

Agenda On The Line

Obama's Domestic Goals Face Big Tests This Week

BY JULIE PACE

AP White House Correspondent

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama's second-term agenda will be robustly tested this week, with gun control and immigration in the spotlight on Capitol Hill and the White House releasing his long-delayed budget blueprint. In a taste of what lies ahead, Democratic gun legislation arrived on the Senate floor Monday — facing an aggressive Republican effort to block it.

In an era of deep partisanship and divided government, Obama knows he won't get everything he wants on the three big issues as he seeks to capitalize on the national support that brought him re-election. But the scope of his victories or defeats on these issues will at least in part define his legacy and determine how much political capital he retains for his final four years in office.

"This is his best chance to set up the next 3 1/2 years where he's the pace car," said Sara Taylor Fagen, who served as political director for President George W. Bush.

But much of what happens during this pivotal period is out of the president's direct control. Members of Congress will largely determine whether his proposals to deal with gun ownership, revamp broken immigration laws and reduce the federal budget deficit gain traction.

Lawmakers, back in Washington after a two-week recess, are expected to take significant steps on some of the issues this week. A bipartisan group of senators could unveil highly anticipated immigration legislation by the end of the week. And Democrats brought a gun-control bill to the Senate floor Monday afternoon amid a threat from conservative Republicans to use delaying tactics to prevent formal debate from even beginning.

Obama himself flew to Connecticut for a new gun-control speech, and he was bringing relatives of Newtown shooting victims back to Washington on Air Force One to lobby members of Congress.

In the midst of all that, Obama will release his 2014 budget, which already is drawing opposition from both parties ahead of its Wednesday publication. Republicans oppose



Obama

Obama's calls for new tax hikes, and many of the president's fellow Democrats balk at his proposals for smaller annual increases in Social Security and other federal benefit programs.

The White House tried to play down the significance of the week's overlapping events to the president's broader objectives, with Obama spokesman Jay Carney saying the administration is always trying to move forward on "the business of the American people."

Said Carney: "Every one of these weeks is full of the possibility for progress on a range of fronts."

But Obama's advisers know the window for broad legislative victories is narrower for a second-term president. Political posturing is already underway for the 2014 midterm elections, which will consume Congress next year. And once those votes for a new Congress are cast, Washington's attention turns to the race to succeed Obama.

Patrick Griffin, who served as White House legislative director under President Bill Clinton, said Obama's legislative efforts this year are likely to be the "sum and substance" of his second-term agenda.

"I think it would be very tough to put another item on the agenda on his own terms," said Griffin, adding that unexpected events could force other issues to the fore.

On both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue, the outcome of the debate over gun measures is perhaps the most uncertain. The White House and Congress had little appetite for tackling the emotional issue during Obama's first term, but December's horrific elementary school massacre in Connecticut thrust gun control to the forefront of the president's second-term agenda.

If a bill does reach Obama's desk this year, it will be far weaker than what he first proposed. An assault weapons ban appears all but dead, and a prohibition on ammunition magazines carrying over 10 rounds, also supported by the president, seems unlikely to survive.

The White House is largely pinning its hopes on a significant expansion of background checks for gun buyers, but the prospects for such a measure are far from certain, despite widespread public support. The best chance at a deal appears to rest on eleventh-hour talks between Republican Sen. Pat Toomey of Pennsylvania and conservative Democratic Sen. Joe Manchin of West Virginia.

Obama focused his efforts Monday on building public support for the legislation and tapping into the emotions of the Newtown shooting during an evening event in Hartford.

The White House is far more confident about the prospects for a sweeping immigration deal that could provide a pathway to citizenship for millions of people who now are in the country, tighten border security and crack down on businesses that employ people illegally. But the president is treading carefully on the sensitive issues, wary of disrupting a bipartisan Senate working group that has been laboriously crafting a bill.

The group of four Republicans and four Democrats could unveil that legislation as early as this week, a pivotal development that would open months of debate. While the growing political power of Hispanics may have softened the ground for passage, significant hurdles remain.

Looming over Obama's entire domestic agenda is the economy, including the deficit deal that has long eluded him. The budget Obama will release Wednesday proposes spending cuts and revenue increases that would project \$1.8 trillion in deficit reductions over 10 years.

That would replace \$1.2 trillion in automatic spending cuts that are poised to take effect over the next 10 years if Congress and the president don't come up with an alternative.

Seeking to soften bipartisan opposition to his budget proposals, Obama will dine Wednesday night with a dozen Republican senators, part of the broader charm offensive he launched in recent weeks.

North Korean Bluster Stirs Worries In Japan

TOKYO (AP) — It's easy to write off North Korea's threats to strike the United States with a nuclear-tipped missile as bluster: it has never demonstrated the capability to deploy a missile that could reach the Pacific island of Guam, let alone the mainland U.S.

But what about Japan?

Though it remains a highly unlikely scenario, Japanese officials have long feared that if North Korea ever decides to play its nuclear card it has not only the means but several potential motives for launching an attack on Tokyo or major U.S. military installations on Japan's main island. And while a conventional missile attack is far more likely, Tokyo is taking North Korea's nuclear rhetoric seriously.

On Monday, amid reports North Korea is preparing a missile launch or another nuclear test, Japanese officials said they have stepped up measures to ensure the nation's safety. Japanese media reported over the weekend that the defense minister has put destroyers with missile interception systems on alert to shoot down any missile or missile debris that appears to be headed for Japanese territory.

"We are doing all we can to protect the safety of our nation," said chief Cabinet spokesman Yoshihide Suga, though he and Ministry of Defense officials refused to confirm the reports about the naval alert, saying they do not want to "show their cards" to North Korea.

Syria: Suicide Attacker Detonates Car Bomb

DAMASCUS, Syria (AP) — A suicide car bomber struck Monday in the financial heart of Syria's capital, killing at least 15 people, damaging the nearby central bank and incinerating cars and trees in the neighborhood.

The attack was the latest in a recent series of bombings to hit Damascus in the civil war, slowly closing in on President Bashar Assad's base of power in the capital. Rebel fighters have chipped away at the regime's hold in northern and eastern Syria, as well as making significant gains in the south, helped in part by an influx of foreign-funded weapons.

The blast was adjacent Sabaa Bahrat Square — near the state-run Syrian Investment Agency, the Syrian Central Bank and the Finance Ministry — and dealt a symbolic blow to the nation's ailing economy.

In the early days of the 2-year-old uprising, the grandiose roundabout was home to huge pro-regime demonstrations with a gigantic poster of Assad hung over the central bank headquarters.

The area was a very different scene Monday.

Push To Arm School Personnel May Be Stalling

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (AP) — When a gunman killed 26 children and staff at a Connecticut grade school, Missouri state Rep. Mike Kelley quickly proposed legislation that would allow trained teachers to carry hidden guns into the classroom as a "line of defense" against attackers.

Similar bills soon proliferated in Republican-led states as the National Rifle Association called for armed officers in every American school.

Yet less than four months later, the quest to put guns in schools has stalled in many traditionally gun-friendly states after encountering opposition from educators, reluctance from some governors and ambivalence from legislative leaders more focused on economic initiatives.

The loss of momentum highlights how difficult it can be to advance any gun legislation, whether to adopt greater restrictions or expand the rights to carry weapons.

Since the Dec. 14 shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Conn., legislators in at least four states — Connecticut, Colorado, Maryland and New York — have passed significant gun-control measures. The Newtown attack came less than five months after a gunman killed 12 people and injured 70 at a Colorado movie theater.

Annette Funicello Dies At 70 After Battle With MS

NEW YORK (AP) — Annette Funicello, who became a child star as a perky, cute-as-a-button Mouseketeer on "The Mickey Mouse Club" in the 1950s, then teamed up with Frankie Avalon in a string of '60s fun-in-the-sun movies with titles like "Beach Blanket Bingo" and "Bikini Beach," died Monday. She was 70.

She died at Mercy Southwest Hospital in Bakersfield, Calif., of complications from multiple sclerosis, the Walt Disney Co. said.

Funicello stunned fans and friends in 1992 with the announcement about her ailment. Yet she was cheerful and upbeat, grappling with the disease with a courage that contrasted with her lightweight teen image of old.

Though she was mostly out of the public eye for many years, she was seemingly never forgotten.

"She will forever hold a place in our hearts as one of Walt Disney's brightest stars, delighting an entire generation of baby boomers with her jubilant personality and endless talent," said Bob Iger, Disney chairman and CEO.

We want to make you a loan!

\$100 - \$3000

GENTRY FINANCE

228 Capital • Yankton
605-665-7955

CONVENIENT LOAN

1818 Broadway Suite D-1 • Yankton
605-665-1640

You don't have to face your problems alone.

F|E
-c|c-
Family
Education and
Counseling
Center, Inc.

1700 Burleigh St. • Yankton, SD
(605) 260-9284 • www.feccinc.com
A United Way & Volunteer Services Agency

Out On The Town

Don't Miss Our
**All-You-Can-Eat
Broasted Chicken
& Pollock Buffet
With Salad Bar**

**Every
Wednesday
5 to 9pm**

**Joe's
Substation**

Rural Lesterville • 605-364-7414



Check Out Our Daily Noon
Lunches ~ Call Ahead
for Noon Meetings
Try Our Homemade Pizza!

April 12 Happy Ending
April 13 Flat Broke Band
April 19 Rude Band
April 20 Royce & Jake

**APRIL 5, 6, 7
OZ - THE GREAT
& POWERFUL**

Fri. 7:30PM • Sat. 7:30PM • Sun. 4PM
Students *2.00 Adults *5.00

Idle Hour Theatre
Tripp, SD

**Overnight Trip To
Royal River Casino
at Flandreau, SD**

**Next Trip
April 22 & 23**

**For Reservations Call
Hennen Tours
1-800-551-5275
or 402-394-1547
or 507-530-0587**

NOW AVAILABLE!

**The
Library
Lounge**

A Unique Setting For
Your Special Event

Looking for a place to have your
rehearsal dinner, baby shower,
birthday party, or anniversary?
The Library Lounge is perfect
for any social gathering.

Call today to
reserve your date
605.661.6169

Knights of Columbus BREAKFAST

**THIS SUNDAY
8:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.**

Pancakes, Rolls, Eggs,
Ham or Sausage, Milk,
Juice or Coffee

KC Hall

2700 N. Broadway
Breakfast served second
Sunday of the month.

**Everyone Welcome!
Try Our Monthly Special!
This Month French Toast**

VFW Post 791
209 Cedar
**OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
Wednesday & Sunday**

5-7pm Cooks Choice

Thursday

6-7pm - Domestic Beers
\$1.50

5-7pm - Hamburger/
Pizza Burger & Fries **\$5.00**

Friday

Apple Glazed Pork Chop
8:30pm-12:30am
BBQ Ribs

Serving 5:30-8:00

**Saturday
Entertainment**

Clay Creek
Regular Menu 5:30-8:00

**Bingo Wed. at 7:00pm
Sunday at 6:30pm
Happy Hour M-F 4:30-7:30**

Chislic Served Last
Wednesday of Month

**BEAT THE
CLOCK
EVERY TUESDAY
AFTER 4:00PM**

Large Single Topping Pizza

THE TIME YOU PICK UP IS THE PRICE YOU PAY!

EXAMPLE: 4:00-4:15 = \$4.00 • 4:30-4:45 = \$4.50
5:15-5:30 = \$5.25 • 7:45-8:00 = \$7.75

Offer good until 10:00pm. Up to 5 large pizzas.

• DINE IN • PICK UP • DELIVERY
YANKTON MALL • 665-2525

Godfather's Pizza

**TOP-IT THURSDAYS
JUMBO
PIZZA!!**

Feeds 5-6 People

Single Topping Specialty

\$13.99 \$15.99

Yankton Summer 9 Ball Pool League



Sign Up Meeting

**Tues., April 16 • 7pm
Upper Deck**

Team captains must be present.

MMC THEATRE Presents
**NATIONAL
Players**
AMERICA'S LONGEST RUNNING TOURING COMPANY

ANIMAL FARM
George Orwell's
Animal Farm
Sunday, April 14th
7:30 pm

romeo juliet
Shakespeare's
Romeo & Juliet
Monday, April 15th
7:30 pm

MARIAN
AUDITORIUM
Tickets Available at Door Only
\$8 Adults \$5 Students

**MOUNT MARTY
COLLEGE**
1105 W. 8TH ST | YANKTON, SD | 1-855-MTMARTY (686-2789) | MTMC.EDU

OHIYA WIN! MEANS
**2013 FORD FOCUS
WINNER!**

**\$16,453
WINNER!**

**\$18,496
WINNER!**

**SPLASH
into
SUMMER
WIN!**

2 YAMAHA VXR
WAVE RUNNERS
\$23,953 MSRP

**MAY 25
9PM**

**FREE LIVE
ENTERTAINMENT
IN APRIL!**

OUTBACK BAND - APR 12
KINGS OF OBLIVION - APR 19
GO FIGURE - APR 26 & 27
21+ • 8pm • Four Winds Event Center

Ohiya
CASINO • RESORT

7 MILES EAST OF NIOBRARA, NE
402.857.3860 • OHIYACASINO.COM