



FRIDAY, JUN 15, 2012 08:21 AM EDT

## Obama: Romney is Bush 2.0

**Kochs double down; Obama fails at campaign finance reform; the Pentagon goes gay; and other top Friday stories.**

BY ALEX SEITZ-WALD

**Obama ties Romney to Bush:** On the heels of a [new poll](#) showing that most Americans still blame George W. Bush for the recession, President Obama used his big economics speech in Ohio yesterday to tie the new GOP presidential nominee to his predecessor. [Both spoke in Ohio](#) and while Romney used his remarks, which hewed close to his stump, to advance the argument that the election should be a referendum on the president, “Obama’s speech was an effort to subvert that dynamic: to argue that while Mitt Romney might be the challenger, [Republican policies — or at least their aftermath — are, in a way, the incumbent](#),” the Washington Post’s Ezra Klein notes.

“Now, Governor Romney and his allies in Congress believe deeply in the theory we tried during the last decade, the theory that the best way to grow the economy is from the top down,” Obama said, taking a direct shot at “trickle-down economics.”

The New Republic’s John Cohn says the dueling speeches underscore that, [“boy, the contrast is stark.”](#) “The difference between Romney’s vision and Obama’s is tens of millions of people losing health insurance; less money for a variety of federal programs that help young people pay for college and enable poor people to get food; fewer dollars for repairing broken down bridges and infrastructure; and much, much bigger tax cuts for wealthy Americans,” he writes, providing evidence after conservatives had dismissed Obama’s claims as “spin.”

**Koch network could spend over \$400 million:** Politico’s Ken Vogel has big look [“inside Koch world,”](#) the network run by the conservative billionaire Koch brothers, which has “increasingly come to resemble its own political party.” The donor network and affiliated groups will meet in San Diego later this month for a secret convention of sorts as the Kochs seek to expand their influence in new groups like the libertarian CATO Institute, and a handful of legacy conservative groups that haven’t been associated with the Kochs before. The growing ambition of the syndicate could push them over their stated goal of raising and spending \$395 million this year.

**What global warming?** The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) found that last month was the second-warmest May since record-keeping began in 1880.

Temperatures were higher in almost every region of the world. Even scarier, NOAA said “last month was the 36th consecutive May and **327th consecutive month with temperatures above** the 20th-century average.”

**Obama loses campaign finance watchdogs:** Perhaps it was inevitable. Politico’s Dave Levinthal reports: “Barack Obama has long cast himself as a warrior against the influence of big money in politics. But as the 2012 election is saturated by billions of dollars, **campaign-finance reformers have largely lost faith** in a president they say is willfully neglecting his reformist agenda while cynically embracing key elements of a new, laissez-faire election system he’s long demonized.” Beyond his endorsement of the super PAC backing his re-election bid, the reformers point to a long list of failures in this space: He has yet to successfully appoint a new FEC commissioner (let alone reform the hopelessly toothless agency), he has not reformed the IRS’ laughable rules governing political non-profits, he ditched an executive order to make government contractors reveal their political spending, he ditched efforts to appoint an “ethics czar,” and has made no proposal to fix the nation’s public financing system (which he killed in 2008 when he chose not to take it).

**Pentagon honors gay pride month:** Just two summers ago, a gay man or woman would have been kicked out of the military if they came out — this year, **the Pentagon has marked June as gay pride month** and is saluting the service members it forced in the closet for decades. “Now that we’ve repealed ‘don’t ask, don’t tell,’ he feels it’s important to find a way this month to recognize the service and professionalism of gay and lesbian troops,” said Pentagon spokesperson John Kirby.

Obama himself is getting in on the action too, hosting a **reception at the White House** today to honor Gay Pride Month.

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