



Maybe President Obama Will Close Strong, after All

DECEMBER 2, 2014

After sweeping GOP victories in 2014, Obama's presidency was left for dead. But the President has since moved forward – negotiating a major climate agreement with China, exempting millions of law-abiding immigrants from deportation, nixing tax break extensions tilted against working families, highlighting the problem of violent policing in minority communities, and announcing strong new cabinet nominees. SSN scholars weigh in on Obama's initiatives and continuing leverage.

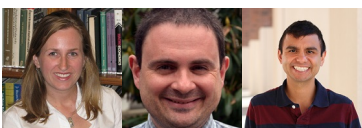


[In His Second Term, is Obama Weak or Strong?](#)

The Hill, December 2, 2014

[Stuart Shapiro](#), Rutgers University

“A president ineligible to run for reelection is freer to focus on his policy preferences and his legacy. All presidents since FDR who have had a second term have also been confronted with a Congress where at least one house was controlled by the opposition party... [making] legislative options harder and administrative ones more attractive....”



[The President's Executive Order: What Difference Will It Make for Immigrants?](#)

The Conversation, November 21, 2014

[Helen Marrow](#), Tufts University, [Ben Railton](#), Fitchburg State University, and [Roberto Gonzales](#), Harvard Graduate School of Education

Three SSN scholars joined others in praising the President's executive action on immigration enforcement, which will modify an aggressive program of deportation and allow relatives of U.S. citizens and those who arrived in the country as minor children to stay with their families. But Obama's action is only the beginning, they stress, because executive actions can be reversed and Congress along with future presidents must act to

achieve comprehensive immigration reform including a path to citizenship for many undocumented residents.



[Why the Democratic Party – Not Just the GOP – Has an Immigration Problem](#)

[Zoltan Hajnal](#), University of California, San Diego

SSN Basic Facts, December 2014

Obama's executive order on immigration has found favor with Latino and Asian American voters along with those who already identify as liberal; but SSNer Zoltan Hajnal warns that the backlash from conservative white voters could counter any positive effects that this policy change is liable to bring about. White voters who identify as Republican or trend conservative have extremely strong, negative views about immigrants that are constantly reinforced by conservative media. In order to protect their interests in 2016, the Democratic party needs to make sure that new immigration policies are coupled with strong narratives that showcase the truth about the immigrants affected by the President's order: that they are law-abiding, hardworking tax payers that represent a net gain for the overall U.S. economy, and deserve expanded rights.



[What Can U.S. Presidents Accomplish in a Second Term?](#)

[Daniel Paul Franklin](#), Georgia State University

SSN Key Findings, February 2013

Drawing on his new book, [Pitiful Giants: Presidents in Their Final Terms](#) (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014) Franklin argues that although second term presidents are “lame ducks walking” whose powers are inevitably on the wane in many spheres, they still have many tools at their disposal to wield influence – including the threat of vetoes to bargain over legislation; the capacity to take international initiatives; and rule making authority plus capacities for administrative action – such as action through the Environmental Protection Agency or setting new priorities for immigration enforcement. Last but not least, Franklin points out, even lame duck presidents can still use the White House as a “bully pulpit” to draw public attention to important national problems and priorities. “Their ideas can become a permanent part of national debates, living on long after those who gave expression to them move out of the White House and lay down the awesome powers of the U.S. presidency.”