

# Debating the importance of knowing the president's agenda: the state of the union...

[Politics](#)



**SOTU: (All sources from CNN)**

The State of the Union address is an excellent way to gauge the state of American politics. Despite what some think, it guides the legislature to form opinions on issues and agendas that the president pushes forward. In this year's State of the Union address there President Obama was expected to give a relatively divisive speech, but he didn't. Obama's speech did have a focus on gun control, but he was thoughtful and logical in his approach. His other main point was a call for increased cancer research to be led by Vice President Joe Biden.

In my opinion this was a very good State of the Union address. Obama picked issues to focus on that are central to everyday Americans. Gun control, although usually very partisan, was approached from a human rights perspective. It would be hard to find fault in Mr. Obama's logic. I thought it was extremely interesting that Obama chose to focus on funding for cancer research. This is completely nonpartisan. Likely every person sitting in the chamber has experienced a loss due to cancer. What amazed me about this issue that he brought up was the reaction. Even when he was talking about saving lives, not just black lives or the lives of democratic voters, the republican majority refused to appear supportive. I believe that this instance says a lot about the American legislative and party systems.

It would be poor form to write about the State of the Union without mentioning the republican response given by Nikki Haley. Haley's address did not tear down president Obama in the expected manner. She jabbed at what she had expected him to say, yes, but she also focused majorly on the

2016 election and the republican nominees. Without using names Haley suggested that republican voters avoid Donald Trump. This was important because it marked the GOP Establishment's first main jab at Trump.

**Week 2:**

This week the price of oil dropped significantly. This has a major impact on everyday Americans as they go the pump, but also as they examine their investments. The drop in oil prices has caused a major downturn in the American stock market over the last few weeks. The reason for this dropping oil price is heavily debated, but could be due to the fact that the United States has doubled their oil output in the last two years or instability within OPEC who refuses to "firm up" their prices.

Many wouldn't realize the far reaching effects that the price of a barrel of oil can have. The New York Times wrote that this decrease on oil prices was actually causing the highest numbers of vehicle related accidents due to increased road travel. Additionally big American oil companies have had to lay off over 250, 000 workers in the last two weeks just to accommodate for these new oil prices (BBC). But let us not forget that the oil industry is not the only industry that is affected. This downturn in oil prices means that the natural gas industry is failing. Environmentalists are worried because cheap oil prices do not incentivize clean methods of electricity. This is the biggest event of this week because it changes many people's daily lives.

**Week 3:**

This week the United States believes that North Korea has successfully launched an H Bomb (CNN). We know now that this is not true, however at

the time of this being a current event there was a significant amount of concern, and rightfully so. The United States, in our modern world, has managed to keep cordial relations with a majority of countries. North Korea is one of the nations that does not fall under the “friendly list”.

With the ability to launch nuclear weapons North Korea could become an even larger threat than it is now. Many people think that the threats are open ended and not backed by any real power, however I would assert that they are backed by something incredibly meaningful- hatred. There is no doubt that Kim Jong Un is terrified of the United States, but also that he hates us. Many will say “we will obliterate them if they nuke us”, but I don’t think that is the point. Un doesn’t care about the safety of his people, he cares most about his legacy. I believe that North Korea’s possession of nuclear weapons could result in a terrible fate for the United States and other western countries.

#### **Week 4:**

It is finally time for me to break down and write about the 2016 election. Next week is the first of the primaries and it marks a big change for the United States. The winners of the New Hampshire primary will likely affect the rest of the primaries to come as they will cause some candidates to drop out (CNN). This election has been insane. Very few Americans are actually apathetic to the election and millennial voters are more involved than ever.

This election marks a new era in American politics. This election represents what effect year of American extremism has had. Any election that can house both a democratic socialist and a racist fascist (just kidding, kind of),

like Donald Trump seems to the average person to be unexpected. But how can this be unexpected, the American people have been conditioned by their parties to follow party lines never straying to fall moderate on some issues. It is exactly that mentality that has led us to this point.

**Week 5:**

This week the United States Justice Department sued the city of Ferguson Police Department for their involvement in the Michael Brown case. 18 months ago Michael Brown was shot and fatally wounded by a police officer. Many think that this shooting was not out of self defense, but instead was an instance of police brutality.

I think that this is the most important topic from this week because it exemplifies a lot of the racial tension in our country right now. Black Lives Matter groups are protesting EVERY SINGLE political candidates rallies. This is a really big deal because it means that the BLM movement believes that no one is "doing it right". I think that this racial tension is the biggest problem with today's society, especially in the United States. I personally am disgusted by police brutality in every aspect of life, but especially in cases where the brutality is racially charged. It empowers me to know that people are finally caring, finally reacting, but it is disheartening to see the amount of brutality increase.

**Week 6: The Skimm and BBC as sources**

This week the main story is the iPhone of a shooter in the San Bernadino hearing. The FBI are calling for the cellphone of one of the shooters to be unlocked by Apple, but Apple refuses. The problem is, it isn't just a quick

finger scan by Tim to open up the device. Instead Apple would have to develop and install a new software, that would be able to be used on all future Apple technology, and so Apple is refusing, and the FBI is taking them to court over it.

I think this is important because it is a really good representation of the issues surrounding personal privacy and security and the undefined boundary between the public sector's privacy and the private sector's. I'm interested to see how this case plays out, but it is easy for someone to speculate that Apple will win. Earlier this week in Brooklyn there was a similar case against Apple where the judge ruled in their favor. I think that this ruling will set an interesting precedent for the San Bernadino case.

### **Week 7: CNN Sources**

The Republican debate identified a lot of the issues that this campaign season will illuminate and left many questioning how so many are left in the race.

The Democrats and the Republicans are polar opposites on most platforms, but in addition to platforms they seem to have opposite party issues right now. While the Democrats can't put forward enough good candidates to warrant a formal search and multiple debates, the Republican nominees are still having to have a lesser debate because they have more than 5 people who want to share the stage.

According to CNN the winner of this debate was Ted Cruz. Cruz has seen his poll numbers rise significantly during his campaign. He now trails Trump by just a small margin. I think that the winner of the debate was Rubio. Many <https://assignbuster.com/debating-the-importance-of-knowing-the-presidents-agenda-the-state-of-the-union-address-speech/>

may assert that I think this because Rubio exhibits the kind of prettyboy quality that many people look for in a candidate, and I think this might be true. Rubio looks trustworthy, he looks like the President of the United States, and much of what he says is fluid and grounded.

Of the people on the stage Rubio seems the least afraid, which is an interesting comparison to Bush, who seems like he would rather be anywhere but each of the debates. Rubio isn't afraid to compare himself to Obama or Kennedy, and he mentions both of their names in this debate. Rubio has a manner of speech that could make a lame man talk, he evokes a sort of passion from listeners and makes them want to be engaged in politics and in the American dream. Rubio isn't just married to the immigrant sob story, like Bush or Webb, Rubio is the immigrant sob story. His immigration reform seems infallible because his parents were immigrants, his politics seems secure because his speech pattern is astute, logical, and easily accessible. Based on this debate I am whole-heartedly surprised that Rubio isn't farther up in the polls. I fully believe that Rubio won this debate and that he has a shot winning the nomination. According to a political ideology quiz I took recently my ideology lines up with his 16% of the time which is surprisingly lower than my percentage in comparison to Carson, Trump, but if I had to choose one I would vote for Rubio. Whoever Rubio's team is, they should be heavily rewarded.

### **Week 8: Democratic Townhall (CNN Sources)**

Prior to the debate many political analysts expected Bernie Sanders, a democratic socialist, to win the debate. Sanders has been gaining massive support from an untapped group of young voters. If Donald Trump were to <https://assignbuster.com/debating-the-importance-of-knowing-the-presidents-agenda-the-state-of-the-union-address-speech/>

have an opposite it would be Bernie Sanders. Bernie Sanders has been around the playing field, he's been in Congress and has voted independent, he identifies now with the Democratic party, but he gets a D- from the NRA (he's practically a moderate...). Bernie has political experience and has received all of his funding from individuals with a donation limit. In other words, people really expected Sanders to have a strong showing at the townhall. Sanders has developed a following because of his unique ability to move a crowd. This townhall was the moment when Sanders could have proved himself. Many were looking to Sanders to beat Hillary. But the next day most of the analysis said that he didn't win, and I would tend to agree. I wholeheartedly think that Hillary is winning this election. CNN's article the following day stated that the best line of the night was delivered by Sanders but I think this statement actually exemplifies the problem that Sanders had in this debate. Everything that Sanders said sounded like he was yelling. Most Americans like a good yelling match between politicians, some angry enthusiasm about platforms and social issues is part of the American dream, but Sanders yelled everything. Just like everyday can't be Christmas, everything can't be emphasized. The screaming means that Sanders' focus was lost and so was he.

Hillary looked like she was primed to debate. Her simple but elegant attire gave the appearance of a shirt and tie, and her responses were canned but natural. Hillary did as we all would expect Hillary to do. She was poised and well spoken even in the face of criticism from all four of her colleagues. If anything Hillary seemed robotic, and a little bit forced. I wonder how Hillary will fair in the future because on stage she seems almost too poised and

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unrelatable, but it can be understood because it's the stage. At a townhall, in a more secluded setting, she still appeared robotic and forced and I'm concerned about that.