

What Did the Republican Candidates Think of Obama's State of the Union?

In a presidential election year, following the president's State of the Union Address to Congress, not only does the opposition party's chosen response get the nation's attention, but so does its presidential candidates.

South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley was selected by party leadership to offer the GOP's official response of President Barack Obama. She very quickly addressed the president's speech, then laid out "a positive vision for our nation's future" in a speech that was widely celebrated by Republicans and the media alike.

The Republican presidential candidates' responses ranged from lengthy speeches to short tweets on social media. But they all made it abundantly clear: President Obama has been a disaster for the country, and they are each the candidate who can turn things around.

Donald Trump, who had held a large campaign event on the University of Northern Iowa campus in Cedar Falls that evening, didn't "troll" the president's speech as he has the Democrat presidential debates. However, he did respond afterward, saying he thought the speech was "boring, slow, lethargic." He then tweeted:

"The State Of The Union speech was one of the most boring, rambling and non-substantive I have heard in a long time. New leadership fast!"

Ted Cruz released the following statement shortly after the speech concluded:

"The president continues to be in denial of reality. He would have us believe that global warming is our greatest threat, our military is as strong as it can be, the economy is working for American families, and that the key to alleviating poverty is more government dependence.

"The reality is very different. We have had at least eight ISIS-inspired attacks on innocent Americans, including law enforcement, yet he refuses to acknowledge the root of the cause of these attacks, radical Islamic terrorism. Our military needs greater support, and the economy only works for those in Washington.

"The president gives lip service to 'We the People,' yet has rejected the entire idea of a 'government of the people, by the people, and for the people.' He has issued endless executive orders, ignoring longstanding principles of separation of powers and constitutional limits on his own power.

"He lectures us on civility yet has been one of the most divisive presidents in American history. He has tried to divide us by race, class, and gender, and our beliefs. He railed tonight against 'rancor' yet has done little to lead or to bring people together. While he suggested that political differences at home may be the most significant concern, he neglected the 10 American sailors who have been taken hostage by Iran today. Instead, he praised the Iran deal and no less than three times professed the threat of climate change.

"Obama's final State of the Union address marks the end of eight years of lost potential for America. We have lost opportunities for economic growth and expanding freedom. It's a sad chapter in American history that will fortunately soon come to a close. And it's a signal that Americans are ready to stand together to elect a leader who will bring back jobs and growth, champion every citizens' God-given liberties, and

restore our security and our leadership in the world.”

Marco Rubio appeared on FOX News Channel’s *The Kelly File* and told the host, Megyn Kelly, what he thought of the speech:

“This president has been the single most divisive political figure this country has had over the last decade. This is a president that has deliberately pitted Americans against each other time and again. Now, if he had given that speech in his second year in office, his third year in office, his fourth year in office on some of those things he said tonight, it would have been a lot more useful.

“But this is a person that has gone around for seven years telling people that Republicans don’t care about those that are less fortunate, even accusing some of not caring about those that are disabled or the elderly, etc. He has used all sorts of attacks against Republicans and against the critics of his agenda.

“Now, tonight, he comes out with language of reconciliation. In many ways, it’s too late, because he has bitterly divided this country and he has done so for political gain.”

Ben Carson quickly tweeted, “Tonight’s #SOTU is the perfect example of why we must reform Washington DC, & give the power back to We the People,” with a link to the “issues” page on his website. Then he called into FOX Business Channel and spoke with Neil Cavuto and Montel Williams about his thoughts in greater detail.

Jeb Bush didn’t directly respond to the speech, but early in the evening, while speaking at a campaign event in Iowa, he argued the president’s foreign policies are making Americans less safe.

Chris Christie tweeted out a link to an interview he did with FOX News Channel’s Bret Baier, saying, “I fight for what I

believe in and make sure that government works for the people.”

Rand Paul issued his own State of the Union speech, sharing it with his army of social media followers. He also emailed a transcript to the media:

“Tonight, we heard the president tell us the state of the union, and what we saw was a leader with a record of failure in search of any meaningful, positive legacy.

“The state of the union affirms one thing—we’re ready for a new president. Here are some things you did not hear from the president tonight:

“Under this president, our national debt has nearly doubled. The next president must be someone with a balanced budget plan, to end massive spending and deficits.

“Under this president, we were promised an end to two wars that were past their time and mission ... but instead, our soldiers continue to risk their lives in Iraq and Afghanistan.

“In fact, President Obama and Hillary Clinton took us to war in Libya and Syria without Constitutional authority.

“The next president will have the daunting task of rebuilding an overextended military, while ensuring that we are capable and prepared to defend ourselves.

“If we continue to engage in nation-building and policing the world, we won’t have the resources to maintain our own national defense.

“This president pledged to take over our healthcare system—and he did.

“Costs are rising, doctors are leaving their practices, and insurance companies are leaving the exchanges. Obamacare has

failed.

"The next president will have to repeal Obamacare and make health insurance affordable again.

"The current president pledged to raise taxes and add regulations to job creators. He's done that too. Some estimate that his policies cost our economy \$2 trillion every year in regulations.

"Our next president must focus on restoring lost jobs through tax cuts, regulatory reforms and more freedom in the market place.

"It has also been too long since our Union saw a president who fought for the entire Bill of Rights.

"The current president ran as a champion of civil liberties, railing against the constitutional violations of the previous administration. In this he has utterly failed.

"He has continued and expanded the surveillance state, he has presided over a continued militarization of our police forces, and has signed laws including the indefinite detention of American citizens.

"In the wake of terrorist attacks, Democrats cry out for more gun control, and some Republicans call for more people control.

"As president, I will fight for the entire Bill of Rights.

"These challenges and more await the next president. This is why I am running.

"No other candidate running will address each of these problems with freedom-based solutions.

"Others claim to be fiscal conservatives, but they don't have a balanced budget plan, and refuse to cut spending across the

board.

"Make no mistake, if we continue the unholy alliance between the left and right on spending, we will be bankrupt sooner rather than later.

"The left wants more welfare ... while the right wants more military spending. Both have gotten what they want for too long, leaving us less safe and more in debt.

"The next president must also take on the power of Washington, something this president has failed to do.

"The first reform needed is Term Limits. We have them for the president, but we should also have them for Congress. Being in Washington for 30 or 40 years should not be an option or a goal.

"Next, I would repeal the entire tax code, and replace it with a flat tax that empowers American workers and business owners to make the most out of their lives.

"If we want to get money out of politics, then we need to get politics out of the peoples' money. We should devalue politicians in Washington by stripping them of power and returning it to local government.

"We also need to Audit the Fed and rein in the out-of-control money printing, manipulation and bank bailouts.

"Today we had the first-ever vote on Audit the Fed in the Senate, a bill I introduced. We don't have a president to sign it yet, but we must make sure that by the next State of the Union, we do.

"The next president must be serious about our national security, and that starts with defending our border.

"Anyone who wishes to visit, study or immigrate to the U.S. must be sufficiently vetted and scrutinized.

"We also need a president who understands the Constitution and will appoint judges who will reverse years of bad decisions that have undermined our freedom.

"Finally, we need someone who will work across the aisle on all issues. On criminal justice reform, I have reached out to the president to work on sentencing reform, ending mandatory minimums, and ending the War on Drugs.

"On day one, our next President must be prepared to protect the Constitution, embrace the entire Bill of Rights and get the government out of the way so Americans can once again prosper.

"I will be that president.

"Thank you, and God Bless America."

John Kasich issued the following response:

"We're going to cut taxes, balance the budget and get government out of the way so every American can rise. We're also going to strengthen our military and renew our alliances to proclaim the values of the civilized world and stand up to extremists and bullies. On-the-job training in this presidency has marched us down a trail of failure and left America weaker, divided and adrift. That's going to end and by working together we're going to fight, win and succeed."

Carly Fiorina issued the following response:

"Tonight, President Obama once again proved that he is a politician, not a leader. Instead of talking about solutions, he talked politics.

"Despite his rhetoric, Americans know that our economy is lagging, our leadership in the world is waning, and the very character of our nation is threatened.

"This administration has continued to grow a bloated, corrupt government that serves only the powerful, the wealthy and the well-connected. President Obama talked about wanting to end crony capitalism—but then proposed doubling down on the same policies that have enabled this corruption and ineptitude.

"We cannot elect Hillary Clinton to the White House. She has promised throughout her campaign to extend and expand Barack Obama's failed policies. And, like this president, she has always put politics ahead of problem-solving. She lacks a track record of leadership and accomplishment. She has lied. It is the Clinton way.

"We need a nominee who can beat Hillary and who will finally hold her accountable. One thing is clear: Hillary Clinton will wipe the floor with Donald Trump.

"I can beat Hillary Clinton and I will. I will force her to fight on her record—on her lies and lack of trustworthiness, whether that's about emails and servers or Benghazi.

"It is time to elect a leader who has been tested, who will see and speak and act on the truth. We need a president who will be a clear-eyed advocate for policies formed by principles, not by polls and politics."

Mike Huckabee issued his own response, noting that the events of Obama's presidency have not been achievements to be celebrated:

"He pats himself on the back for giving us an Affordable Care Act no one can afford. He glows and grins about an economy that's punching millions of Americans in the gut. And he refuses to accept an ounce of responsibility for his epic foreign policy disasters. Set aside our Union, Obama's mind is in a state of confusion, delusion and decay."

Rick Santorum, like Paul, issued his own State of the Union

address, but didn't bother to wait until after the president's speech to release it. The video was from a previous house party, one of dozens the candidate has participated in around the state of Iowa.