



The Obama Administration's Favorite Pass Time: Goal Post-Moving

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A few months into the presidency that promise rings hollow after having been broken on multiple occasions. Now, the administration is revising this promise. [Writes the New York Times](#):

Now, in a tacit acknowledgment that the campaign pledge was easier to make than to fulfill, the White House is changing its terms. Instead of starting the five-day clock when Congress passes a bill, administration officials say they intend to start it earlier and post the bills sooner.

So rather than adhering to the initial promise on keeping the bill unsigned for five days *after* it reaches the President's desk, the White House now wants to provide a link to the legislation "once it is clear that a bill will be coming to the president's desk. We shall see, but it certainly seems to make it easier on the President to keep that promise."

Now, some question the value of having such a waiting period in the first place, saying legislation is a done deal at that point. However, we agree with the Cato Institute's Jim Harper when [he says](#):

The following is cross-posted at www.fiscalaccountability.org:

If goal post-moving was an olympic discipline, the Obama administration would surely be a contender for the gold medal.

We've talked a lot about the administration moving the goal posts when it comes to the "stimulus" package - particularly when it comes to the ill-conceived "jobs created/saved" metric.

Now the administration is moving the goal posts again, this time in the area of transparency.

During the presidential election campaign, President Obama made a lofty promise of posting all bills that reach his desk on the White House website for five days before signing them into law.

Members of Congress are very skilled political risk analyzers. When the president is enforcing this rule and they know their work is going to sit for five days before signing, they're going to know they can't slip in that last earmark.

The ideal scenario for taxpayers would be both a congressional waiting period for all bills with a fiscal impact (under which the clock would be re-set when a bill is amended) combined with a presidential waiting period as originally promised by President Obama that starts when a bill reaches his desk.

Legislation for a congressional waiting period of 72 hours has been [re-introduced by Washington Representative Brian Baird](#) and may actually get more traction this time around in light of the heightened visibility and taxpayer outrage over the way the "stimulus" passed.

Let's hope the momentum keeps going to the point where we get both a congressional and a presidential waiting period - taxpayers deserve no less after they have been promised an "unprecedented level of transparency."

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