



Written by [Brian Koenig](#) on October 11, 2011

Obama's Jobs Council Comprises Job-Cutting Executives

President Obama is traveling to Pittsburgh today to discuss with prominent American business leaders the lingering economic barrier of high unemployment. The gathering will consist of members of the President's Council on Jobs and Competitiveness (Jobs Council), which was established in January to "provide non-partisan advice to the President on continuing to strengthen the Nation's economy and ensure competitiveness of the United States and on ways to create jobs, opportunity, and prosperity for the American people."



The Jobs Council comprises 27 Obama-appointed business leaders from primarily corporate entities outside the federal government who are responsible for advising the President "on how the Federal Government can best foster growth, competitiveness, innovation, and job creation." The council includes executives from American Express, Boeing, and Citigroup, and is chaired by Obama's corporate cohort, CEO of General Electric Jeffrey Immelt.

But many of the Jobs Council's chief executives have rotten track records of creating jobs, as they have axed expansion projects, terminated entire departments, and slashed thousands of American jobs, despite posting record profits. Chief executive of Xerox, Ursula Burns, who sits on the council, laid off 4,500 workers in the first six months of 2011, despite having a 16 percent hike in total revenue in the first quarter of this year. "Steady revenue growth and our continued sharp focus on operational improvements resulted in a 28 percent increase in adjusted earnings. It's a good start to the year," Burns [said](#) in April.

The *Los Angeles Times* [reported](#):

Just days before the president appointed Kenneth I. Chenault, chairman and chief executive of American Express, to the council, the company announced a massive restructuring that closed a facility in North Carolina and eliminated 550 jobs, or about 1% of the company's workforce. At the same time, American Express announced it had made \$1.1 billion in the fourth quarter of 2010, up 48% from the same period the previous year...

Jim McNerney, chief executive of Boeing, shrank the company's California operations because of the end of the space shuttle program and defense cutbacks. In January, Boeing said it was cutting 1,100 U.S. jobs, including 900 in Long Beach, and has since announced further cuts in Alabama and Kansas, while adding jobs elsewhere. At the same time, Boeing reported that profits rose 20%, to \$941 billion in the second quarter of 2011.

Kodak, whose chief executive Antonio Perez occupies a chair on Obama's "job-creating" council, has been shrinking its workforce for years, particularly at its manufacturing facilities in Rochester, N.Y. Within the last seven years, the number of employees at the Rochester facilities has dwindled by over 2,000.



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Another leading concern among critics is the council's budding impulse for corporate welfare and crony capitalism, as some of the council's members have reaped lavish government benefits for so-called research and job-creation projects. General Electric, for one, was awarded \$210 million in stimulus money from the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act — and its CEO, Mr. Immelt, chairs the Jobs Council.

"We've had concerns that Immelt uses the government rather than the marketplace to drive GE's philosophy on how to do business," [asserted](#) Wayne Brough, chief economist at the national Tea Party group Freedomworks. "It feeds into a crony capitalist kind of mentality that isn't actually the best way to generate economic growth."

But despite such bounteous government luxury, GE has shut down 31 U.S. locations and cut 22,000 jobs in the last four years. Further, the nation's largest corporation has slashed wages for nonunion employees, while offering less comprehensive health plans and eliminating pensions for new employees. "We think it speaks of incredibly poor judgment on the part of the White House to select the members of the panel that they've selected and try to describe it somehow as a job creation panel," said Chris Townsend, a political action director of a labor union representing 3,500 GE workers.

General Electric has also shipped many segments of its operations overseas, which has resulted in thousands of American jobs being converted to foreign jobs. Indeed, no U.S. company has gone global more progressively than GE, as the company's self-proclaimed globalist CEO stands at the forefront of American outsourcing. GE has become so globalized that more than half of its 300,000-strong workforce [lodges](#) overseas, and 60 percent of the company's revenue is foreign — 30 percent more, or double, what it was before Immelt took hold of the company.

The *Wall Street Journal* [reported](#):

GE has created more jobs overseas in the last decade than it did at home. GE employs more people outside the U.S. than within the country. Its U.S. employment dropped by 16% over the previous decade to 133,000 jobs at the end of last year while overseas employment fell by 2,000 jobs to 152,000. The company moved some of its avionics business, which develops electronic systems that run airplanes, into a joint venture with a Chinese company that has its headquarters in Shanghai.

During one of Obama's countless "jobs speeches," this one being to hawk his American Jobs Act, he expressed his desire to see more products branded with "Made in America." Of course, ironically, during the speech, none other than Jeffrey Immelt, the great American outsourcer, retained a chair right next to the President's wife.

Photo: President Barack Obama salutes as he walks down the steps of Air Force One upon his arrival at Pittsburgh International Airport in Pittsburgh, Tuesday, Oct. 11, 2011.: AP Images



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