



Obama Would Veto Spending Bill Without Funding for Amnesty Order

When asked on December 1 by ABC News reporter Jonathan Karl if President Obama would veto a funding bill that did not provide funds for him to carry out his executive action to grant amnesty from deportation to millions of illegal immigrants, White House Press Secretary Josh Earnest replied, simply: “Yes.”



When Karl restated Earnest’s reply, “So the president is willing to see the government shut down if Congress does not — tries to tie his hands on immigration?” Earnest replied:

Well, Jon, you’ll be surprised to hear that I see it slightly differently. I actually don’t believe that members of Congress, or at least a majority of members of Congress, are going to be willing to go along with an effort to shut down the government in protest over the president’s executive actions on immigration. What the president announced about 10 days ago is entirely consistent with the precedent that was established by previous presidents and is well within the legal confines of the law as it relates to prosecutorial discretion.

Earnest actually gave credit to the Republican leadership for not wanting a government shutdown, when he said: “I think that’s a pretty clear statement from among the most influential Republicans in Congress that a government shutdown is not in the offing here.”

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But when Karl asked:

Is the president willing to go along with this idea that Republicans are now talking about basically funding all of the government through October of next year except for the Department of Homeland Security, which would be implementing, of course, the immigration changes, making that funding temporary?

Earnest cast the blame for a potential impasse on Congress, saying:

As a general matter, it is the view of this administration that Congress should fulfill their responsibility and pass a yearlong extension of — pass a yearlong budget because that ... Congress’s responsibility to do that. So we’re not asking them to do anything heroic; we’re asking them to do their job.

Obama himself provided a fairly good summary of what the jobs of Congress and the president are, respectively, when he said during a Univision Town Hall held on March 28, 2011 at Bell Multicultural High School in Washington, D.C.:

With respect to the notion that I can just suspend deportations through executive order, that’s just not the case, because there are laws on the books that Congress has passed.... We’ve got three branches of government. Congress passes the law. The Executive branch’s job is to enforce and



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implement those laws and then the Judiciary has to interpret the laws. There are enough laws on the books by Congress that are very clear in terms on how we have to enforce our immigration system, that for me to simply though executive order ignore those congressional mandates would not conform with my appropriate role as president.

The president's comments reflected an accurate understanding of the separation of powers that every high-school civics students learns. Yet, from his nationwide address delivered on November 20, it is apparent that Obama has departed from the principles expressed in 2011 by announcing he would use executive actions to implement policies that Congress has failed to approve legislatively. Obama justified his use of executive authority by citing the alleged failure of Congress to pass what he termed "common sense law."

"But until that happens," he said, "there are actions I have the legal authority to take as president — the same kinds of actions taken by Democratic and Republican presidents before me — that will help make our immigration system more fair and more just."

By asserting that it is "Congress's responsibility" and "their job" to pass a year-long budget that includes funding for Obama's executive actions that implement an amnesty program that Congress (particularly the House of Representatives) finds unacceptable, Earnest — who speaks for the president — confirms Obama's repudiation of the principles he appropriately defended in his 2011 talk.

Mara Liasson, a national political correspondent for National Public Radio, asked Earnest to confirm a statement made by a White House spokesman that illegal aliens "eligible for deferred deportation" (i.e., amnesty) would be eligible for Medicare and Social Security benefits. Earnest replied:

My understanding is that they would be eligible for those programs that they pay into. So essentially, when it comes to Social Security benefits, if you qualify — I believe if you pay into it for 40 quarters, you can begin to collect benefits based on what you paid into the program.

So, in that case, yes, it would make sense.

Liasson followed by asking if illegal immigrants using fake Social Security numbers before getting their deferred status would receive credit toward their 40 quarters for what they paid in before achieving amnesty. Earnest suggested that the journalist check with DHS but gave his opinion that "once they've paid into the Social Security system for 40 quarters, which is what is the threshold for anybody who is part of that system, then that's when they would qualify for receiving Social Security benefits." Apparently, even if some of those quarters were during a time when the immigrant was working illegally.

When Mara asked Earnest to be more specific on this point, he replied:

It's not exactly clear to me how, on such a detailed level, this program is implemented. It does seem to me that it would be difficult to verify if you've actually paid into the program if you're using a fake Social Security number.

As we noted in our article on November 26, the problem with the idea that illegal immigrants who have worked and paid FICA taxes should be eligible for Social Security benefits is that it is one more step to offering illegal immigrants de facto citizenship. The logical next step would be to ask, "Why not just make them all citizens?"

Such citizens would undoubtedly vote for Democratic candidates in large numbers, providing a plausible explanation for why Obama and his congressional allies are so intent on legalizing as many



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illegal aliens as possible

The president is obviously pushing so much to achieve this goal that he would veto a spending bill sent to him by Congress that does not give him what he wants, even if the effect would be to shut down the government. He would then blame Congress, not himself, for the shutdown!

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