

October 11, 2012

MEMORANDUM TO INTERESTED PARTIES

RE: What to Expect from the “Marathon Man”

TO: Interested Parties

FROM: Stephanie Cutter, Obama for America Deputy Campaign Manager

When Vice President Joe Biden and Rep. Paul Ryan debate Thursday night at Centre College in Danville, Ky., the Vice President will speak directly to the American people about the progress we’ve made over the past four years and the concrete Obama-Biden plans to continue creating an economy that works for the middle-class.

We now know that Mitt Romney will say anything to win, even if it’s not true – just like he did in Massachusetts and in the boardroom. Mitt Romney has been running for years on positions he described as “severely conservative,” but now is cynically and dishonestly hiding his real positions because he knows it will jeopardize a win on Election Day. Just two days ago, Romney claimed that anti-choice legislation was not on his agenda, but the real Romney has consistently committed to overturning *Roe vs. Wade*. And, his campaign was quickly forced to clarify that Romney would in fact champion anti-choice legislation as president. In last week’s presidential debate, Gov. Mitt Romney pretended that some of his most extreme positions don’t exist – like the plan the real Romney has touted for months to cut taxes by \$5 trillion dollars -- weighted toward the wealthy -- and no way to pay for them unless he raises taxes on the middle-class.

But there’s no hiding when you are President. Voters deserve to know where you stand and what you believe, and they won’t be fooled by Mitt Romney’s attempt to hide his positions. After six years of running for president, they know the real Mitt Romney.

The question now is whether Ryan will adopt the same dishonest strategy or if he’ll stand by the very extreme positions he’s taken as the “intellectual leader” of the Republican Party. Ryan spent 14 years honing his debate skills in the House of Representatives, including six as the top Republican on the powerful House Budget Committee. He has been the face of the Republican Party’s increasingly extreme policies, spending years laying out his budgets and making the case for his policies and his vision. He has an exceptional grasp of policy details and his mastery of budgetary matters is second to none.

Unfortunately, as we’ve already seen in everything from his fact-free convention speech to his exaggerated marathon time, Ryan isn’t afraid to skirt the truth. This week, he said he expects the Vice President to come at him “like a cannon ball” and “descend down into a mud pit.” But it is Paul Ryan who has shown that he’s the one comfortable doing the mudslinging – he’s repeatedly made claims that are quickly debunked by fact-checkers. Here are four of the biggest lies Ryan has told in the past that we will likely hear again Thursday night:

1. False claims about Medicare. Ryan can’t seem to get through a single speech without lying about Medicare. He falsely claims Obamacare cut seniors’ benefits by \$716 billion; in fact, AARP endorsed Obamacare because it strengthens Medicare by cutting unnecessary payments to insurance companies and health care providers. The law used the savings to expand prescription

drug coverage by closing the doughnut hole, and it extended the life of the Medicare trust fund by eight years. And by making Medicare more efficient, Obamacare is lowering seniors' premiums and out-of-pocket costs by \$5,000 by 2022.

But Ryan's claim is more than just dishonest – it's also deeply hypocritical because Ryan's own budget included the identical policy. Tomorrow night he's going to attack a policy he's on the record supporting only months ago.

Of course, we know why Ryan has resorted to these false attacks: Romney and Ryan's plans to end Medicare's guaranteed benefits would hurt seniors. They would turn the popular and reliable program into a voucher system that raises seniors' costs by more than \$6,000 a year. Rather than have a serious conversation about the impact of their plan, they have resorted to misleading and hypocritical claims.

Keep these independent fact-checkers' conclusions in mind the next time you hear Ryan say the words "\$716 billion":

- **PolitiFact: "Highly Misleading ... Mostly False."** "Ryan's comments are highly misleading. Neither Obama nor his health care law literally cut funding from the Medicare program's budget. ... In fact, the law limits payments to health care providers and insurers to try to reduce the rapid growth of future Medicare spending. ... Ryan's statement is exaggerated and we rate it Mostly False."
- **Bloomberg Businessweek: "Flat Out Wrong."** "The Romney campaign has been making this argument a lot lately. The \$716 billion line gets people pretty riled up. ... The problem is, the claim is flat-out wrong."
- **New York Times: "Repeatedly Debunked."** "Fact-checkers have repeatedly debunked this claim. ... Mr. Obama did not cut benefits by \$716 billion over 10 years as part of his 2010 health care law; rather, he reduced Medicare reimbursements to health care providers, chiefly insurance companies and drug manufacturers. And the law gave Medicare recipients more generous benefits for prescription drugs and free preventive care like mammograms."

2. False claims about Romney's \$5 trillion tax plan: Romney dishonestly tried to disown his \$5 trillion tax plan last week. A few days earlier, Ryan tried to do the same in a television interview with Chris Wallace, saying it was "not in the least bit true" that Romney's tax cut costs \$5 trillion. Pressed by Wallace to explain how the math adds up on the Romney tax plan, Ryan said "it would take me too long to go through all of the math."

In fact, it doesn't take long at all to explain the math behind Romney's tax plan – it doesn't add up at all. By cutting tax rates by 20 percent and eliminating both the estate tax and the AMT, Romney has promised \$5 trillion in new tax cuts weighted to the wealthiest. Even if he eliminated every tax benefit for high-income taxpayers -- except those that reward investment earnings, which he has already taken off the table -- he'd still end up giving these taxpayers a \$1 trillion tax cut. As a result, he must either increase middle-class taxes or the deficit by \$1 trillion.

Here, again, are the fact-checkers:

- [Washington Post's Glenn Kessler](#): **"The Numbers Aren't There."** "The nonpartisan Tax Policy Center has analyzed the specifics thus far released from Romney's plan and concluded the numbers aren't there to make it revenue neutral."
- [Washington Post's Wonkblog](#): **"Trust us."** "So the basic message from Ryan here is: Trust us —the math adds up."
- [Bloomberg](#): **"Long on promises and short on details."** "On taxes, Mitt Romney is long on promises and short on details."

3. False claims about the Simpson-Bowles deficit plan: Congressman Ryan has accused President Obama of dismissing the Simpson-Bowles Commission's budget proposal. "He created a bipartisan debt commission," Ryan said in his convention speech. "They came back with an urgent report. He thanked them, sent them on their way, and then did exactly nothing."

Of course, Ryan neglected to mention that he was a member of that bipartisan commission and voted against its proposal even as five Republicans, including conservative Oklahoma Sen. Tom Coburn, voted for it. If it had garnered three additional votes, the proposal would have been sent to Congress. One of those votes could have been Ryan's.

Ryan also falsely claims that President Obama has failed to act on the deficit. In fact, President Obama has already signed into law \$1 trillion in spending cuts. His balanced deficit reduction plan is in line with the Simpson-Bowles approach, and even achieves more savings from annual domestic spending than the Simpson-Bowles plan. The President's plan would reduce the deficit by more than \$4 trillion, including steps already taken, through specific spending cuts and savings across the budget and asking the wealthiest Americans to pay their fair share, while protecting key investments in the future of the middle class like education, clean energy, and manufacturing.

Meanwhile, the Romney and Ryan plan rejects the basic principles of Simpson-Bowles. It doesn't include a penny of new revenues, which Simpson-Bowles recognized must be part of any balanced solution, and achieves almost two-thirds of its savings by cutting programs for low-income Americans. Instead of decreasing the deficit, Romney and Ryan's plan adds \$2 trillion for a defense buildup the Pentagon hasn't asked for and that Romney and Ryan have no plan to pay for. Romney and Ryan don't have a deficit plan; between their unpaid-for tax plan and unspecified spending cuts they have an \$11 trillion math problem.

Ryan has been already been called out repeatedly for this misleading claim:

- [AEI Scholar Norm Ornstein](#): **"Utterly hypocritical."** "I found it utterly hypocritical, and it was at a minimum disingenuous not to mention his membership on the commission... The reality is that the three House Republicans who voted against it, unlike the Senate Republicans, were instrumental in keeping the plan from coming directly to Congress."
- [New York Times](#): **Ryan "helped to seal its fate."** "Left unsaid: Mr. Ryan served on that debt commission, and his opposition to its final proposals helped to seal its fate... His dismissal of the plan was seen as an important blow to its chances of success, since it soured other House Republicans on it."

- [Erskine Bowles](#): Romney “does nothing to reduce the debt.” This month, Romney said that his tax reform proposal is ‘very similar to the Simpson-Bowles plan.’ How I wish it were. I will be the first to cheer if Romney decides to embrace our plan. Unfortunately, the numbers say otherwise: His reform plan leaves too many tax breaks in place and, as a result, does nothing to reduce the debt.”

4. False claims about the Janesville, Wis., GM plant: In his convention speech, Ryan claimed that President Obama broke his promise by letting the plant close. But he didn’t mention that it closed in December 2008, before President Obama took office.

Ryan also never mentioned that if Mitt Romney had his way and we had “let Detroit go bankrupt,” Wisconsin’s auto industry would be in much worse shape. President Obama’s rescue of the industry saved more than a million jobs. Since GM and Chrysler retooled in June 2009, we’ve added more than 245,000 auto jobs, including many in Wisconsin, where the auto industry helps support more than one in every 20 jobs.

Independent fact-checkers immediately noted Ryan’s dishonesty:

- [Washington Post’s Wonkblog](#): “**Dishonest.**” “Hitting [President Obama] for Janesville is dishonest. The first assembly line stopped rolling in December 2008. Workers unfurled banners declaring the ‘Last Vehicles Off the Janesville Line’ at a ‘final goodbye ceremony.’ The plant was closing regardless of what Obama did.”
- [Salon.com](#): “**One of the biggest whoppers of the night.**” “Ryan: blamed Obama for the closing of GM plant in his hometown of Janesville, Wis. Truth: One of the biggest whoppers of the night; the plant closed before Obama was even sworn into office. His position also contradicts the Republicans’ position of opposing President Obama’s auto rescue.”
- [CNN](#): “**Wrong.**” “Ryan reportedly recalled this event incorrectly just days ago, during an August 16 speech in Ohio. Ryan reportedly alleged that Obama said he’d ‘keep that plant open,’ and therefore broke his promise because the plant closed. ... The Detroit News pointed out that Obama made no such promise in the February 13, 2008, speech, and indeed, we’ve seen no account suggesting that Obama did. ... So, back on August 16 of this year, it does appear Ryan was wrong for saying Obama promised to keep it open.”