

# Obama: The Year Since His Election

Posted by Mark Knoller



(AP)

In the 12 months since his [election a year ago tomorrow](#), President Obama has learned first hand it's easier to run for president than to be president.

It was easier to talk about the expansive [health care](#), education and energy programs he would pursue, than to get them enacted.

"But he was under no illusion that being president would be easy," says press secretary Robert Gibbs.

As one who gets to observe the president as a member of his inner circle, Gibbs says the job has proven to be harder and more exhausting than Mr. Obama expected.

"Oh, I don't think there's any doubt," said Gibbs in a CBS News interview in his office.

More exhausting being president than running for president?

"I actually think so," said Gibbs, "which is hard to believe since there were times in the campaign where coffee didn't do anything for you. There was no jolt left in your body."

He says this past year has "mostly been a whirlwind." And it's gone by so rapidly, says Gibbs, "it's hard to believe it's been a year."

In the 75 days from Election Day last year to Inauguration Day this year, Barack Obama morphed from Illinois' junior senator to president-elect to President of the United States. Gibbs says there's really no way to get ready for that kind of dramatic if not traumatic professional change.

"There really isn't on-the-job training regardless of what you've done beforehand," said Gibbs. "We haven't had the luxury of a learning curve because we faced so many different challenges so quickly."

From his perch down the hall from the Oval Office, Gibbs thinks Mr. Obama regards his job as "a tremendous joy." But not all aspects of the presidency fit into that category.

As president, every aspect of Mr. Obama's life is under intense scrutiny. He [complained to the New York Times Sunday Magazine this week](#) about the criticism he faced just because he took wife Michelle to New York City for [dinner and a Broadway show last May](#).

"Annoyed me," the president said bluntly. The date night drew fire for the costs imposed on taxpayers by his use of Marine One, Air Force One and various limousines, Secret Service and other support personnel, just to take his wife out for a night.

But even simpler outings are denied Barack Obama since he assumed the awesome duties of the presidency.



(CBS)

"I think the one thing he genuinely misses is being able to take a walk," says Gibbs (pictured at left).

He thinks the president would love just to be able to walk off the grounds of the fortress that is the White House, without aides, security and other hangers-on, and spend an hour by himself browsing the shelves at a local bookstore. Just like any person who isn't president can do.

He would "enjoy the fall air and the late day sun," said Gibbs of such a

presidential outing. But those days are gone.

"Maybe in 4 or 8 years he'll get to do that," said the spokesman, holding out the possibility that the drawbacks of the presidency won't keep Mr. Obama from seeking a second term.

Not even after the presidency. "His bookstore walking days are over," I tell Gibbs.

"Do me a favor," says Gibbs, "don't tell him that."



(CBS)

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