



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on September 15, 2011

McConnell: Obama's Jobs Bill "Political," Won't "Actually Work"

Making his first public comments on the bill, McConnell said, "The first thing to say about this plan is it's now obvious why the president left out the specifics last week. Not only does it reveal the political nature of this bill, it also reinforces the growing perception that this administration isn't all that interested in economic policies that will actually work."



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Anyone who doubts the bill is a political exercise need only consult a calendar and the latest opinion polls. With roughly 14 months to go until voters select the next President, Obama knows that unless he is perceived to be doing something about the stubbornly high unemployment rate, his already [less-than-certain](#) bid for reelection is almost surely doomed. Soaking the rich via tax hikes will shore up Obama's left-wing base, while the billions he plans to shell out for various projects will, he hopes, buy him some votes among moderates. To Obama, whether the bill actually improves the employment situation in the long term is irrelevant; all that matters is what happens in November 2012.

"The specifics we got ... only reinforce the impression that this was largely a political exercise," [McConnell added](#). "For one, they undermine the president's claim that it's a bipartisan proposal — because much of what he's proposing has already been rejected on a bipartisan basis. The half-trillion-dollar tax hike the White House proposed yesterday will not only face a tough road in Congress among Republicans, but from Democrats too."

Indeed, as the [New York Times](#) notes, "most of the [tax increase] measures have been pitched by the Obama administration in some form or other since 2009, yet none generated enough support to pass Congress — even when Democrats controlled both houses."

House Republicans, too, have opposed these measures. On Tuesday House Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) told reporters, "As a former small businessman myself, I can tell you that we've got a little different approach to creating jobs than our friends across the aisle. When you look at what we saw in the president's pay-fors yesterday, we see permanent tax increases put into effect in order to pay for



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temporary spending. I just don't think that's going to help our economy the way it could."

McConnell was even more forceful in his response to the tax hike proposals. "The president knows raising taxes is the last thing you want to do to spur job creation," he asserted. "He's said so himself."

McConnell is correct. Back in 2009, Obama, pushing his last stimulus plan in Elkhart, Indiana, bluntly [stated](#), "You don't raise taxes in a recession." Even his latest plan seems to share this premise, offering tax cuts and credits in hopes of spurring economic growth. Then, as if he had never argued that raising taxes in a recession is a bad idea, Obama turns around and does just that so he can claim that his bill is "paid for" even though he knows those tax hikes don't stand the proverbial snowball's chance of passing.

The President, McConnell continued, is proposing "temporary stimulus to be paid for later by permanent tax hikes, so that when the dust clears, and the economy is no better off than it was after the first stimulus, folks find themselves with an even bigger tax bill than today."

Congressional Democrats, naturally, say McConnell's position is based on pure partisanship, not principle. Writes the *Washington Post*:

"One should not be shocked that Senator McConnell said that he didn't like what President Obama suggested when his principal objective in life is to defeat President Obama next year," [House Minority Whip Steny] Hoyer said in a reference to McConnell's remarks late last year that Republicans' top priority in 2012 should be to defeat Obama.

However, the *Post* adds, "Hoyer said Tuesday that he believed there was some wiggle room among Republicans when it comes to taxes."

Senate Majority Whip Richard Durbin (D-Ill.) also feels that GOP opposition to the bill is not as strong as McConnell's comments would imply. According to Politico, Durbin said "the Republicans' opposition is focused on the revenue-raising offsets the president proposed and not opposition to the specifics outlined in Obama's job proposal."

Unfortunately, Hoyer and Durbin may be right that Republicans will ultimately cave on all or part of Obama's bill. Many of them, it must be recalled, voted for President George W. Bush's 2008 "stimulus" bill, so they can hardly be considered principled opponents of Keynesian economic programs. In addition, this summer's debt-ceiling deal, in which McConnell was "a central player" (Politico), indicates little fiscal prudence on the part of the GOP.

Will McConnell stand firm in his effort to prevent the passage of Obama's American Jobs Act? Baker thinks the Senator's combative stance with regard to the bill is an attempt to change his "reputation of being someone who's open to compromise and ... to reassure his conservative colleagues that he's a fighter." Taxpayers hope it's not just a pose; they have almost \$450 billion on the line.

Photo of Sen. Mitch McConnell: AP Images



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