitive talks with senators were taking place. Republican senators warned it could cost the president votes, though in the end it appeared it did not. Obama's supporters want him to press his case forcefully. The left criticized the president during his first term, saying the prodigious organization that had been built up during his 2008 campaign was harnessed only sporadically, if at all, when it came to governing. Team Obama's desire to keep the campaign infrastructure alive and vibrant was evident last week, when 2012 campaign manager Jim Messina sent out an email blast to supporters with a video of the president talking about the merits of the fiscal-cliff deal. But any sense of **triumphalism over Republicans could spark a backlash in Congress** and erode Obama's image among centrist voters as someone committed to forging bipartisan consensus. Republicans have long argued that the idea of Obama-as-conciliator is a self-serving fiction put forth by the White House. In recent days, The Wall Street Journal has run two op-eds by prominent conservatives — Fred Barnes and Peggy Noonan—insisting that Obama talks the talk but does not walk the walk when it comes to bipartisanship. "At Mr. Obama's campfire, he gets to sing 'Kumbaya' solo while others nod to the beat," Noonan wrote. The president's aides firmly deny the characterization. "The president has demonstrated repeatedly his willingness to find common ground," one senior administration official said. "He'll continue to do that, I'm sure. The negotiating positions he takes are in the best interests of the middle class. That will continue to be his North Star." Obama aides justify his refusal to negotiate over raising the debt ceiling in a similar fashion. The president has twice in the last week issued unambiguous statements asserting that Congress needs to do what is required to increase the national debt limit, without any quid pro quo attached. At a brief White House press conference after the fiscal-cliff accord was reached, Obama said: "I will not have another debate with this Congress over whether or not they should pay the bills that they've already racked up through the laws that they passed. Let me repeat: We can't not pay bills that we've already incurred." In his weekly address, recorded in Hawaii and released on Saturday, he made a similar statement, warning against the "dangerous game" of Congress declining to raise the ceiling until the last moment, as happened in the summer of 2011. "The last time Congress threatened this course of action, our entire economy suffered for it," he said. Obama aides insist that this is not political posturing. One administration official said the president will "definitely not" come to the negotiating table. "Full stop," the official emphasized. Republicans argue that the president might have little choice, however, lest the public blame him for intransigence. They also argue that **other Obama priorities, notably immigration reform, are achievable, but only if Republicans can be persuaded of their merits**. Asked if the most recent negotiations had poisoned the well around the Capitol, GOP strategist Dan Judy replied, "I think **the well was poisoned long before the fiscal-cliff fight**. There has been a lot of poison **dumped in that well**, most notably Obamacare." "I think that is really too bad, because there is an opportunity for bipartisan consensus on a lot of these things, especially immigration reform," Judy added. **If the president really wants** to bring along some Republicans on **immigration reform**, he can do it. But **it is incumbent upon him to go to them wanting their help, not offering the kind of my way or the highway' approach** we've seen before." Democratic strategist Jamal Simmons, however, made light of the idea that sharp, campaign-style rhetoric could be counter-productive. "This ain't nursery," he said with a laugh. "The Republicans have been known to use fairly heated rhetoric themselves. When the Tea Party was out in front of the Capitol or turning up at Democrats' town halls, the Republican Party was not upset by that level of political activity. That's what you're supposed to do." In terms of legislative realities, Simmons also noted that last week's deal set a potentially useful precedent for Obama. Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) jettisoned his usual insistence that he would only bring forth legislation that could win the approval of most of his own conference. "Boehner did not have to live by the rule of getting the majority of Republicans," Simmons said. "Some of these big bills are things that are good for the country and he can get them passed with Democratic votes. This is a precedent for bills to be passed by a majority of the House rather than a majority of the majority." Still, the question about Obama's willingness to make concessions is hotly disputed across the political divide. Psaki insisted that



the president had expressed an openness to reforming programs cherished by Democrats, including Social Security. ¶ "He has reached out an olive branch and he's shown he's willing to make tough choices," she said. But she added, "He's also not going to cut programs that have a dramatic impact on the middle class." ¶ To Judy, the Republican strategist, **Obama's olive branches have always looked illusory, part of a sleight-of-hand in pursuit of political gain.** ¶ "I think his press conferences and campaign events are symptomatic of a larger disease, which is his unwillingness to strike a deal. **If you talk to Republicans, it's his inability to negotiate with them in good faith that is really what upsets them,**" he said. ¶ **The fundamental problem is that he's not willing to make a deal."**

Obama's PC makes an immigration deal less likely to pass – budget fights prove

Stewart 1/4/13 (Martina, "Both Obama, GOP have laid out hard lines for tough talks ahead",

<http://www.cnn.com/2013/01/04/politics/obama-congress/index.html>,

Washington (CNN) -- If all the recent **wrangling over the fiscal cliff** has **revealed** anything, it's **how tense and strained**

President **Obama's relationship is with Republicans in Congress.** ¶ And **Obama's relationship with Congress**

reached yet another low Thursday when House Speaker John Boehner confirmed to CNN that **he has told House**

Republicans he will no longer negotiate legislative deals with the president. ¶ Low bar for new Congress ¶ **"They**

are going to fight the president tooth and nail." Zelizer said, a problem made worse by the fact that Boehner "is not in

control" of House Republicans, particularly the contingent of fiscal conservatives brought to Washington by support from the tea party movement. ¶ CNN contributor Ruben Navarrette Jr. said Obama's strained relationship with congressional Republicans dates back to the contentious debate over Obama's signature health care legislation, where the president showed his willingness to push through major proposals and major legislation without consulting them. ¶ "He is so good at the business of politics that he's really outmaneuvered them,"

Navarrette observed about Obama's relationship with Republicans over the past four years. ¶ **The already difficult relationship**

isn't helped by unique issues on each side. ¶ The GOP has been struggling to define itself and its message in tough economic

times amidst twin concerns about government spending and income inequality. ¶ And buoyed by his electoral success in 2008, legislative

successes in the first half of his first term and by winning a second term, **Obama adopted a take-it-or-leave-it attitude with**

Republicans, even as the nation teetered on the edge of the fiscal cliff. ¶ "My preference would have been to solve these problems in the

context of a larger agreement, a bigger deal, a grand bargain. But with this Congress, that was obviously a little too much to hope for at this

time," Obama said Monday afternoon at a White House event that at moments seemed like a campaign gathering. ¶ At the same event, Obama

also warned the GOP about expected battles over spending cuts in the coming months. ¶ "Now, if Republicans think that I will finish the job of

deficit reduction through spending cuts alone," Obama said, "[I]f they think that's going to be the formula for how we solve this thing, then

they've got another thing coming. That's not how it's going to work." Rather, Obama declared "it's going to have to be a matter of shared

sacrifice, at least as long as I'm president. And I'm going to be president for the next four years." ¶ **Obama's recent post-election**

trash talking directed at Congress is "defiance politics" that misunderstands what it means to win an election, Navarrette

said. ¶ The president's recent comments are like "an end zone dance, a celebration" or, in the world of mixed martial arts competition, like

"putting your foot on the other guy's neck and holding your hand up in the air," after you've felled your opponent, according to Navarrette. ¶

Instead of taking every opportunity to remind Republicans that he won (and they lost) last November, Obama needs to realize that "with

winning elections comes the responsibility to lead," Navarrette said. As the person in whom the public has placed its trust and confidence,

"your burdens are much greater (than your losing opponent's)." ¶ Democrats counter that **Obama hasn't had anyone to make a**

deal with. ¶ "When John Boehner comes to the table and he can't even bring his deputy or his third in command to vote for the deal that he

is agreeing to, I think you've got a real crisis of leadership in the House," former White House press secretary Bill Burton said. ¶ "And so the

president showed that even in that case, he can get a deal that moves the ball forward for the country, but going forward, you just wonder,

how much control does Boehner have over the folks in the House and what kind of deals are we going to be able to get?" ¶ **For all his**

recent public swagger when it comes to Congress, **Obama "really does compromise a lot,"** said Zelizer. For example,

Zelizer pointed out that during recent negotiations over the fiscal cliff, the president changed his position substantially on the income threshold

for eliminating the Bush tax cuts. ¶ While he says he doesn't think there's much more Obama can do publicly to smooth over the differences

with House Republicans, Zelizer said that Obama can't let stand Boehner's declaration that he's abandoning any more legislative deal-making

with the White House. The president would be wise to try to work behind the scenes to keep Boehner "in the fold and maintain some sort of

relationship" with the speaker. ¶ And Zelizer noted an encouraging pattern in the recent fiscal brinksmanship between Congress and the

president. ¶ After negotiations between Boehner and Obama broke down, "(Senate Minority Leader Mitch) McConnell stepped up and put the

deal together," observed Zelizer, who added the Senate could take the lead again in working out agreements on things like handling automatic

spending cuts put off by this week's fiscal cliff deal and likely upcoming battles over the debt ceiling and funding the federal government. ¶

Zelizer noted that after McConnell negotiated a deal with Vice President Joe Biden, Boehner allowed House Republicans to entertain an

alternative that would have included more spending cuts, an alternative which never made it to a vote because fiscal conservatives couldn't

muster a majority in the House GOP to support its passage. ¶ Ultimately, Boehner kept his pledge to Democratic leaders in Congress to put the

Senate's deal up for a House vote. By making the pledge before the terms of the Senate deal were even set, Zelizer said, Boehner sent a signal



to House Republicans that they were going to lose the battle over the fiscal cliff even if they didn't like the Senate deal.¶ The maneuvers by McConnell and Boehner suggest a path forward if repeated, according to Zelizer, because if GOP leaders continue not to obstruct Democrats as they try to move forward with legislation, that could help bring around tea party Republicans in the House.¶ In order to improve their relationship with the White House, Navarette said Republicans "have to fix what's broken in their own party, they have to heal the divisions in their own party . . . and define what the GOP is about."¶ Calling it "a miracle" that Boehner was re-elected as speaker, Navarette said the GOP must also decide which role it wants to play in Obama's second term. Will they try to be accommodating and try to work with the president to find solutions to problems, including some problems Republican donors and the Republican establishment wants fixed? Or will they play the proverbial loyal opposition?¶ Both are "not terribly attractive options" for the GOP, Navarette said, especially up against a masterful political strategist like Obama.¶ As for the tea party contingent in the House GOP, Navarette predicts the new lawmakers will become moderate as they enter their second and third terms and realize they need the financial support of the GOP establishment to win re-election.¶ And Navarette suggests that the sports-loving and competitive Obama invite top Republicans over to the White House for his annual Super Bowl watching party in order to build personal relationships across the aisle in Congress.¶ For Obama, moderating his triumphal, defiant approach when it comes to Republicans and Congress is also important because, Navarette points out, gun control and immigration reform are both high on Obama's second term agenda. And there are strong feelings on the part of conservatives and Obama's liberal base on both issues.¶ On the fiscal issues where Obama has repeatedly clashed with Capitol Hill Republicans in the past two years, Zelizer warns that recent events could repeat themselves.¶ "It's going to be rough, going to be tough, we're going to see this issue recur again and again over the years," the historian said.¶ Indeed, both Obama and McConnell, the GOP's new lead fiscal negotiator, already seem to be playing out a familiar script.¶ The last fiscal battle barely over, Obama wasted no time late Tuesday night staking out his position in the battles to come.¶ After saying "I am very open to compromise," the president went on to fire a shot over Congress' bow in the likely fight in February over raising the debt ceiling. "[W]hile I will negotiate over many things, I will not have another debate with this Congress over whether or not they should pay the bills that they've already racked up through the laws that they passed," Obama declared, "Let me repeat: We can't not pay bills that we've already incurred."¶ McConnell quickly fired back.¶ "The president may not want to have a fight about government spending over the next few months, but it's the fight he is going to have, because it's a debate the country needs," McConnell wrote in a Yahoo op-ed published Wednesday night, adding that Obama "must show up" and deliver a serious plan for slashing federal spending.¶ "That's the debate the American people really want. It's a debate Republicans are ready to have. And it's the debate that starts today, whether the president wants it or not," McConnell wrote.



Thumper – Fiscal fights

Fiscal fights and foreign policy *obliterate* PC and the agenda

Benac 1/21 – over 3 decades of experience covering govt and politics in Washington (Nancy, “Analysis: Optimistic Obama faces tough to-do list”, <http://www.greenbaypressgazette.com/viewart/20130122/GPG06/301220172/Analysis-Optimistic-Obama-faces-tough-do-list>)

First up is **certain battle** **with Congress in the next few months** over deadlines on automatic **budget cuts**, expiring **government spending** authority **and** raising the **debt limit**. House Republicans last week agreed to bump up the debt limit slightly, but that just puts off that part of the fight for a few months. **Obama’s goal is to get through that trifecta and still have the political capital left** for the things he’d rather focus on: reducing **gun violence**, overhauling **immigration** policy, revamping **tax laws, addressing climate change** and more. **with Republicans in Congress approaching the new year with very different goals, “it’s a formula for deadlock and difficulty for the president,”** **says James Thurber, director of the Center for Congressional and Presidential Studies at American University. “I don’t think this president has even a month of political capital.”** **International worries, including** the civil war in **Syria, Iran’s nuclear intentions and** instability in **Mali could complicate the president’s Term Two game plan as well. “Things are stacked up,”** Obama senior adviser David Plouffe acknowledged Sunday on ABC’s “This Week.”

Fiscal fights first – derails immigration

O'Brien 1/21 (Michael, “Ambitious agenda: Debt fight, gun control and immigration top president's to-do list”, 2k13, http://nbcpolitics.nbcnews.com/_news/2013/01/21/16610922-ambitious-agenda-debt-fight-gun-control-and-immigration-top-presidents-to-do-list?lite)

Confronting the **fading effectiveness of a second-term presidency, dogged opposition** from **Republicans** in Congress **and unexpected hurdles that will inevitably arise** over the next four years, **Obama must act** with a sense of urgency on his plans, particularly **amid** the **fiscal cliff negotiations**. **“Second-term presidents generally get eight months or so ... where there's a honeymoon** to push an agenda,” **said James Thurber, the director of Center for Congressional and Presidential Studies at American University. “He doesn’t even have a month.”** Newly armed with “Organizing for Action” – the remnants of the president’s campaign structure, converted to a nonprofit for advocacy purposes – Obama has suggested he will indeed act quickly on his top priorities. NBC News presidential historian Michael Beschloss points out that the US needs a president who is also going to suggest things that are not raised by an event of national magnitude, and that was something we saw a lot of in Obama’s speech Monday. But **the next few months might well test the limits of the political capital that the president won** in November, which saw Obama score a decisive victory over Republican opponent Mitt Romney and Democrats add seats in the House and the Senate. If this past December’s lame duck Congress – in which Obama won higher tax rates for the wealthy, but only after a bitter fight with Republicans – offers any lessons, it’s that **the GOP is equally committed to pursuing its own priorities, making compromise** just as **elusive** as before. **The fiscal cliff fight will extend into this spring**, when the government hits a series of major deadlines to keep the government funded and prevent a default on the national debt. **That** bare-knuckled **fight could** make or **break Obama’s** hopes of accomplishing much else on his **agenda**. **“I don’t believe that he can wait until the last minute to deal with the debt ceiling and sequestration,”** said Martin Frost, a former Democratic congressman from Texas. “That’s got to be worked out during February.” **That fight would** threaten to **consume** much of the **political oxygen** in Washington in any normal year. And **Obama’s ability to pivot toward** his other major priorities, **gun violence and immigration, may** well **hinge** up **on** how quickly and



cleanly he can dispense with **this** spring's **spending fight**.¶ History suggests that many presidents cannot hope to accomplish much in the last two years of their term, when the jockeying for the next presidential campaign begins. And **with midterm elections looming** in 2014, **lawmakers will inevitably turn at some point from governing to politicking**.¶ "There's kind of an arc of achievement in presidential administrations. Usually the first few months of a new administration is where most of the accomplishment takes place," **said** Ross Baker, a presidential historian at Rutgers University. "It's **hard to imagine** getting **another piece of legislation of the magnitude of the Affordable Care Act in the second term**."¶ And Obama's hopes of significant reforms to immigration and gun laws might well depend upon how well (or how poorly) the spending fight with Congress proceeds.¶ The president last week laid out a series of measures intended to curb gun violence, most significantly proposals to limit the size of ammunition magazines, ban assault weapons and require universal background checks on firearm purchases. That plan won little praise from Republicans, and Obama might have to lean upon any reservoir of goodwill he has left after the spending fight to reach his goals.¶ Obama is practically obligated to attempt **immigration reform** after soothing the Latino community during last year's election about his inability to follow through with a pledge to accomplish immigration reform in his first term. If re-elected, Obama told Hispanic voters, he would make immigration reform a priority in this second term.¶ Both proposals **could engender significant Republican resistance**, a phenomenon familiar to any observers of Obama's first four years in office.¶



Thumper – gun control

Budget and gun control thump

Robison 2/7 (Daniel, “State of the Union Address Likely to Focus on Domestic Issues”, <http://www.voanews.com/content/domestic-issues-likely-to-dominate-state-of-the-union-address/1598894.html>,

President Barack **Obama delivers his State of the Union** Address -- the first of his second term in office -- on **February 12**. The speech to a joint session of Congress will be watched by millions across the nation and around the world. ¶ In his first address to Congress in 2009, Obama aimed to inspire confidence amid the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression. "Though we are living through difficult and uncertain times, tonight I want every American to know this. We will rebuild, we will recover, and the United States of America will emerge stronger than before," he stated. ¶ Since then, he has used the State of the Union address to talk about events that have shaken the nation, such as mass shootings. ¶ Now, **empowered by his re-election, he is pushing Congress to strengthen gun control** and pass immigration reform. ¶ **Obviously** immigration is going to be a big issue, **gun control and gun violence those hot button issues.** ¶ said James Carafano with the conservative Heritage Foundation. **He is going to have a lot to say about the budget because we will still be in the middle of the budget thing.** ¶ **Deficit reduction and cuts to government spending, facing a March deadline** for agreement with Congress, **are also likely to be highlighted** in the speech

Gun control

Klein 1/14 (Rick, “Analysis: Gun Control Set to Crowd Out President Obama’s Second-Term Agenda,” 1/14/2013, <http://abcnews.go.com/blogs/politics/2013/01/analysis-gun-control-set-to-crowd-out-president-obamas-second-term-agenda/>)

WASHINGTON — President **Obama is putting his chips on guns.** ¶ It wasn’t an issue he campaigned on — actually, it was almost the opposite of that. It did more to grab him than he did to grab it. ¶ But a month after the unfathomable tragedy at Sandy Hook, **the president has positioned himself to take on a fight with long odds as his biggest domestic-policy initiative** this side of the never-ending fiscal fights. ¶ The valuable run-up to the inauguration — traditionally a White House’s best chance to put forward a bold new policy initiative — is being dominated by the polarizing debate over **gun control**. The coming **fight has broad implications on virtually every other Washington priority** in 2013 and beyond. ¶ Vice President Joe **Biden’s guns task force is strongly signaling recommending a robust menu of policy options,** spanning executive actions and legislative initiatives. **Each piece is sure to require the full force of presidential leadership** to turn into action. ¶ “The public demands we speak to it,” Biden said last week, referencing the emotions that followed a tragedy involving young children. ¶ It may yet be a solid bet that this moment is different than past shootings. Powerful allies including New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg and former Rep. Gabrielle Giffords are lending their considerable political weight to the efforts, prodding action along. ¶ Already, the fact that Washington hasn’t lost interest bodes well for a major legislative push that includes more background checks and a renewed assault weapons ban. ¶ But **the gun lobby has been explicit that it won’t be giving in. The fight will consume valuable political oxygen,** perhaps all of what’s available to a reelected president whose party controls only half of Capitol Hill. ¶ **That means other ambitious subject areas — immigration reform, energy and environmental policy, a major infrastructure initiative — will have to wait.** ¶ Moreover, the coming **brinkmanship over spending and budget issues could further poison the chances of action,** potentially **grinding Washington to an effective halt.** ¶ President George W. Bush found out the hard way that **political capital doesn’t last long into a second term,** even if the president tries to spend it with a friendly Congress. Bush’s push for Social Security reform not only went nowhere, it helped sow the seeds of the Democratic takeover of Congress in 2006. ¶ This fight over guns has the potential to be more than that for Obama, though. After a campaign devoid of much inspiration, a passionate debate that gets to the heart of the nation’s culture may be what the recently reelected president needs. ¶ **The fight will mobilize and energize those on both sides — even if it tires everyone out before discussions begin in other areas.**



Gun control push will undermine immigration --- whether he succeeds or not

Rauch 1/20 --- guest scholar at Brookings (Jonathan, "Tackle immigration first, Mr. President,"

<http://www.nydailynews.com/opinion/tackle-immigration-mr-president-article-1.1242944?localLinksEnabled=false>

Asked a few years ago whether George W. **Bush** had **made** any consequential mistakes in his second term, a senior official of Bush's administration had to think for a moment. After all, Bush and his people were not known for regrets or introspection. Yes, he finally said, there had been **one serious mistake: putting Social Security reform ahead of immigration**. In 2005, the newly reelected President had two domestic policy goals. Immigration reform, a long-time objective of the former Texas governor, looked to the center. Social Security private accounts, prized by conservatives as a game-changing reform of the New Deal welfare state, looked right. Bush chose Social Security. The Democrats folded their arms and said no. Even many Republicans balked. **By the time the resulting wild goose chase had run its course, Bush's second-term political capital, unreplenishable at that point in his presidency, was depleted.** Worse, the immigration debate had changed. In early 2005, not only Bush but many Democrats and such prominent Republicans as Sen. John McCain were ready to deal. More quickly than anyone expected, the Republican base moved right and the window closed. And so what should have been a historic policy achievement, and a political watershed for Republicans, never happened. Imagine how different Republicans might look to Hispanic voters today if a Republican President and Congress had led immigration reform.

Bush probably still rues that misstep. And now President Obama looks set to repeat it. **Once again, a reelected but polarizing President begins his second term with political stars aligned for immigration reform.** Democrats need to do it, because their liberal and Hispanic base demands it. Republicans also need to do it, because they are desperate to shed their hard-won reputation for hostility to immigrants and Latinos. Obama needs to do it; he has been campaigning on it since 2008, when he said he would "move that forward as quickly as possible." Not least important, the country sorely needs immigration reform. The current system has become not only a political thorn in the side of both parties but a drag on growth and innovation. Recent evidence shows that immigration, even low-skilled immigration, is a net economic and social plus. Meanwhile, the current federal policy takes too little account of skill and talent, and admits fewer workers than the economy needs for the jobs it actually has. America's current policy is to educate the next foreign-born generation of engineers and entrepreneurs and then expel most of them. And the policy is inhumane as well as inefficient. Millions of otherwise law-abiding and productive people are driven underground, including many who would pay a reasonable fine or penalty to get right with the law; thousands of same-sex partners and spouses are vindictively shut out of the country. These are not problems over which Washington has merely indirect influence, as it does with most social problems. They are problems that Congress could actually solve. You say we should secure the borders before reforming immigration law? Though you would never know it from some of the political rhetoric, border control has been accomplished, at least as completely as it ever can be. As Edward Alden of the Council on Foreign Relations noted in a Cato Journal article last year, over the last two decades, the government has more than septupled the size of the border patrol, built nearly 700 miles of fencing along the Mexican border, and deployed technologies ranging from cameras to drones. "The U.S. borders are far harder to cross illegally than at any time in American history, and the number of people entering illegally has dropped sharply," Alden writes. Border security is not perfect and never will be, but enough has been achieved so that even "security first" advocates should be willing to move on to legal reform. **Immigration reform, then, offers the highest bang for the buck of any reform agenda now before Congress.** For Democrats, it also offers to cement the electoral loyalty of the growing Hispanic population for decades to come.

So what does Obama do first? Gun control. If ever there was a political sticky wicket, this is it. "Gun Agenda Faces an Uphill Battle," headlined the Washington Post the other day. You can say that again. On the merits, in a magic-wand world, it makes sense to tighten some gun regulations, especially by closing the so-called "gun show loophole," which allows non-dealers to buy firearms without background checks. But let's not kid ourselves: In a country with perhaps 250 million firearms already in private hands, even the deftest regulatory improvements will bring only marginal reductions in violence. No one likes to hear this, but it is true: the mass murder at Sandy Hook Elementary School was an atrocity of the first magnitude, and even one such atrocity is too many — but mass shootings in schools are very rare, and way, way down the list of causes of violent deaths. Moreover, there is little the federal government can do to prevent them. No doubt, Obama was distraught by those murders. We all were. But this was a case when his more characteristic cold-blooded realism would have served him better. **None of what makes immigration so urgent and accomplishable is true of gun control.** **There is no bipartisan desire to get it done. In fact, not even Democrats are united.**

Republicans already smell blood: a chance to grind Obama down by stalling and obstructing in the usual way and to re-energize what has been, until now, a demoralized conservative base. The National Rifle Association will provide plenty of assistance with that project, fattening its coffers along the way. Now, Obama is more popular today than Bush was in 2005, and he won a stronger reelection victory; nor is gun regulation as quixotic as was Bush's effort to reform Social Security with only one party's support. Obama may yet succeed where Bush failed. **Suppose he does succeed, though. What with the upcoming two (or is it three? four?) budgetary crises, the bandwidth for immigration was always narrow. It will be narrowed still further by diverting legislative time and energy toward guns. Gun control gives liberals a new crusade, but in doing so it opens an attention-distracting, resource-depleting two-front war.** Meanwhile, the window of opportunity for immigration might stay open for a while, but it might not,



especially if Obama is weakened and conservatives regroup. ¶ **And if he loses on guns? Bush thought he could afford to lose on Social Security and move on to immigration.** He was wrong. In fact, **he never recovered**. His political strength and strategic credibility were shaken, and he spent the rest of his second term playing defense. Also, of course, the immigration-reform window closed. Republican moderates were marginalized by conservatives who had no interest in any reform that Democrats might accept.

Gun control first

Chris Weigant, 1/23/2013 (staff writer, "Handicapping Obama's Second Term Agenda,"

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/chris-weigant/obama-second-term_b_2537802.html

Budget battles are going to happen no matter what else does -- that's another safe bet. What is more interesting, though, is handicapping which of Obama's agenda

items will actually see some action. **There are three major initiatives that Obama is currently pushing: action on**

global warming, comprehensive immigration reform, and gun control. Obama did mention other issues in his speech,

but these are the big three for now. Gay marriage, for instance, is in the hands of the Supreme Court right now, and no matter how they rule it's hard to see any

legislative action (good or bad) happening on it immediately afterwards. ¶ **Gun control will likely be the first of these debated in**

Congress. Vice President Biden laid out a wide array of possible actions Congress could take on the issue, all of which Obama then backed. While the Newtown massacre did indeed shift public opinion dramatically on the overall issue, the biggest initiative is not likely to become law. An assault rifle ban is very important to some Democrats, but the way I read it is that this was included to have something to "trade away" in the negotiations. If Obama gets most of the other gun control initiatives -- closing loopholes on background checks, much better tracking of weapons, and all the other "small bore" (sorry about that pun) ideas -- then he will at least be able to say he accomplished something at the end of the day. Perhaps this is pessimistic, but the mechanics of banning "assault weapons" become very tricky, when you have to actually define what they are in legal language. And such a ban may not get universal Democratic backing anyway, so I fully expect this will be shelved at some point in exchange for support for all the other initiatives. Without such a ban, the prospects for other meaningful gun control legislation get a lot better, though, and I think that a bill will eventually pass.



Thumper – nominations

Obama will burn capital on nominations – kills the agenda

Thurlow 2/5 (Tom, “Obama’s Political Capital”, He may run out of gas on these nominations, <http://www.redstate.com/tfthurlow/2013/02/05/obamas-political-capital/>,

President **Obama blows through his own political capital** just as **fast** as he blows through America’s financial capital. Neither case of over-spending is sustainable, and we will just have to wait to see which spending spree is forced to end first.¶ But this further confirms my suspicion that President Obama’s brains are the most over-rated to occupy the Oval Office in generations. Take **his recent nominations**, which **are a mess**.¶ Last week’s Senate **hearings on Senator Hagel’s confirmation** as defense secretary **were a disaster**. Senator McCain pressed Senator Hagel to confirm or deny Hagel’s earlier statement that the Surge in Iraq was “the greatest foreign policy blunder since the Vietnam War.” Senator Ted Cruz pointed out that Senator Hagel, during an interview with the Al Jazeera English network in 2009 had agreed with a questioner who said that the United States appeared and acted like the world’s bully. As Paul Mirengoff at the Powerline Blog wrote, **“if he were a Broadway play, Hagel would close after one performance.”**¶ There were also a number of past anti-Semitic, or at least anti-Israel statements about which Senator Hagel was questioned. About the only thing about the hearing that was reassuring to those who take national defense seriously was that Hagel bumbled so much he sounded like he may have dementia. Let’s face it, a demented defense secretary may not be as bad as an anti-American defense secretary who is purposefully soft on defense and unconcerned about looming problems with Iran’s nuclear program.¶ Senator Lindsey **Graham has threatened a hold on the Hagel nomination**, and he should. Not only is a defense secretary an important policy position, but as has been pointed out by Republican critics that in any given foreign crisis, the defense secretary will be one of the few advisors in the room, advising the president.¶ **Next up: a nomination battle for a Treasury secretary nominee**, Jacob **Lew, who has never worked in a bank except as an attorney for Citibank**, and has held many different government jobs, most recently President Obama’s chief of staff. Definitely a financial industry lightweight. **Lew has also been accused of misleading the public on deficits**. About the only thing that stands out about Jacob Lew as Treasury secretary is the fact that his signature — which will appear on all of our currency — looks like a bunch of circles. Oddly enough, it doesn’t appear as if Lew has had any medical training.¶ **After that, brace yourself for President Obama’s nominee for director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), Todd Jones. Jones** is the current acting director of ATF and **has been criticized by a local Democratic FBI office director as being politically well-connected but incompetent and soft on gun and violent crime prosecutions**.¶ Past presidents have had difficult times in their second terms, but the difficulty is usually with big proposals. President George W. Bush unsuccessfully tried to pass privatization of Social Security and immigration reform in his second term. President Reagan spent his second term solidifying his victory in the Cold War and simplified the tax code, lowering the top marginal tax rate to 28%. Meanwhile, President **Obama is trying to get Charles Hagel approved as defense secretary, Jacob Lew at Treasury secretary, and Todd Jones as ATF director, not grand plans by any means.**¶ President **Obama may get these nominees approved** by a majority of senators. But **the question is: why is he fighting these particular battles?** **He could have easily found better qualified nominees for these positions and fought bigger battles on some substantive legislative proposals. Why spend what remaining political capital he has** on these problematic appointments? I have a theory, and here goes.¶ As liberal as he is, President **Obama prefers to settle scores with his political adversaries even more than getting big liberal proposals passed**. There were some clues dropped in the recent campaign. In one speech President Obama told his audience, who booed after Gov. Romney was mentioned, “don’t boo ... voting is the best revenge.” This follows a slip he made a couple years earlier when he encouraged Latinos to punish their “enemies,” and when he warned African Americans that a Republican take-over of Congress would mean “hand-to-hand combat up here on Capitol Hill.”¶ These Freudian slips and others show the resentment that President Obama feels towards anyone who opposes him. Opposing ideas are not to be argued against; their proponents are to be personally defeated and the victory noted. Somewhere in his brain the president is keeping score, and he relishes announcing to his opponents, as he did in his first term, “I won.”¶ It is a pettiness that may work out well for the conservative cause. After all, the best way to block any future liberal proposals is to not have them proposed in the first place. **The Hagel, Lew and Jones nominations, and the spending of President Obama’s political capital needed to advance these nominations, may be just the ticket to stall any future liberal proposals.**



XO solves

Unilateral action solves

Rich Web News 13 ("Obama's new rule eases path to residency for immigrants with US relatives", 1/3m <http://www.allvoices.com/contributed-news/13727441-obama-new-immigration-rule-makes-residency-easier-for-immigrants-with-us-relatives>, CMR)

President **Obama continues to reiterate his deep commitment to** fixing the broken **immigration** system **by signing an executive order** that makes it easier for illegal immigrants to obtain permanent residency if they have immediate relatives who are US citizens, according to the final rule posted in the Federal Register on Wednesday. Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano announced the change yesterday through department release of the final rule to support family unity during the visa waiver process. It allows certain individuals to apply for a provisional unlawful presence waiver before they depart the United States to attend immigrant visa interviews in their countries of origin. **"This final rule facilitates the legal immigration** process and reduces the amount of time that US citizens are separated from their immediate relatives who are in the process of obtaining an immigrant visa," said Napolitano. According to the release, under current law, immediate relatives of US citizens, who are not eligible to adjust status in the United States to become lawful permanent residents, must leave the US and obtain an immigrant visa abroad. Individuals who have accrued more than six months of unlawful presence while in the United States must obtain a waiver to overcome the unlawful presence inadmissibility bar before they can return to the United States after departing to obtain an immigrant visa. It also states that immediate relatives cannot file a waiver application until after they have appeared for an immigrant visa interview abroad and the State Department has determined that they are inadmissible. The US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) will publish a new form, Form I-601A, Application for a Provisional Unlawful Presence Waiver, for individuals to use when applying for a provisional unlawful presence waiver under the new process. "The law is designed to avoid extreme hardship to US citizens, which is precisely what this rule achieves," USCIS Director Mayorkas said. "The change will have a significant impact on American families by greatly reducing the time family members are separated from those they rely upon." Furthermore it says that, under the new provisional waiver process, the immediate relatives must still depart the United States for the consular immigrant visa process; however, they can apply for a provisional waiver before they depart for their immigrant visa interview abroad. The new procedures could reduce a family's time apart to one week in some cases, officials said. Individuals who file the Form I-601A must notify the Department of State's National Visa Center that they are or will be seeking a provisional waiver from USCIS. Details on the process changes are available at

<http://www.regulations.gov/>. Immigration reform **advocates greeted the Obama administration policy shift as a welcome step toward an eventual overhaul of federal immigration laws.** "The change will have a significant impact on American families by greatly reducing the time family members are separated from those they rely upon," said Alejandro Mayorkas, director of US Citizenship and Immigration Services, as reported by the L.A. Times. "We're hopeful that all of this portends a bigger improvement to the immigration system," said Lisa Koop, a managing attorney with the Chicago-based National Immigrant Justice Center. Opinion: In his next four years, President **Obama will keep pushing Congress** to reach a consensus on fixing the broken immigration laws for the 21st century, **but if Congress dodges the issue again, we can expect more executive orders like this in the future even though it means bypassing Congress.**

It's guaranteed – empirics prove

Examiner 1/2/13 ("Examiner Editorial: A year of 'fiscal cliff' crises coming up", <http://washingtonexaminer.com/coming-up-a-year-of-sslqfiscal-cliff-crises/article/2517381#.UOCFEXdXtkY>,

If his first term is any indication, **Obama will retaliate against congressional resistance by acting alone, as he already has by using executive power to make policy in education, welfare, labor law, the environment and immigration.** He will test legal limits with new **administrative changes, executive orders, memoranda and creative regulatory rulings.** This will further alienate Congress and prompt still more lawsuits against his administration, like the one currently underway to unseat "recess" appointees whom he installed without confirmation last year when the Senate was not in recess.



Multiple tools solve

Uribe 1/22 (Sarahi, "Immigration reform: Obama needs to close gap between rhetoric and reality", 2013, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2013/jan/22/immigration-reform-obama-rhetoric-reality>,

In his second term, **Obama could implement a number of administrative policies** even as Congress takes up **federal immigration reform**. **The president last year proved he could use his executive powers when he suspended the deportations** of undocumented youth and allowed them to apply for work permits under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. A sign of his **renewed commitment** to immigration reform **would be** the **expansion** of this program to cover undocumented adults. **Obama could** also **administratively terminate the "secure communities" program**, a controversial deportation policy that became emblematic of the president's broken promise to legalize undocumented immigrants.



PC not key

Pol cap isn't key—Obama is letting congress work out the details

Elise **Foley**, staff writer, **1/15/13** ["Obama Gears Up For Immigration Reform Push In Second Term," HuffPost, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/01/15/obama-immigration-reform_n_2463388.html]

In a briefing with The Huffington Post, a senior administration official said **the White House** believes it **has met enforcement goals** and must now move to a comprehensive solution. **The administration is highly skeptical of claims from Republicans that immigration reform can or should be done in a piecemeal fashion.** **Going down that road,** the White House worries, **could result in passage of the less politically complicated pieces, such as an enforcement mechanism and high-skilled worker visas, while leaving out** more contentious items such as **a pathway to citizenship** for undocumented immigrants. ¶ "Enforcement is certainly part of the picture," the official said. "But if you go back and look at the 2006 and 2007 bills, if you go back and look at John McCain's 10-point 'This is what I've got to get done before I'm prepared to talk about immigration,' and then you look at what we're actually doing, it's like 'check, check, check.' We're there. The border is as secure as it's been in a generation or two, so it's really time." ¶ One key in the second term, advocates say, will be convincing skeptics such as Republican Sen. John Cornyn of Texas that the Obama administration held up its end of the bargain by proving a commitment to enforcement. The White House also needs to convince GOP lawmakers that there's support from their constituents for immigration reform, which could be aided by conservative evangelical leaders and members of the business community who are pushing for a bill. ¶ Immigrant advocates want more targeted deportations that focus on criminals, while opponents of comprehensive immigration reform say there's too little enforcement and not enough assurances that reform wouldn't be followed by another wave of unauthorized immigration. The Obama administration has made some progress on both fronts, but some advocates worry that the president hasn't done enough to emphasize it. The latest deportation figures were released in the ultimate Friday news dump: mid-afternoon Friday on Dec. 21, a prime travel time four days before Christmas. ¶ Last week, the enforcement-is-working argument was bolstered by a report from the nonpartisan Migration Policy Institute, which found that the government is pouring more money into its immigration agencies than the other federal law-enforcement efforts combined. There are some clear metrics to point to on the border in particular, and Doris Meissner, an author of the report and a former commissioner of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, said she hopes putting out more information can add to the immigration debate. ¶ "I've been surprised, frankly, that the administration hasn't done more to lay out its record," she said, adding the administration has kept many of its metrics under wraps. ¶ **There are already lawmakers working on a broad agreement. Eight senators, coined the gang of eight, are working on a bipartisan immigration bill.** It's still in its early stages, but nonmembers of the "gang," such as Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) are also talking about reform. ¶ **It's still unclear what exact role the president will play,** but sources say he does plan to lead on the issue. Rep. Zoe Lofgren (D-Calif.), the top Democrat on the House immigration subcommittee, said **the White House seems sensitive to the fact that Republicans and Democrats need to work out the issue in Congress -- no one is expecting a fiscal cliff-style arrangement jammed by leadership** -- while keeping the president heavily involved. ¶ In other words, **it's not the place for steamrolling.** "He needs to be an honest broker here," said Ali Noorani, executive director of the National Immigration Forum, which works on bipartisan consensus for reform. "Instead of the politician forcing immigration reform, Obama needs to be the statesman creating immigration reform." ¶ Beyond the border, Obama will push for changes to the legal immigration system, which is universally considered to be out of date and ill-suited to the labor market and to managing the future flow of immigrant workers. **Any bill will almost certainly include an increase in visas for graduates with advanced degrees in science, technology, engineering or math, and more and better flexibility for foreign migrant labor.**

PC's not key

Nakamura, '12 (David, "Advocates fear gun control agenda will divert Obama from immigration reform, December 22, www.washingtonpost.com/politics/advocates-fear-gun-control-agenda-will-divert-obama-from-immigration-reform/2012/12/22/2725d3d0-4acc-11e2-b709-667035ff9029_story.html)

"As we line up a path to gun control and the response to Connecticut, **everybody expects Congress,** just like the rest of the American people, **will be able to take on more than one thing,**" said Clarissa Martinez de Castro, director of civic engagement and immigration for the National Council of La Raza. **"There is a real premium for Republicans moving forward on**



immigration. It's **less about their position with Democrats** than with **making inroads with** a section of **the electorate** that they will not see the inside of the White House without. **That's their biggest motivation."**



PC bad – poison the well

Obama's backing off immigration now – presidential push makes it not pass

Koppelman 1-29

[Alex, The New Yorker, "WILL OBAMA SAVE IMMIGRATION REFORM OR KILL IT?",

<http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/newsdesk/2013/01/will-obama-save-immigration-reform-or-kill-it.html>]

There's one other thing that's different, though: now, thanks in large part to the Hispanic vote, Barack Obama is President. That will make working for a bill harder for the Republicans who want to see something passed. **It's one thing to give up on some of the same principles** the G.O.P.'s base fought so hard for just a few years ago, **but doing so in partnership with Obama is something else entirely. The President's endorsement—his very presence—can suddenly make almost any proposal toxic for a great many Republicans, and anyone who works with him may have some explaining to do** come primary season. As a result, before Obama had so much as landed in Las Vegas to deliver his speech, **even those Republicans who are in favor of reform were criticizing him for what he would say** in it. "The President has an important decision to make... when he gives his speech," Senator Marco Rubio, the Florida Republican, said during an appearance he made on Rush Limbaugh's radio show on Tuesday. "He can either decide that he wants to be part of a solution or he can decide he wants to be part of a political issue and try to trigger a bidding war. I'm not gonna be part of a bidding war to see who can come up with the most lenient path forward.... if he's gone to Las Vegas to give a speech and try to trigger a bidding war, then, no, it doesn't bode well. There won't be a solution." **It's not often that you see a politician building the explanation for why he might come to oppose his initiative just one day after he announced it**, but that is exactly what Rubio, who was part of the group of eight senators who released their ideas for reform, seemed to be doing. This may be bluster on Rubio's part, an attempt to provide himself some cover in case he does decide to run for President in 2016 and needs to explain to Republican primary voters why he essentially sided with Obama. Or it might not be: what Rubio was referring to are some very real differences between the senators' proposal and Obama's on the question of border security, and whether it has to be a precursor to citizenship for illegal immigrants. By all indications, though, and despite Rubio's preemptive fighting stance, **it seems that Obama might be ready to compromise in order to get something done, and not just on policy. The White House knows that the President's involvement could harden the opposition, and it appears to be working to minimize that effect.** His critics will note the campaign-esque appearance of his big speech, delivered in a swing state to a cheering crowd, and in passionate tones. They won't be wrong to do so, but that's form, not substance, and on substance he's given up serious ground. **Reform has been a priority of Obama's ever since the 2008 campaign, but he's not taking the lead—he let those eight senators do that, and then he largely adopted their proposal instead** of putting out a detailed one of his own. **Simply diminishing the number of Obama's fingerprints that are on this initiative does not ensure that it will pass**, of course. **Even if it does pass, it's hardly a guarantee of good policy, as we saw all too clearly when the President stepped back during the fight over the stimulus and let Congress dictate terms on purely political grounds. But if immigration reform is to be done, this may be the only way to do it.**

Congress will do immigration alone – Obama's involvement is a kiss of death

Weingarten, 1-16-13 (Elizabeth, New America Foundation, "President Obama's Next Steps on Immigration" <http://inhetank.newamerica.net/blog/2013/01/president-obamas-next-steps-immigration>)

Tamar Jacoby, the president of ImmigrationWorks USA, **hopes** President Obama doesn't introduce a comprehensive immigration reform bill in the next few months, as The New York Times reported he would. Why? **"If this is seen [in Congress] as President Obama's project alone, you won't get enough Republicans voting to pass it,"** explained Jacoby, also a New America Schwartz Fellow. But to Jacoby's relief, **a group of senators from both sides of the aisle are also seizing the reins on immigration reform.** The senators, including Republican Sen. Marco Rubio, are meeting behind-the-scenes to draft a comprehensive bill that will likely share many of President Obama's policy tenets. The story behind this crew: Senator Chuck Schumer (D-NY)



and Senator Lindsay Graham (R-SC) started talking about a bipartisan bill early in President Obama's first term. But talks stalled after issues like the tanking economy took legislative precedence. The senators resumed discussions after this year's election. To Jacoby, it's critical the group succeed because of the divisive atmosphere in Congress today. **"In the olden days, a President from one party could propose a bill, and you could get enough members from another party to pass it,"** Jacoby said. **"It doesn't work that way anymore** – not for now, anyway." Regardless of party affiliation, any successful legislation must share a few key sweet spots, Jacoby said: A path to citizenship or legal status for the 11 million illegal immigrants currently living in the country, an easier way for high-skilled workers to enter and stay in the country, and better immigration enforcement both on the border and in the workplace. But legislators often leave out what Jacoby thinks are two of the most important pieces of the puzzle: a way for unskilled workers to enter the U.S. legally, and a better integration strategy once immigrants are here. The economy needs those unskilled workers, but they have no legal pathway to enter the U.S. And once immigrants are inside the U.S. – we do a poor job of teaching them English and how to become an American, says Jacoby. Of course, various members of Congress have agitated for comprehensive immigration reform for years. What makes 2013 any riper for change? As anyone who cast a vote or read a newspaper during the 2012 election season knows - the Latino vote propelled the issue to the forefront of public discourse and debate. Though Latinos alone didn't elect President Obama and defeat Gov. Mitt Romney, both parties finally recognized that it was a huge and growing voting bloc. But immigration reform isn't just about shoring up the Latino vote or providing a pathway to legalization, Jacoby cautions. "That's one of the biggest misconceptions – this isn't a favor we're doing for Latinos. This is for us – for all Americans. It's about the U.S. economy and U.S. competitiveness." **Her advice for President Obama: Keep up the pressure to advance legislation, but don't take over the process.** "That could potentially be the **kiss of death**," she said.



NO political capital

Political Capital Low: Obama Overstretch

Ron Fournier, 1/24/2013. "Is the GOP Moving to the Center? Or Just Getting Sane?" National Journal. <http://www.nationaljournal.com/politics/is-the-gop-moving-to-the-center-or-just-getting-sane-20130124>

It is no secret that President **Obama plans to move the country to the left**, demanding "collective action" in his Inaugural Address to curb global warming, buttress the middle class, regulate guns and ammunition, defend Medicare and Social Security, and extend gay rights. The question is whether, behind the scenes, **Republican leaders have recognized an opportunity to counter Obama's liberalism with ever-so-slight jogs toward the center** – if not ideologically, at least pragmatically, to a position the GOP all but abandoned in recent months: political sanity. I ask because of two important developments: The GOP-controlled House passed a bill Wednesday that effectively extends the debt ceiling limit until May 19. It was a major capitulation to Obama, who publicly declared he would not negotiate with the nation's credit held hostage. Rep. Paul Ryan, the party's vice presidential nominee in 2012, cited the "realities of divided government" when he urged his rank and file to effectively eat crow. Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida, another likely 2016 GOP presidential candidate, is quietly and (so far) effectively lobbying conservative lawmakers and commentators to consider immigration reforms. In the not-to-distant past, Rubio's proposals would have been fatally labeled as stalking horses for amnesty. Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal is expected to tell the Republican National Committee tonight that it's time for the GOP to focus less on political battles in Washington. "A debate about which party can better manage the federal government is a very small and shortsighted debate," he is expected to say, according to the Washington Post. "If our vision is not bigger than that, we do not deserve to win." If these developments don't represent a tentative step to the center, they are at least deep bows to reality. Polls showed that the public was braced to blame Republicans for any economic fallout over a debt-ceiling fight. Election results from November underscored the GOP's existential image problem in the fast-growing Hispanic community. There could be something else going on here: If **Obama overestimates the amount of political capital he collected upon reelection (a common mistake for second-term presidents), he might go to far with his liberal agenda, alienate moderate and independent voters, and leave a vacuum for Republicans in the middle.**



NO Public Popularity

Public popularity is low – no expectations

Mark **Murray**, Senior Political Editor at NBC News, **1/17/13**, “NBC/WSJ poll: Public lowers expectations heading into Obama's 2nd term”, http://firstread.nbcnews.com/_news/2013/01/17/16570498-nbcwsj-poll-public-lowers-expectations-heading-into-obamas-2nd-term?lite, acc. 1/25/13

As President Barack **Obama is set to begin his second term next week, he finds himself with** a job-approval rating above 50 percent and with majorities supporting his general direction on gun control and immigration, according to a new NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll. But he also confronts **an American public holding mixed attitudes about the next four years, concerns about the economy and a belief that tougher times lie ahead.** It's a stark reversal from four years ago, when Obama's first inauguration – despite taking place in the midst of the Great Recession – contained high expectations and seemed more like a “coronation,” says Democratic pollster Peter D. Hart, who conducted the survey with Republican pollster Bill McInturff. **“If 2009 was all about hope, 2013 is about the ability to cope,”** Hart adds **of the public's lower expectations about the economy and reducing partisanship in Washington.**

Obama's second term focus on gun control and climate change will be unpopular – checks back any inaugural popularity

Kraushaar 1-23 (Josh, executive editor of National Journal Hotline, The National Journal, “Obama: A Party of One”, access lexis)

There's a good reason why **Obama's** former campaign advisers are setting up their new lobbying vehicle outside of the Democratic National Committee: They fully understand their **own interests aren't always aligned with the party's.** In 2012, even as the president shunned campaign stops and fundraising events for down-ballot Democrats, disappointed party officials kept silent, knowing that a rising tide indeed raised all boats. But without Obama on the ballot, that dynamic is far less evident. **Obama's** average job **approval of 52 percent is improved from** the dog days of **2010** when his approval was stuck in the mid-40s. **But Obama began his first term on a much higher note, watching his approval rating fall after pushing for issues that proved to be unpopular. There's a good chance that gun control and climate-change regulations will be just as polarizing as Obamacare and cap-and-trade, and his approval ratings will decline accordingly.**



No impact – watered down

Doesn't solve – the GOP will water it down

Yglesias, 1-15-13 (Matthew, Slate, "How the GOP Can Roll Obama on Immigration")

http://www.slate.com/blogs/moneybox/2013/01/15/immigration_reform_will_obama_get_rolled.htm

Of the major policy issues under discussion in Washington, "immigration reform" stands out for having unusually undefined content. For the major immigration-advocacy groups, the goal is clear, a comprehensive bill that includes a path to citizenship for the overwhelming majority of unauthorized migrants already living in the United States. But many other aspects of immigration law are in the mix as part of a proposed deal, and it seems to me that **there's a fair chance** that a nimble **Republican Party could** essentially **roll the Democratic coalition** and pass an "immigration reform" bill that doesn't offer the path Latino advocacy groups are **looking for**. Elise Foley has the key line from her briefing on the administration's thinking about immigration, namely that **a piecemeal approach "could" result in passage of the less politically complicated pieces**, such as an enforcement mechanism and high-skilled worker visas, **while leaving out more contentious items** such as a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants." And indeed it could. **But how can they stop it?** The last House GOP effort to split the high-tech visas question from the path to citizenship question was an absurd partisan ploy. **If Republicans want to get serious about it they should be able to make it work. The centerpiece would be something on increased immigration of skilled workers.** That's something the tech industry wants very much, it's a great idea on the merits, and few influential people have any real beef with it. High tech visas will easily generate revenue to pay for some stepped-up enforcement. **Then instead of adding on a poison pill** so Democrats will block the bill, **you need to add a sweetener**. Not the broad path to citizenship, but something small like the DREAM Act. **Now you've got a package that falls massively short** of what Latino groups are looking for, **but that** I think **Democrats will have a hard time actually blocking**. After all, **why would they block it?** It packages three things—more skilled immigration, more enforcement, and help for DREAMers—they say they want. Blocking it because it doesn't also do the broad amnesty that liberals want and conservatives hate would require the kind of fanaticism that is the exact opposite of Obama's approach to politics.

Comprehensive reform fails – passage forces compromises that prevent solvency

Morrison 12-9 – Bruce Morrison, a former U.S. Representative from Connecticut, was the chairman of the House immigration subcommittee and the author of the Immigration Act of 1990. December 9th, 2012, "One Bill of Compromises Isn't the Answer"

www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2012/12/09/understanding-immigration-reform/one-immigration-bill-of-compromises-isnt-the-answer

To many, **"comprehensive immigration reform" means "fix it and forget it."** But **doing it all in one bill reprises what got us in the current mess in the first place.** After major reform bills in 1986 and 1990, the failing employment verification scheme and the clogged green card process were allowed to go unattended. The **"enforcement only" 1996 law only froze the mess in place.** Save the 'punishment' for those that do not comply with a system that works, not those ensnared in the current system that does not. **A huge compromise of all competing immigration fixes larded into one bill will involve compromises that do not serve the nation's interests.** Instead we need to assemble the votes to do the two things that must be done — a broad earned legalization program for the 11 million now illegally resident in the country in conjunction with the assurance that this problem will not happen again. That assurance will come from a universal, electronic, identity-authenticating screening of all workers to ensure that they are authorized to work in the U.S. Because almost all who make unauthorized entries and overstays do so to seek and accept employment, no other tool will get the result we need to make legalization politically and philosophically justified — that we have fixed the source of the problem. And this also means using the employment relationship to roll-in legalization while rolling out universal verification. The key point is that prevention of illegal presence is the goal. **Save the "punishment" for those that do not comply with a system that works, not those ensnared in the current system that does not.** Our legal immigration system needs lots of fixing, like the increase of STEM green cards passed by the House last week and much more. But these fixes, including all future flows beyond the current one million annual immigrants and the millions who will be legalized, will get much easier to negotiate when the legalization-prevention barrier is removed.



Best-case is weak reform

Reuters 1/4/13 ("Fiscal Fallout Bruises Obama's Second-Term Agenda",

<http://www.foxbusiness.com/government/2013/01/04/fiscal-fallout-bruises-obama-second-term-agenda/>,

But **Kessler** said he **was skeptical** that **Obama and Congress can find common ground on a comprehensive immigration measure that provides a long-term solution** for the country's 12 million illegal immigrants.¶ "Will something get done on immigration? Probably. But **a major deal that addresses all undocumented immigrants in a comprehensive way? We're much less confident than we were two weeks ago**," Kessler said.¶ "The question now is, **do they even know how to make deals with each other?**" he said.



2ac winner win

PC isn't finite or key – the plan is a win that spills over to future victories

Hirsh 2/7 – chief correspondent of National Journal (Michael, “There’s No Such Thing as Political Capital”, <http://www.nationaljournal.com/magazine/there-s-no-such-thing-as-political-capital-20130207>,

On Tuesday, in his State of the Union address, President **Obama will** do what every president does this time of year. For about 60 minutes, he will **lay out a sprawling and ambitious wish list** highlighted by gun control and immigration reform, climate change and debt reduction. In response, the **pundits will** do what they always do this time of year: They will **talk about how** unrealistic most of the proposals are, discussions often informed by sagacious reckonings of how **much “political capital” Obama possesses to push his program through.** Most of **this talk will have no bearing on what actually happens** over the next four years. Consider this: Three months ago, just before the November election, if someone had talked seriously about Obama having enough political capital to oversee passage of both immigration reform and gun-control legislation at the beginning of his second term—even after winning the election by 4 percentage points and 5 million votes (the actual final tally)—this person would have been called crazy and stripped of his pundit’s license. (It doesn’t exist, but it ought to.) In his first term, in a starkly polarized country, the president had been so frustrated by GOP resistance that he finally issued a limited executive order last August permitting immigrants who entered the country illegally as children to work without fear of deportation for at least two years. Obama didn’t dare to even bring up gun control, a Democratic “third rail” that has cost the party elections and that actually might have been even less popular on the right than the president’s health care law. And yet, for reasons that have very little to do with Obama’s personal prestige or popularity—variously put in terms of a “mandate” or “political capital”—chances are fair that both will now happen. What changed? In the case of gun control, of course, it wasn’t the election. It was the horror of the 20 first-graders who were slaughtered in Newtown, Conn., in mid-December. The sickening reality of little girls and boys riddled with bullets from a high-capacity assault weapon seemed to precipitate a sudden tipping point in the national conscience. One thing changed after another. Wayne LaPierre of the National Rifle Association marginalized himself with poorly chosen comments soon after the massacre. The pro-gun lobby, once a phalanx of opposition, began to fissure into reasonables and crazies. Former Rep. Gabrielle Giffords, D-Ariz., who was shot in the head two years ago and is still struggling to speak and walk, started a PAC with her husband to appeal to the moderate middle of gun owners. Then she gave riveting and poignant testimony to the Senate, challenging lawmakers: “Be bold.” As a result, momentum has appeared to build around some kind of a plan to curtail sales of the most dangerous weapons and ammunition and the way people are permitted to buy them. It’s impossible to say now whether such a bill will pass and, if it does, whether it will make anything more than cosmetic changes to gun laws. But one thing is clear: The political tectonics have shifted dramatically in very little time. Whole new possibilities exist now that didn’t a few weeks ago. Meanwhile, the Republican members of the Senate’s so-called Gang of Eight are pushing hard for a new spirit of compromise on immigration reform, a sharp change after an election year in which the GOP standard-bearer declared he would make life so miserable for the 11 million illegal immigrants in the U.S. that they would “self-deport.” But this turnaround has very little to do with Obama’s personal influence—his political mandate, as it were. It has almost entirely to do with just two numbers: 71 and 27. That’s 71 percent for Obama, 27 percent for Mitt Romney, the breakdown of the Hispanic vote in the 2012 presidential election. Obama drove home his advantage by giving a speech on immigration reform on Jan. 29 at a Hispanic-dominated high school in Nevada, a swing state he won by a surprising 8 percentage points in November. But the movement on immigration has mainly come out of the Republican Party’s recent introspection, and the realization by its more thoughtful members, such as Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida and Gov. Bobby Jindal of Louisiana, that without such a shift the party may be facing demographic death in a country where the 2010 census showed, for the first time, that white births have fallen into the minority. It’s got nothing to do with Obama’s political capital or, indeed, Obama at all. The point is not that “political capital” is a meaningless term. Often it is a synonym for “mandate” or “momentum” in the aftermath of a decisive election—and just about every politician ever elected has tried to claim more of a mandate than he actually has. Certainly, Obama can say that because he was elected and Romney wasn’t, he has a better claim on the country’s mood and direction. Many pundits still defend political capital as a useful metaphor at least. “It’s an unquantifiable but meaningful concept,” says Norman Ornstein of the American Enterprise Institute. “You can’t really look at a president and say he’s got 37 ounces of political capital. But the fact is, it’s a concept that matters, if you have popularity and some momentum on your side.” The real problem is that **the idea of political capital—or mandates, or momentum—is so poorly defined that presidents and pundits often get it wrong.** “Presidents usually over-estimate it,” says George Edwards, a presidential scholar at Texas A&M University. “The best kind of **political capital**—some sense of an electoral mandate to do something—**is very rare. It almost never happens.** In 1964, maybe. And to some degree in 1980.” For that reason, **political capital is a concept that misleads far more than it enlightens. It is distortionary.** It conveys the idea that we know more than we really do about the ever-elusive concept of political power, and it discounts the way unforeseen events can suddenly change everything. Instead, **it suggests, erroneously, that a political figure has a concrete amount of political capital to invest, just as someone might have real investment capital—that a particular leader can bank his gains, and the size of his account determines what he can do at any given moment in history.** Naturally, any president has practical and electoral limits. Does he have a majority in both chambers of Congress and a cohesive coalition behind him? Obama has neither at



present. And unless a surge in the economy—at the moment, still stuck—or some other great victory gives him more momentum, it is inevitable that the closer Obama gets to the 2014 election, the less he will be able to get done. Going into the midterms, Republicans will increasingly avoid any concessions that make him (and the Democrats) stronger.¶ But the abrupt emergence of the immigration and gun-control issues illustrates how suddenly shifts in mood can occur and how political interests can align in new ways just as suddenly. Indeed, **the pseudo-concept of political capital masks a larger truth about Washington that is kindergarten simple: You just don't know what you can do until you try.** Or as Ornstein himself once wrote years ago, **"Winning wins."** In theory, and in practice, **depending on Obama's handling of any particular issue, even in a polarized time, he could still deliver on a lot of his second-term goals,** depending on his skill and the breaks. Unforeseen catalysts can appear, like Newtown. Epiphanies can dawn, such as when many Republican Party leaders suddenly woke up in panic to the huge disparity in the Hispanic vote.¶ Some **political scientists who study the elusive calculus of how to pass legislation and run successful presidencies say that political capital is, at best, an empty concept,** and that almost **nothing in the academic literature successfully quantifies or even defines it.** "It can refer to a very abstract thing, like a president's popularity, but there's no mechanism there. That makes it kind of useless," says Richard Bensele, a government professor at Cornell University. Even Ornstein concedes that the calculus is far more complex than the term suggests. **Winning on one issue often changes the calculation for the next issue; there is never any known amount of capital.** "The idea here is, **if an issue comes up where the conventional wisdom is that president is not going to get what he wants, and he gets it, then each time that happens, it changes the calculus of the other actors"** Ornstein says. **"If they think he's going to win, they may change positions to get on the winning side. It's a bandwagon effect."**¶ ALL THE WAY WITH LBJ¶ Sometimes, **a clever practitioner of power can get more done just because he's aggressive and knows the hallways of Congress well.** Texas A&M's Edwards is right to say that the outcome of the 1964 election, Lyndon Johnson's landslide victory over Barry Goldwater, was one of the few that conveyed a mandate. But one of the main reasons for that mandate (in addition to Goldwater's ineptitude as a candidate) was President Johnson's masterful use of power leading up to that election, and his ability to get far more done than anyone thought possible, given his limited political capital. In the newest volume in his exhaustive study of LBJ, *The Passage of Power*, historian Robert Caro recalls Johnson getting cautionary advice after he assumed the presidency from the assassinated John F. Kennedy in late 1963. Don't focus on a long-stalled civil-rights bill, advisers told him, because it might jeopardize Southern lawmakers' support for a tax cut and appropriations bills the president needed. "One of the wise, practical people around the table [said that] the presidency has only a certain amount of coinage to expend, and you oughtn't to expend it on this," Caro writes. (Coinage, of course, was what political capital was called in those days.) Johnson replied, "Well, what the hell's the presidency for?"¶



1ar winners win

Forcing controversial fights key to Obama's agenda—the alt is gridlock

Dickerson '13 John Dickerson, Slate, 1/18/13, Go for the Throat!,

www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/politics/2013/01/barack_obama_s_second_inaugural_address_the_president_should_declare_war.single.html

On Monday, President Obama will preside over the grand reopening of his administration. It would be altogether fitting if he stepped to the microphone, looked down the mall, and let out a sigh: so many people expecting so much from a government that appears capable of so little.

A second inaugural suggests new beginnings, but this one is being bookended by dead-end debates. **Gridlock** over the fiscal cliff

preceded it and **gridlock** over the debt limit, sequester, and budget will follow. After the election, **the same people are in power in all the branches of government and they don't get along. There's no indication that** the

president's **clashes with** House Republicans **will end soon**. Inaugural speeches are supposed to be huge and stirring. Presidents haul our heroes onstage, from George Washington to Martin Luther King Jr. George W. Bush brought the Liberty Bell. They use history to make greatness and achievements seem like something you can just take down from the shelf. Americans are not stuck in the rut of the day. But this might be too much for Obama's second inaugural address: After the last four years, how do you call the nation and its elected representatives to common action while standing on the steps of a building where collective action goes to die? That bipartisan bag of tricks has been tried and it didn't work. People don't believe it. Congress' approval rating is 14 percent, the lowest in history. In a December Gallup poll, 77 percent of those asked said the way Washington works is doing "serious harm" to the country. **The challenge for** President **Obama's** speech is

the challenge of his **second term: how to be great when the environment stinks. Enhancing the president's**

legacy requires something **more than** simply the clever application of **predictable stratagems**. Washington's **partisan**

rancor, the size of the problems facing government, **and the limited amount of time before Obama is a lame duck**

all point to a single conclusion: The president who came into office speaking in lofty terms about bipartisanship and

cooperation **can only cement his legacy if he destroys the GOP**. If he wants to transform American politics, **he must**

go for the throat. President Obama could, of course, resign himself to tending to the achievements of his first term. He'd make sure

health care reform is implemented, nurse the economy back to health, and put the military on a new footing after two wars. But he's more ambitious than that. He ran for president as a one-term senator with no executive experience. In his first term, he pushed for the biggest overhaul of health care possible because, as he told his aides, he wanted to make history. He may already have made it. There's no question that he is already a president of consequence. But there's no sign he's content to ride out the second half of the game in the Barcalounger. He is approaching gun control, climate change, and immigration with wide and excited eyes. He's not going for caretaker. How should the

president proceed then, if he wants to be bold? The Barack **Obama** of the first administration **might have approached the task**

by finding some **Republicans to deal with and** then start agreeing to some of their demands in hope that he would **win some**

of their votes. It's the traditional approach. Perhaps he could add a good deal more schmoozing with lawmakers, too. **That's the old**

way. He has abandoned that. He doesn't think it will work and he doesn't have the time. As Obama

explained in his last press conference, he thinks the **Republicans are dead set on opposing him. They cannot be**

unchained by schmoozing. Even if Obama were wrong about Republican intransigence, other

constraints will limit the chance for cooperation. Republican lawmakers worried about primary

challenges in 2014 **are not going to be willing partners.** He probably has at most 18 months before people start dropping the

lame-duck label in close proximity to his name. **Obama's only remaining option is to pulverize.** Whether he succeeds in

passing legislation or not, given his ambitions, his goal should be to delegitimize his opponents. **Through a series of clarifying**

fights over controversial issues, he can force Republicans to either side with their coalition's most extreme elements

or **cause a rift in the party that will leave it, at least temporarily, in disarray.**

Winners win – legislative victories build momentum

Hirsh 2/7 – chief correspondent of National Journal (Michael, "There's No Such Thing as Political

Capital", [http://www.nationaljournal.com/magazine/there-s-no-such-thing-as-political-capital-](http://www.nationaljournal.com/magazine/there-s-no-such-thing-as-political-capital-20130207)

20130207



In terms of Obama's second-term agenda, **what all these shifting tides of momentum** and political calculation **mean is this: Anything goes**

there is no reason to think he can't win far more victories than any of the careful calculators of political capital now believe is possible

If he can get some early wins

that will create momentum, and one win may well lead to others. "Winning wins."