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# What They're Saying ...

## ABOUT OBAMA'S "DISAPPOINTING" STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

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**ABC News' Mark Halperin:** "I have great respect for the president and David Axelrod and Robert Gibbs. I confess, I come here telling you, I have no idea what they are doing. Based on the excerpts that have been released. If they have a strategy, I can't discern what it is." (MSNBC's "Hardball," 1/27/10)

- Halperin: "I see as much Michael Dukakis in these excerpts." (MSNBC's "Hardball," 1/27/10)

**The Plum Line's Greg Sargent:** "It's Hard To See How This Speech Isn't Disappointing On Health Care."

- Sargent: "It Didn't Come Up Until The 53rd Paragraph Of His Speech. While He Urged Congress Not To Walk Away From Completing Reform, The Speech Was Notably Lacking On Specifics In Terms Of What He'd Like To See Congress To Do Resolve The Current Impasse." (Greg Sargent, "The Speech," [The Plum Line](#), 1/27/10)

**CNN's Ed Henry:** "[S]peech has lot of meat on bones, there is lot of substance on education, trade, economy -- but doesn't feel like there's a theme." ([twitter.com](#))

- Henry: "[C]olleague notes the 'Viewer's Guide' put out by the WH with sound bytes did NOT mention health care. [I]mpossible to imagine just weeks ago" ([twitter.com](#))
- Henry: "[T]his was an even harder pivot away from health care to jobs than i expected; he fought for health care and is still hopeful of deal but ..." ([twitter.com](#))

**"PolitiFact: Obama Incorrect On Lobbyist Policy"** ([CNN](#), 1/27/10)

**ABC News' Rick Klein:** "[O]ne thing to count tonight - how many pledges/promises are really 'call on Congress...'? easier to say later, well, we tried" ([twitter.com](#))

**The New York Times' Jeff Zeleny:** "Dropping Down the Priority List: If anyone was looking for a sign about the future of health care legislation, perhaps none is clearer than this: After 25 minutes, not a word has been uttered about the signature domestic initiative of Mr. Obama's first year." (Jeff Zeleny, "Live Blogging the President's Address," [The New York Times](#), 1/27/10)

- Zeleny: "The strategy now, aides to the president say, is to let the issue fall below the radar, become less radioactive and hope to resurrect a scaled-back version at some point." (Jeff Zeleny, "Live Blogging the President's Address," [The New York Times](#), 1/27/10)

**Time's Karen Tumulty:** "[The Supreme Court] gets called out in the [State Of The Union]. Has that ever happened before?" ([twitter.com](#))

- Tumulty: "[I]s obama talking this long so no one will be awake to watch the republican response?" ([twitter.com](#))

**NBC's Chuck Todd:** "Just crossed the one hour mark: Only Bill Clinton (every SOTU) and LBJ (just one) have given SOTUs longer than 60 minutes." ([twitter.com](#))

- **Todd: “President has spent a GOOD deal of time on what's wrong with Washington and what's wrong with our politics.”** ([twitter.com](#))
- **Todd: “Wow, talk about a passing mention, his call for dealing with immigration was not exactly a ‘must do’ for Congress this year.”** ([twitter.com](#))

**CNN’s Candy Crowley: “Wow. President Obama takes on the Supreme Court, which is seated in the front row. He dissed them for their decision on campaign finance spending.”** (Candy Crowley, “Crowley: Obama Takes On SCOTUS,” [CNN](#), 1/27/10)

**CNN’s Gloria Borger: “The one missing piece: what he intends to do on healthcare.”** (Gloria Borger, “Borger: Smart, but missing a piece,” [CNN](#), 1/27/10)

**Washington Post’s Howard Kurtz: “Is this the first time the media have been called out in a SOTU? Should pundits demand a response after Bob McDonnell?”** ([twitter.com](#))

**The Wall Street Journal: “[M]r. Obama reserved some of the harshest criticism for the Washington that he was expected to lead but which often has confounded him.”** (Laura Meckler And Jonathan Weisman, “Obama Calls for New Jobs Bill,” [The Wall Street Journal](#), 1/27/09)

- **WSJ: “The circumstances surrounding Wednesday’s speech contrasted sharply with Mr. Obama’s first address to Congress last February.”** (Laura Meckler And Jonathan Weisman, “Obama Calls for New Jobs Bill,” [The Wall Street Journal](#), 1/27/09)

**“The president hadn’t even left the chamber, and at least one liberal House member was ready to let loose. Rep. Jim McDermott (D-Wash.) first faulted Obama for endorsing nuclear power in his speech. ... And he joked about Obama’s commitment to double exports.”** (James Hohmann, “Liberal Discontent Comes Quick,” [Politico’s Politico Live](#), 1/27/10)

**The Washington Post’s Chris Cillizza: “Of course, the blame game is a dangerous one to play as it can always boomerang back at you. Whether it’s later this year, 2011 or even 2012, a majority of the American people will view this as Obama’s economy.”** (Chris Cillizza, “First Thoughts On President Obama’s State Of The Union Address,” [The Washington Post’s The Fix Blog](#), 1/27/10)

- **Cillizza: “Obama waited more than thirty minutes before raising the touchy topic of health care.”** (Chris Cillizza, “First Thoughts On President Obama’s State Of The Union Address,” [The Washington Post’s The Fix Blog](#), 1/27/10)
- **Cillizza: “Obama’s message to his own party as more surprising. ... The question: Does Obama still have credibility with this group of wavering Democrats after what has happened in the past year?”** (Chris Cillizza, “First Thoughts On President Obama’s State Of The Union Address,” [The Washington Post’s The Fix Blog](#), 1/27/10)

**Paul Begala: “I’m getting the sense he’s trying to downplay healthcare here.”** (CNN, 1/27/10)

**The Washington Post’s Alec MacGillis: “Tonight, in seeking to rebut Republican claims that he is a big spender, Obama is playing up the role of earmarks, without the perspective he offered against McCain.”** (Alec MacGillis, “44: Politics And Policy SOTU Liveblog” [The Washington Post](#), 1/27/10)

**WaPo’s Michael Fletcher: “The president’s sentiments ... imply that the Republicans have been obstructionists and they have stood in almost unanimous opposition to the president’s major initiatives. But that view obscures a basic fact: Democrats run Washington.”** (Michael Fletcher, “44: Politics and Policy SOTU Liveblog” [The Washington Post](#) 1/27/10)

- **Fletcher: “Intense partisanship is not a new feature in Congress, and it is a president’s job to break through it, particularly when he has such a huge advantage.”** (Michael Fletcher, “44: Politics and Policy SOTU Liveblog” [The Washington Post](#) 1/27/10)

- **Fletcher: “Consequently, it is fair to say that the congressional Democrats are also to blame for the president’s legislative problems.”** (Michael Fletcher, “44: Politics and Policy SOTU Liveblog” [The Washington Post](#) 1/27/10)

**WaPo’s Lori Montgomery: “Obama refers here to his plan to raise taxes on international corporations by more than \$200 billion over the next decade, a proposal that went nowhere in Congress after he laid it out last year.”** (Lori Montgomery, “44: Politics and Policy SOTU Liveblog” [The Washington Post](#) 1/27/10)

- **Montgomery: “The idea is unlikely to win approval in an election year, either, and even some of the most liberal Democrats ... say they would only consider such a big tax hike on business in the context of comprehensive tax reform.”** (Lori Montgomery, “44: Politics and Policy SOTU Liveblog” [The Washington Post](#) 1/27/10)