

Oh noes, not a president who supports outsourcing!

By [Steve Thorngate](#)

June 26, 2012

This new ad from the Obama campaign claims that if Romney wins he'll be an "outsourcer-in-chief":

And here I thought we already had one of those. President Obama didn't run a private equity firm that shut down American workplaces. But he has signed [several free trade deals](#) as president, and he's [pursuing a major multilateral agreement](#)—and with a lack of transparency that [has some Democratic senators upset](#).

No surprise there, Obama's past criticisms of NAFTA aside. For many years now, it's been a given that only relatively steadfast supporters of free trade are getting anywhere near the presidency, whatever their party. And while there's a whole endless debate about the overall pros and cons, it's a simple fact that opening up global trade enables U.S. companies to outsource jobs. A president's impact on outsourcing may take a couple more steps than that of a business executive—pretty sure White House and executive agency staff still work right there in Washington, not over in Bangalore—but this impact is massive in scale.

Of course, the point isn't that President Romney would outsource his own staff, or that he'd cushion his pay cut by moonlighting for Bain Capital, or even that he'd be yet more hawkish on free trade than Obama is. The ad exists because "outsourcer-in-chief" is a slick and politically fertile line, packed with the vague threat of Romney's professional past. But it's pretty disingenuous for Obama's people to imply that Romney might potentially do in the future what Obama is actually doing now.