

Obama: Democrats Could Win Back US House in 2014

President Barack Obama, whose agenda has been frustrated by Republicans in Washington, said on Wednesday he believed his party could reclaim control of the House of Representatives in the 2014 midterm elections but conceded it was an uphill struggle.

The party in power in the White House typically loses seats in the first midterm election after a presidential campaign, and many political analysts believe Democrats could lose seats in Congress in 2014.

But Obama, appearing at fundraisers for Democratic House candidates in his hometown of Chicago, said he believed 2014 could prove different.

"We've got a great chance to take back the House," he told more than 100 people gathered at a cocktail reception in an ornate ballroom at the Chicago Hilton, where ticket prices ranged from \$1,000 per person to \$5,000 per couple.

Obama, who was reelected in 2012, told donors that he is willing to work with Republicans on issues like creating jobs through national infrastructure programs, but said he has a hard time finding Republican lawmakers willing to compromise.

"We've got a politics that is stuck right now. And the reason it's stuck is because people spend more time thinking about the next election than they do thinking about the next generation," Obama said.

Obama said he is willing to work with Republicans, who currently control the House, but accused them of "obstructionism" and "an interest only in scoring political points or placating a base."

It was the fifth time since April that Obama has traveled to raise money for Democrats running for Congress in 2014.

In Chicago, about 70 people paid \$10,000 per person or \$32,400 per couple to attend dinner in the sculpture-filled apartment of Bettylu and Paul Saltzman, longtime Chicago Democratic activists and some of Obama's earliest political benefactors.

Obama told the group, which he described as "kind of an Obama cabal," that a Democratic-controlled House is key to achieving goals he views as his legacy, like curbing climate change and gun violence.

"My only interest is making sure that when I look back 20 years from now, I say, 'I accomplished everything that I could while I had this incredible privilege to advance the interests of the broadest number of Americans,'" he said.

But he admitted winning back the House won't be easy.

"This will be hard," he said, blaming "gerrymandering" or the redistricting process which many Democratic groups have said unfairly benefits Republicans.

First Lady Michelle Obama also spoke at two Democratic fundraisers on Wednesday in Manhattan.

"We need all of you to get engaged in every special election and every midterm election all across this country," she told donors who paid between \$5,000 and \$25,000 to attend a fundraiser in the Manhattan apartment of fashion designer Tory Burch.

"We need you to keep on writing those checks and, if you haven't maxed out, max out. Get your friends to max out," she said, referring to caps on donations set by U.S. election law.

At a Park Avenue gala with about 350 people who paid \$1,250 to \$32,400 to attend, the first lady was introduced by basketball player Jason Collins, who recently came out as the nation's

first openly gay major professional sports player.

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