

Senate Lets Debate Begin On Gun Control Bill

WASHINGTON (AP) — Congress' most serious gun-control effort in years cleared its first hurdle Thursday as the Senate pushed past conservatives' attempted blockade under the teary gaze of families of victims of December's Connecticut school shootings.

The bipartisan 68-31 vote rebuffed an effort to keep debate from even starting, giving an early victory — and perhaps political momentum — to President Barack Obama and his gun control allies. Four months after 20 first-graders and six staffers at Sandy Hook Elementary School were killed, relatives watching the vote from a gallery overlooking the Senate floor dabbed at tears and clasped hands, some seeming to pray.

Even so, few supporters of the legislation are confident of victory. Several weeks of emotional, unpredictable Senate debate lie ahead, and a mix of gun-rights amendments, opposition from the National Rifle Association and skepticism from House Republican leaders leave big questions about what will emerge from Congress. Foes of the proposed new restrictions say they would penalize law-abiding citizens and do nothing to curb gun violence.

"The hard work starts now," said Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., who brought the legislation to the floor for debate.

Still, in a Congress marked by a notable lack of cooperation between Democrats and Republicans, Thursday's vote was one of several displays of unusual rapport across party lines. In other examples not connected to the issue of guns:

Group Wraps Up Details On Immigration Bill

WASHINGTON (AP) — Democratic and Republican negotiators have reached agreement on all the major elements of sweeping legislation to remake the nation's immigration laws and expect to unveil the bill next week, lawmakers said Thursday.

After months of arduous closed-door negotiations, the "Gang of Eight" senators, equally divided between the two parties, had no issues left to resolve in person, and no more negotiating sessions were planned. Remaining details were left to aides, who were at work completing drafts of the bill.

"All issues that rise to the member level have been dealt with," Sen. Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said in a statement. "All that is left is the drafting."

Democratic Sen. Dick Durbin of Illinois said the bill probably would be introduced on Tuesday.

The landmark legislation would overhaul legal immigration programs, require all employers to verify the legal status of their workers, greatly boost border security and put the estimated 11 million immigrants living in the U.S. illegally on a path to citizenship. A top second-term priority for President Barack Obama, it would enact the biggest changes to U.S. immigration law in more than a quarter century.

Man Cuts Own Arms With Saws At Calif. Store

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Fire Capt. Art Hurtado was making an off-duty visit to a home improvement store when he encountered a horrific sight — a man had deliberately cut his own arms to the bone with handsaws.

As others screamed, the veteran paramedic used materials from store shelves to stanch the bleeding.

"I kind of MacGyver-ed it," Hurtado said Thursday, referring to the old TV drama about a secret agent who used whatever materials he could find to solve problems.

The incident occurred Wednesday inside a Home Depot store in West Covina, a suburb east of Los Angeles.

The victim of the self-mutilation remained hospitalized in critical condition as investigators tried to determine why he hurt himself.

Report: Global Warming Didn't Cause Drought

WASHINGTON (AP) — Last year's huge drought was a freak of nature that wasn't caused by man-made global warming, a new federal science study finds.

Scientists say the lack of moisture usually pushed up from the Gulf of Mexico was the main reason for the drought in the nation's midsection.

Thursday's report by dozens of scientists from five different federal agencies looked into why forecasters didn't see the drought coming. The researchers concluded that it was so unusual and unpredictable that it couldn't have been forecast.

"This is one of those events that comes along once every couple hundreds of years," said lead author Martin Hoerling, a research meteorologist at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. "Climate change was not a significant part, if any, of the event."

Researchers focused on six states — Wyoming, Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado, Missouri and Iowa — but the drought spread much farther and eventually included nearly two-thirds of the Lower 48 states. For the six states, the drought was the worst four-month period for lack of rainfall since records started being kept in 1895, Hoerling said.

He said the jet stream that draws moisture north from the Gulf was stuck unusually north in Canada.

Other scientists have linked recent changes in the jet stream to shrinking Arctic sea ice, but Hoerling and study co-author Richard Seager of Columbia University said those global warming connections are not valid.

Hoerling used computer simulations to see if he could replicate the drought using man-made global warming conditions. He couldn't. So that means it was a random event, he said.

Using similar methods, Hoerling has been able to attribute increasing droughts in the Mediterranean Sea region to climate change and found that greenhouse gases could be linked to a small portion of the 2011 Texas heat wave.

Another scientist though, blasted the report.

Kevin Trenberth, climate analysis chief at the National Center for Atmospheric Research, a federally funded university-run research center, said the report didn't take into account the lack of snowfall in the Rockies the previous winter and how that affected overall moisture in the air. Nor did the study look at the how global warming exacerbated the high pressure system that kept the jet stream north and the rainfall away, he said.

"This was natural variability exacerbated by global warming," Trenberth said in an email. "That is true of all such events from the Russian heat wave of 2010, to the drought and heat waves in Australia."

Pentagon:

NKorea Could Launch Nuclear Missile

BY ROBERT BURNS AND JULIE PACE
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A U.S. intelligence report concludes that North Korea has advanced its nuclear knowhow to the point that it could arm a ballistic missile with a nuclear warhead, a jarring revelation in the midst of bellicose threats from the unpredictable communist regime.

President Barack Obama urged calm, calling on Pyongyang to end its saber-rattling while sternly warning that he would "take all necessary steps" to protect American citizens.

The new American intelligence analysis, disclosed Thursday at a hearing on Capitol Hill, says the Pentagon's intelligence wing has "moderate confidence" that North Korea has nuclear weapons capable of delivery by ballistic missiles but that the weapon was unreliable.

Rep. Doug Lamborn, R-Colo., read aloud what he said was an unclassified paragraph

from a secret Defense Intelligence Agency report that was supplied to some members of Congress. The reading seemed to take Gen. Martin Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, by surprise, who said he hadn't seen the report and declined to answer questions about it.

In a statement late Thursday, Pentagon press secretary George Little said: "While I cannot speak to all the details of a report that is classified in its entirety, it would be inaccurate to suggest that the North Korean regime has fully tested, developed or demonstrated the kinds of nuclear capabilities referenced" in Lamborn's remarks.

"The United States continues to closely monitor the North Korean nuclear program and calls upon North Korea to honor its international obligations," Little added.

The DIA conclusion was confirmed by a senior congressional aide who spoke on condition of anonymity because the Pentagon had not officially released the contents. The aide said the report was produced in March.

Since the beginning of March, the Navy has moved two missile defense ships closer to the coast of the Korean peninsula, in part to protect against a potential missile launch aimed at Guam, a U.S. territory in the Pacific. The Pentagon also has announced it will place a more advanced land-based missile defense on Guam, and Hagel said in March that he approved installing 14 additional missile interceptors in Alaska to bolster a portion of the missile defense network that is designed to protect all of U.S. territory.

On Thursday, the Pentagon said it had moved a sea-based X-band radar — designed to track warheads in flight — into position in the Pacific.

Notably absent from that unclassified segment of the report was any reference to what the DIA believes is the range of a missile North Korea could arm with a nuclear warhead. Much of its missile arsenal is capable of reaching South Korea and Japan, but Kim has threatened to attack the United States as well.

Three Dead In Storm Of Ice, Snow, Tornadoes

BY HOLBROOK MOHR
Associated Press

SHUQUALAK, Miss. — A strong spring storm that socked the Midwest with ice and heavy, wet snow made its way east, raking the South with tornadoes Thursday, with three deaths blamed on the rough weather and thousands of people without power.

Mississippi Emergency Management Agency spokesman Greg Flynn said Thursday one person died and several people were injured after a reported tornado struck Kemper County in the far eastern part of the state.

Tabatha Lott, a dispatcher in Noxubee County, said there were "numerous reports of injuries" in the town of Shuqualak, though it wasn't immediately clear how many. Flynn also said there are reports of damaged buildings and many power outages.

The T-shaped system first swept across the nation's midsection Wednesday night and pummeled portions of Missouri, where the National Weather Service said Thursday that an EF-2 tornado appears to have damaged dozens of homes in the St. Louis suburb of Hazelwood. That category of tornado generally packs winds of 113 to 157 mph.

Derek Cody, an amateur storm chaser who works at East Mississippi Community College in Scooba, just south of Shuqualak, told The



Laurie Skrivani/St. Louis Post-Dispatch/MCT
Alan Besaw looks over damage to his garage and truck at his on Townhouse Lane in Hazelwood suburb in St. Louis, on Thursday.

Associated Press that he drove north to the small town to try to catch a glimpse of the tornado.

He said he got out of his car on U.S. 45 just as the twister was approaching the highway, only to be hit by a strong gust of wind moving into the storm that almost knocked him over.

"I kind of sat there and hoped it would cross right in front of me," Cody said. "It was just a black mass that moved across the road."

Cody said that the center of Shuqualak, a town of 500 people, was unaffected. But he said a gas station and about 10 or so houses west of the town center were damaged. He said one house was "completely flattened"

with debris blown across the road.

The line of severe storms was trudging east to soon be in Georgia, where the world's best golfers are playing in the Masters at Augusta National. The weather was warm and sunny on the first day of the four-day tournament but severe storms were forecast overnight.

Behind it in Missouri and neighboring Illinois, crews with the weather service still were assessing whether tornadoes were to blame for other damage, meteorologist Mark Fuchs said. Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon declared a state of emergency shortly after the storm swept through the eastern part of Missouri, bringing hail, up to 2 1/2 inches of rain and strong winds.



TOM FOX/DALLAS MORNING NEWS/MCT
First responders attend to injured passengers after a charter bus which tipped on its side on George Bush Highway in Irving, Texas, on Thursday. Two people died in the accident when the bus hit the concrete median and flipped.

2 Killed, Dozens Injured In Texas Bus Crash

IRVING, Texas (AP) — At least two people were killed and more than 40 were hospitalized after a charter bus careened off a North Texas highway and flipped onto its side Thursday, drawing a large emergency response as rescue crews struggled to reach victims inside, authorities said.

The Cardinal Coach Line bus was carrying mostly senior citizens when it suddenly veaved across the busy highway, striking two concrete barriers, and toppled over in the center median, witnesses said. The wreck occurred along President George Bush Turnpike in Irving, just east of

Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport.

"It was pretty bad, people screaming," said Ed Cluck, who stopped after driving by the wreck and seeing smoke. He said he popped the bus' roof hatches and helped six to eight people escape.

"It was just people stacked on top of each other," he said.

"It's just a lot of injuries, a lot of people in shock, broken bones," added Robert Hare, another motorist who stopped to help. He said many passengers were crying and appeared to be in shock as they were pulled from the wreckage.

The bus, which was carrying about 45 people, was on its way to a casino in Oklahoma, authorities said.

Texas Department of Public Safety Trooper Lonny Haschel confirmed that two people were killed in the accident. Authorities said 41 other people were taken to local hospitals, many of them suffering from fractured bones.

67th Wedding Anniversary

Mr. & Mrs. LeRoy Kuestermeyer
LeRoy and DeLaine Kuestermeyer will celebrate their 67th wedding anniversary, Sunday, April 14, 2013. They were married on April 14, 1946, in Hitchcock, SD. They have four children and 9 grandchildren. Their family is requesting a card shower. Greetings may be sent to: 1313 W. 30th St., Apt. F, Yankton, SD 57078.

3 Day Spring Spruce Up

Friday, April 12th 9am-8pm
Saturday, April 13th 9am-5pm
Sunday, April 14th Noon-5pm

Take An Extra **15% Off** ALL Clearance Merchandise

\$10 Local Delivery (Storewide)

*See store for complete details

Yankton Only **slumberland** furniture that lives the way you do

920 Broadway, Yankton • 665-3719

J.R. Comfort Discount Bedding Fair

Held Over!!

- Sheet sets
- Super soft sheet sets
- Baby blankets
- Mink blankets
- Sherpa throws
- Filled Sherpa blankets
- 7-piece comforter sets
- Egyptian cotton sheets

Friday, April 12 • 7 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Benedictine Center Lobby

Partial funds raised benefit the Women's Center's Safe Sleep Initiatives

Avera Sacred Heart Foundation

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

NEWS AROUND THE CLOCK
www.yankton.net