

**NATION/WORLD**

**Obama To Voters: Stick With Dems**

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Barack Obama reached out fervently Monday to skeptical voters who are still hurting long after the declared end of the recession, imploring them to stick with him in elections that could inflict catastrophic losses on Democrats in just six weeks.

Recognizing the economy is the campaign's issue No. 1 — and a peril for his party — Obama vigorously defended his recovery efforts and challenged tea party activists as well as the Republicans who are clamoring to take over Congress to spell just how they would do better.

Republicans said that's just what they intended to do, on Thursday. House Republicans said they would roll out a roughly 20-point agenda — on jobs, spending, health care, national security and reforming Congress — at a hardware store in suburban Virginia.

Unimpressed in advance, the president said, "We have tried what they're offering." Addressing the GOP and tea party candidates, he said, "It's not enough just to say, 'Get control of government.'"

Campaign style, Obama finished his town hall-like event on the economy and then headed to Pennsylvania to raise money and rally dispirited Democrats for Joe Sestak in a tough Senate race against Republican Pat Toomey.

**House GOP To Reveal Campaign Agenda**

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Republicans plan to unveil a roughly 20-point agenda Thursday, less than six weeks before midterm congressional elections in which they're favored to add substantially to their ranks — and possibly cost Democrats control of the chamber.

Party leaders are set to go public with the plan at a hardware and building supply store in Sterling, Va., according to GOP officials who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss it publicly. The agenda will focus on jobs, spending, health care, national security and reforming Congress, but omit any mention of social issues such as gay marriage or abortion rights.

Top Republicans plan to brief lawmakers on the blueprint late Wednesday, but key details remain to be worked out.

Officials described the agenda as the culmination of an Internet- and social networking-powered project they launched earlier this year to give voters the chance to say what Congress should do. The "America Speaking Out" project collected 160,000 ideas and received 1 million votes and comments on the proposals, according to a report issued Friday by its chairman, Rep. Kevin McCarthy of California.

**Yemen: Thousands Flee Tense Fighting**

SANA'A, Yemen (AP) — Thousands of people have fled a village in southern Yemen where security forces are laying siege to al-Qaida militants, a security official said Monday, signaling an escalation in the government's U.S.-backed campaign to uproot the terror network's local offshoot.

Government forces have moved into the village of Hawta with tanks and armored vehicles and 90 percent of its residents have fled, said Abdullah Baouda, police chief for the surrounding district.

One family fleeing Hawta said forces have shelled the village indiscriminately for the past two days to flush out the militants. Troops also fired on vehicles of residents fleeing the village and another nearby trouble spot, the city of Lawder, killing two civilians and wounding three others, according to local government and medical officials.

**Bahrain Widens Shiite Crackdown**

BAGHDAD (AP) — Bahrain's king warned that mosques would be key targets in sweeps against suspected Shiite dissent in his tiny Gulf nation and vital U.S. ally.

The first blow was a big one: stripping the citizenship of a powerful Shiite cleric with close ties to Iraq before next month's parliamentary elections.

The move is seen as stern warning by the kingdom's Sunni rulers as they struggle to hold down protests by the majority Shiites, who claim they are the targets of discrimination and suspicion for their ancestral bonds with the Shiite centers Iran and Iraq.

But the showdown in Bahrain — an island no bigger in area than New York City — speaks of wider stakes for the region and Washington.

Unrest in Bahrain comes right to the doorstep of the U.S. Fifth Fleet, which is the Navy's front-line flotilla against Iran. Bahrain also has been the main experiment with democratic reforms in the Gulf. Any rollback could harden the political positions of Sunni leaders from Kuwait to the United Arab Emirates and feed their perceptions of being in a fight against Iranian influence.

**Panel: Recession Ended In Summer '09**

Downturn Was The Longest Since WWII; Doubt Clouds Future

BY JEANNINE AVERSA  
AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON — It turns out the recession ended more than a year ago.

Feeling better now? The panel that determines the timing of recessions concluded Monday that this one ended — technically, anyway — in June 2009, and lasted 18 months. The duration makes it the longest since World War II.

It may be over, but you won't be hearing any cheers from the millions of Americans who are struggling to find a job. Or are worried about the ones they have. Or have lost their homes. Or are behind on the mortgage.

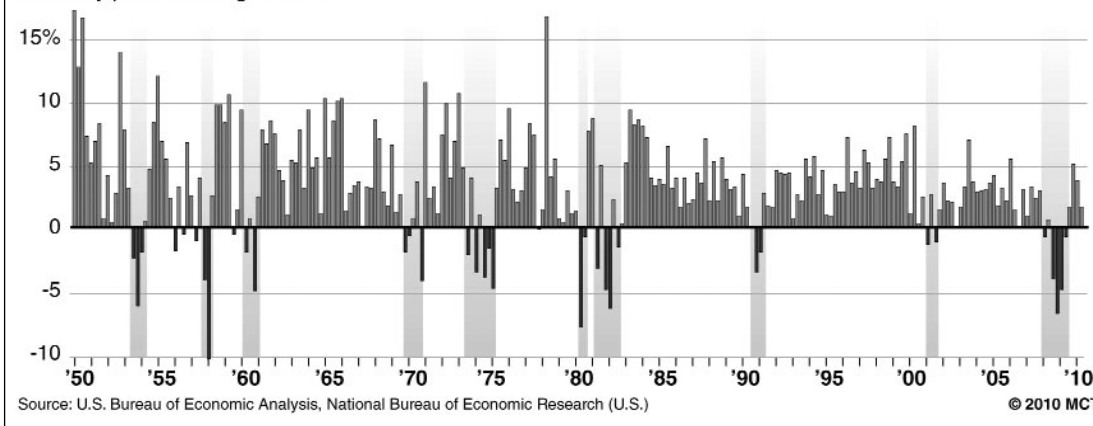
"Every single one of the individuals who wrote the report needs a serious reality check," said Bob Johnson of the Queens borough of New York, who is 46, had worked in communications and has been looking for a job for more than three years.

Not that it's the fault of the academics — in this case the National Bureau of Economic Research, a group of economists based in Cambridge, Mass. It's their job to

**Long recession ends**

The National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER), which formally declares a recession's start and finish, has said the recession, which began in Dec., 2007, officially ended in June 2009.

Tracking U.S. recessions  
Quarterly percent change in GDP



Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, National Bureau of Economic Research (U.S.) © 2010 MCT

declare when recessions officially begin and end.

Their finding is one that economic historians spend a lot of time pondering. Politicians care, too. They don't want to be blamed for downturns that happen on their watch.

One of those politicians is President Barack Obama, who inherited the recession — it began in December 2007, according to the bureau. Obama found little reason Monday to celebrate that it had officially ended.

"The hole was so deep that a lot of people out there are still hurting,"

the president, whose Democratic Party faces a likely setback in the midterm elections, said at a town-hall meeting sponsored by CNBC.

Obama has made a point of noting small signs of progress in the economy, which is growing slowly. Some Democrats have urged him to stop boasting about any progress at all, for fear that it irks people who feel things aren't getting better and makes politicians seem out of touch.

For Melody Brooke, a 55-year-old marriage and family counselor in Lewisville, Texas, it didn't feel in her household as if the recession ended

15 months ago. Her household finances were in shambles at the time.

"It felt like the heat of it for us," Brooke said.

Her outlook is starting to brighten. Her husband finally found full-time work about a month ago. And Brooke's counseling business is picking up. She's on track to make about \$35,000 for the year.

For the rest of the country, the statistics are familiar and grim. Since the recession began, 7.3 million jobs have disappeared. Nearly 2.5 million homes have been repossessed.

Unemployment is at 9.6 percent.

Since the technical end of the recession, the economy has been growing. But the growth has been painfully slow.

How slow? The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development figures the U.S. economy will grow 2.6 percent this year. It would take growth twice that fast to drive down unemployment by a single percentage point.

Unemployment usually keeps rising well after a recession ends. That's because it takes time for companies to gain confidence in the economy, know that customer demand will last, and add jobs.

But for the past few recessions, it's taken longer and longer for unemployment to come down. In 1982, for example, unemployment peaked the same month the recession ended. After the 2001 recession, the gap was 19 months.

This time around, it's been 15 months, and economists don't expect unemployment to come down significantly anytime soon.

In part, that's because of how the unemployment rate is calculated. It's based on a survey of households. Only out-of-work people who are looking for jobs are counted as unemployed. Those who have quit looking out of discouragement aren't included. As the economy improves, more of these people will start looking for jobs and will be counted again as unemployed. That will drive up the unemployment rate, at least for a while.

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