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Opinion wavers on president's speech

By [AUSTEN HUFFORD](#) [PRINT](#) (/PRINT/64715) | [E-MAIL](#) (/FORWARD?PATH=NODE/64715) | [LETTER TO THE EDITOR](#) (/LETTERS) (/PEOPLE/AHUFFORD/AUSTEN_HUFFORD), For the Daily and [HALEY GOLDBERG](#) (/PEOPLE/HSGOLD/HALEY_GOLDBERG), Daily News Editor
Published January 29, 2012

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“If we could manage to get free of Boehner or get some more defense, we could maybe make some progress.”

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While the crowd was largely comprised of Obama supporters, a group of about 25 vocalizing a variety of complaints against President Obama protested outside the field house during his speech.

While the University’s chapter of College Republicans decided not to participate in the protest, some members of the official branches of the Republican Party in the state came out to demonstrate their opposition toward the president.

Norm Shinkle, chair of the Republican Party in Ingham County, said there were people from multiple counties around Michigan protesting against Obama’s policies.

“We just want our president and his friends to know that there are some people who think he hasn’t done a very good job and that he shouldn’t get reelected,” Shinkle said.

Multiple student protesters said they did not approve of Obama’s economic policies, but they were not against Obama’s presence at the University.

LSA junior Matt Jones, the student coordinator of the protest, said while it was an honor to have the president speak at the University, he protested to represent the percentage of Michigan residents that “completely disagree with the direction the president is taking the country.”

Engineering freshman Sam Shrago agreed with Jones, adding that he feels the president’s policies have hurt businesses and decreased job opportunities.

“We respect the office of the presidency, but we just believe he’s done a terrible job and he’s killing businesses and killing jobs,” Shrago said.

Jones added that protestors did not intend to “take cheap shots at President Obama,” referring specifically to the actions of protesters toward Republican House Majority Leader Eric Cantor, when [he spoke at the University in October](#) (/news/protests-erupt-response-cantor-visit). In the middle of Cantor’s speech, protesters associated with the Occupy movement stood up and turned their backs to Cantor.

The protesters outside of Obama’s speech included those who were anti-abortion, anti-fracking,

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anti-Israel and Tea Party members. LSA sophomore Joe Lipa, events chair of Students for Life, an anti-abortion advocacy group, said he was frustrated that the issue of abortion has become less of a prominent issue of national debate.

“We’re seeing unprecedented attacks both on the unborn and also on religious freedoms,” Lipa said.

While most of the protesters left after the majority of ticket holders entered the field house, three people showed up to protest hydraulic fracturing – the process of inserting water and chemicals in the ground to extract natural gas –in Michigan when attendees left the event.

LuAnne Kozma, cofounder of Ban Michigan Fracking, said her group aims to ban fracking completely since it allows dangerous chemicals to enter the groundwater supply.

“We already know that fracking isn’t safe and that it is never going to be safe,” Kozma said.

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