

12th Military Member Tied To Scandal

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Secret Service prostitution scandal grew Monday to include a 12th member of the U.S. military as the Pentagon suspended the security clearances of all the military personnel who have been implicated. The Secret Service has also taken action against 12 of its employees.

Three Defense Department officials said the 12th military person involved was in Colombia in advance of President Barack Obama's arrival for the Summit of the Americas and was assigned to the White House Communications Agency, a military unit that provides secure communications for the president. The defense officials, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because the investigation is ongoing, said he is an enlisted man. One of the officials said he is in the Army.

Another of the officials said the soldier has been relieved of his duties at the White House.

Meanwhile, the White House still faced fire Monday because of the prostitution scandal. It moved anew to keep itself at arm's length in two ways. Led by its top lawyer, the White House internally investigated and then ruled out misconduct by the White House staff members who helped arrange the president's trip ahead of his arrival in Colombia. Obama's chief spokesman, Jay Carney, sought to make clear that the "White House Communications Agency," which has now been implicated by the widening scandal, is a military unit and not a White House one.

Commission Rejects Police Chief's Resignation

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — The Sanford City Commission rejected the resignation of the police chief harshly criticized for his handling of the Trayvon Martin case.

The commissioners voted 3-2 Monday to reject the resignation of Bill Lee. The majority blamed the uproar surrounding Martin's death on outsiders.

Police did not initially charge 28-year-old George Zimmerman, a neighborhood watch volunteer who says he shot the 17-year-old Martin in self-defense.

Florida law gives people broad leeway to use lethal force if they believe their lives are in grave danger. The Feb. 26 shooting sparked protests nationwide, as well as debates about the laws and race. Martin was black; Zimmerman is the son of a white father and Hispanic mother.

Lee temporarily stepped down as police chief on March 22, saying he wanted to let tensions cool.

Romney Supports Low Student Loan Rates

ASTON, Pa. (AP) — Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney on Monday embraced a student loan proposal that President Barack Obama is selling on the campaign trail and refused to endorse Sen. Marco Rubio's conservative immigration plan aimed at helping young illegal immigrants.

The two policy positions signaled an effort by Romney to move to the political center as he works to court critical general election swing voters — including young voters and Hispanic voters — after a brutal primary fight.

"I think young voters in this country have to vote for me if they're really thinking of what's in the best interest of the country and what's in their personal best interest," Romney said as he stood next to Rubio, R-Fla., and answered reporters' questions for the first time since effectively securing the GOP presidential nomination.

House Republicans oppose legislation to temporarily extend low-interest rates for student loans. Obama has been pushing Congress for the extension and planned a three-state tour this week to warn students of the potential financial catastrophe they will face if Congress fails to act.

Romney refused to embrace a Rubio proposal that would allow young illegal immigrants to remain in the United States to work or study. He did say there were provisions to "commend" it and that his campaign would "study the issue."

Supreme Court To Consider Ariz. Crackdown

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court will referee another major clash between the Obama administration and the states, this one over Arizona's crackdown on illegal immigrants. The case could add fuel to the partisan split over tough state immigration laws backed by Republicans but challenged by the administration.

Like last month's arguments over President Barack Obama's health care overhaul, the immigration case is expected to be decided at the end of June.

Wednesday's arguments will focus on whether states can adopt their own immigration measures to deal with an estimated 11 million illegal immigrants, or whether the federal government has almost exclusive authority in the area of immigration.

Arizona was the first of a half-dozen states to enact laws intended to drive illegal immigrants elsewhere, a policy known as "attrition by enforcement." Even where blocked by courts, these laws have already had an impact on farm fields and school classrooms as fewer immigrants showed up.

Edwards' Former Aide Takes Witness Stand

GREENSBORO, N.C. (AP) — A former aide to John Edwards has taken the witness stand in his criminal trial to testify about the ex-senator's role in allegedly violating campaign finance laws to cover up an extra-marital affair.

Andrew Young was the first witness called by prosecutors Monday as they began making their case that Edwards masterminded a conspiracy to use nearly \$1 million in secret payments from two wealthy donors to help hide his pregnant mistress as he sought the White House in 2008.

Young recounted meeting the woman, Rielle Hunter, as she travelled with Edwards in 2006. Young also introduced Edwards to Rachel "Bunny" Mellon, an heiress who provided much of the money at issue.

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Poor Economy Worsens Social Security's Outlook

BY STEPHEN OHLEMACHER AND RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — High energy prices and an economy that has been slow to rebound are worsening Social Security's finances, shortening the life of the trust funds that support the program by three years, the government said Monday.

Those trust funds will now run dry in 2033, according to a report issued by the trustees that oversee the massive retirement and disability program.

Medicare's hospital insurance fund is projected to run out of money in 2024, which is unchanged from last year. The trustees, however, said Medicare spending continues to rise.

Congress enacted a 2 percent cut in Medicare last year, which is the main reason the trust fund exhaustion date did not advance.

If the Social Security and Medicare funds ever become exhausted, the nation's two biggest benefit programs would collect only enough money in payroll taxes to pay partial benefits.

The trustees said in their annual report that Congress should address the programs as soon as possible, but no action is likely before the November election.

"Lawmakers should not delay addressing the long-run financial challenges facing Social Security and Medicare," the trustees wrote. "If they take action sooner rather than later, more options and more time will be available to phase in changes so that the public has adequate time to prepare."

Social Security's finances worsened in part because high energy prices suppressed wages, a trend the trustees see as continuing. The trustees said they expect workers to

work fewer hours than previously projected, even after the economy recovers.

This year's cost-of-living-adjustment, or COLA, was also higher than expected. That was good news for seniors, who saw their benefits increase by 3.6 percent, but it drained more resources from Social Security.

The trustees project a 1.8 percent COLA for next year, though the actual amount won't be set until October.

Social Security is split into two funds — one for retirement and survivor benefits and one for disability. The retirement fund is projected to run out of money in 2035 while the disability fund is projected to run dry in 2016.

The trustees who oversee Social Security are urging Congress to shore up the disability system by reallocating money from the retirement program, just as lawmakers did in 1994.

Combined, the two funds will last until 2033. If they run dry, payroll taxes would cover about 75 percent of benefits.

"This year's trustees report contains troubling but not unexpected projections about Social Security's finances," said Social Security Commissioner Michael J. Astrue. "It once again emphasizes that Congress needs to act to ensure the long-term solvency of this important program, and needs to act within four years to avoid automatic cuts to people receiving disability benefits."

The trustees also warned that their own Medicare projections could be too rosy. Based on current law, they assume cuts in payments to doctors that Congress routinely waives will actually take place. They also assume President Barack Obama's health care law will squeeze the full amount of its \$500 billion cuts from the program.

Social Security and Medicare

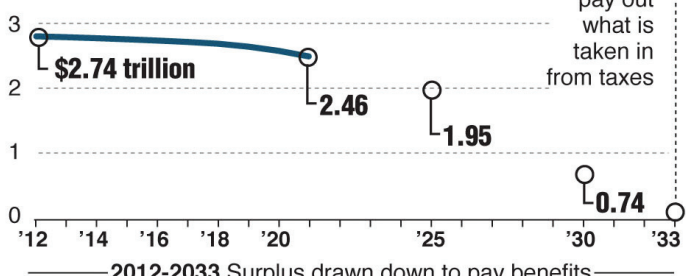
Unless reforms are made, the two biggest U.S. benefit programs will exhaust their trust funds sooner than had previously been projected.

Social Security

New analysis anticipates that the Social Security Trust Fund (surplus) will be depleted by 2033, not 2036; year-end assets, in trillions

2033

Surplus exhausted; can only pay out what is taken in from taxes

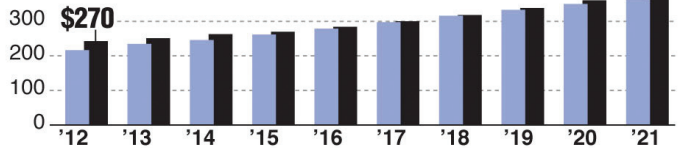


Year	Surplus (trillions)
'12	\$2.74
'20	2.46
'25	1.95
'30	0.74
'33	0.74

2012-2033 Surplus drawn down to pay benefits

Medicare

Medicare Trust Fund will be depleted by 2024, as noted last year; projected cash flow for the federal hospital insurance for seniors\*



Year	Projected income (billions)	Projected expenses (billions)
'12	\$270	
'13		
'14		
'15		
'16		
'17		
'18		
'19		
'20		
'21		\$431

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\*Also known as Part A; helps pay for hospital, home health, skilled nursing facility, hospice

Source: Social Security Administration, 2012 Annual Report of the Board of Trustees

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