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**From:** sbwhoeop( )  
**Sent:** Monday, February 15, 2010 6:57 PM  
**To:** H  
**Subject:** Podesta

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## **Podesta: W.H. 'lost' health narrative**

**By:** Andy Barr

**February 15, 2010 03:03 PM EST**

John Podesta, the president of the Center for American Progress who led Barack Obama's presidential transition, acknowledges the White House has been unable to successfully drive the debate on health care reform.

"They lost the narrative," Podesta told the Financial Times. "They lost the perspective of how all of the activity they were engaged in was knit together."

In a video interview posted on the newspaper's website Monday, Podesta also bemoaned the present political climate in Washington and expressed frustration with inability of the White House and Congress to advance the president's agenda.

"Change is hard in America. We've all learned that over the last year," said the former White House chief of staff under Bill Clinton. "There is real frustration amongst independent voters, and anger amongst independent voters."

Voters have become discouraged, Podesta said, by seeing "no spirit in which people were having a

reasonable conversation” during the health care debate and from “the last twist and turns on health care, the special deals that had to be made in the Senate to get the 60 votes.”

Asked how he would rate the health of the American political system, he responded simply: “Sucks.”

“It feels like a very frustrated country, a country frustrated with the inability of Washington to do anything to get the economy going again, to get jobs going again,” he said. “And I think that there is tremendous anger [and] frustration about the inability to improve people’s lives.”

Republicans also have shown little ability to raise the level of debate, Podesta suggested.

Obama’s “not dealing with the party of Lincoln. He’s dealing with the party of Palin,” Podesta said, referring to Sarah Palin, the former Alaska governor who was the 2008 GOP vice presidential nominee.



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