



Unemployment Rate Same Today As It Was When Obama First Took Office

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WASHINGTON (CBSDC/AP) — Even though much has changed the past four years, President Barack Obama begins his second term with one thing that hasn't: the unemployment rate.

When Obama first took office in January 2009, the unemployment rate was 7.8 percent. Today the unemployment rate is once again at 7.8 percent.

The unemployment rate rose as high as 10 percent during Obama's first term before falling back down to 7.8 percent last November.

Unemployment rates fell in less than half of U.S. states last month, as steady but slow hiring is making only gradual improvement in the job market.

[Lobbyists Displeased With Obama's 'Vilification' Of Them](#)

The Labor Department said Friday that rates fell in 22 states in December and rose in 16. They were unchanged in 12.

The department's monthly report also shows that steady hiring nationwide in the past two years has lowered the unemployment rate in many parts of the country. The rate is now below 7 percent in 25 states. And some of the states hardest hit in the recession have seen solid gains.

Obama has prepared a second inaugural address that broadly lays out his vision for the country's future, setting the stage for looming debates over taxes, guns, immigration and other issues while leaving the details for another day.

The speech, slated right after Obama takes an oath to "faithfully execute the office of the president of the United States" Monday on the Capitol's west front, includes no new policy, aides say. Rather, the president plans to use the moment as it traditionally has been in most of the 56 previous inaugurations — to talk about founding American values and their importance to the country's success today.

[Obama Inauguration Speech Sets Stage for Policy Fights](#)

But his words come at the start of a second term with no shortage of tough battles. Obama may in some way reference the Connecticut elementary school shooting that pushed gun control to the

top of his agenda. He may also speak of a need to tackle comprehensive immigration reform, another second-term priority, and a need to bring U.S. troops home from Afghanistan.

White House advisers see the inaugural speech as the opening opportunity for the president to discuss his second-term agenda, but in broad terms. The next major opportunity will be at the State of the Union address Feb. 12, when aides say Obama will discuss specific policy proposals.

Obama adviser David Axelrod told “CBS This Morning” that in the speech, Obama “will be speaking about values and principles, not so much about programs and prescriptions.”

Senior adviser Robert Gibbs told CBS Obama will use his address to communicate that “we’re going to move beyond what has paralyzed this town for so long.”

He said Obama wants members of both parties to “lay aside their partisanship” to solve protracted problems like budget, taxes and spending, gun violence, and immigration. Gibbs, who formerly was Obama’s press secretary, said the president will tell the country that much is possible “if we sit down long enough and work together and talk together.”

“I think he feels very comfortable with what he’s got ... and understands the moment that he and the country are in, and is anxious to get started,” Gibbs said.

Inaugural addresses are not typically partisan, and White House aides say Obama doesn’t intend to call out his political opponents. But they say he will stand up for his values and vision that were supported by the majority of voters in the November election.

Photos: [President Barack Obama Sworn in For Second Term](#)

Obama’s prepared text notes that spirited debate is a hallmark of a vibrant democracy, aides say, but that the country’s leaders can’t let disagreement prevent them from finding common ground to move the country forward. The president also plans to encourage Americans to continue making their voices heard to shape the debate as policy is made, aides said.

The inauguration gives Obama the chance to command global attention at a level that’s rare even for the leader of the free world.

Aides say he has been working on the speech since early December, and he clearly has an eye toward his place in history. He invited presidential historians to the White House and chose to take his oath on Bibles owned by Abraham Lincoln and Martin Luther King Jr.

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