

2010 Legal and Public Notices

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Boehner: Fiscal Cliff Talks Are Stalled

BY ANDREW TAYLOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON — House Speaker John Boehner said Friday there has been no progress in negotiations to avert a "fiscal cliff" combination of automatic tax increases and spending cuts in January and called on President Barack Obama to produce a new offer.

Hours later, Vice President Joe Biden again laid out the White House's terms: raise the top two tax rates paid by upper-income earners and give the president authority to raise the government's borrowing cap without the approval of Congress.

"Top brackets have to go up. The top rate should go to 39.6 percent," Biden said, referring to the top Clinton-era tax rate. Obama campaigned on raising tax rates on individual income exceeding \$200,000 and family income over \$250,000, and he's claiming his re-election as a mandate to insist on it. Republicans are offering new tax revenues through closing loopholes and curbing deductions.

Biden allowed that the White House is willing to negotiate over rates — even as he pressed a new administration demand for authority for Obama to unilaterally raise the national debt and avoid a reprise of the debt crisis of a year and a half ago.

"We have to have a mechanism to stop the brinkmanship for dealing with the national debt," Biden said.

Boehner's frustration seems to be mounting. He said that the White House has wasted another week and has failed to respond to Monday's GOP offer to raise tax revenues and cut spending. Obama and Boehner spoke privately by phone on Wednesday. Boehner described the conversation as pleasant "but just more of the same."

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., was downbeat Friday about prospects for striking a deal before year's end.

"I'd love to tell you that privately it's a lot better; you know — that's just public posturing," McConnell said in Louisville at the Kentucky Fair Bureau's convention. "Privately, it isn't any better. ...I think what his problem is, he's having a hard time turning off the campaign."

On Thursday, two Boehner aides met with a top White House official in the Capitol for a discussion that Republicans said produced no progress.

These officials said presidential aide Rob Nabors insisted that Boehner agree to the president's demand for an increase in the tax rate on upper incomes, and also bow to Obama's wishes for presidential authority to raise the government debt limit without prior approval by Congress. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because the discussions were private.

Biden spoke with reporters after having lunch at a Northern Virginia diner with seven people identified by the White House as middle-class Americans who would be affected by a tax hike. Repeating an attack line increasingly used by Democrats, Biden said Republicans shouldn't "hold hostage the relief for the middle class" in order to protect tax cuts for upper-income people.

Biden said it would take "15 minutes" for a bill to get done if Boehner agreed to let taxes on the wealthy go up. It could be done "like that," Biden said, snapping his fingers.

Boehner complained that "there's been no counteroffer from the White House" since the GOP plan was delivered on Monday. "Instead, reports indicate that the president has adopted a deliberate strategy to slow-walk our economy right to the edge of the fiscal cliff."

Boehner singled out for criticism White House aides and Treasury Secretary Tim Geithner, who have said Obama was willing to allow Bush-era tax cuts for everyone to expire on Jan. 1 and automatic, across-the-board spending cuts to kick in the next day. He called their comments "reckless talk."



Boehner

Economy

Post-Sandy Jobs Data Shows Surprising Jump

BY CHRISTOPHER S. RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON — It takes more than a superstorm to derail the U.S. job market. Employers added 146,000 jobs in November and the unemployment rate dipped to 7.7 percent, a four-year low, the government said Friday.

Though modest, the job growth was encouraging because it defied disruptions from Superstorm Sandy and employers' concerns about impending tax increases from the year-end "fiscal cliff."

Analysts said the job market's underlying strength suggests that if the White House and Congress can reach a budget deal to avoid the cliff, hiring and economic growth could accelerate next year.

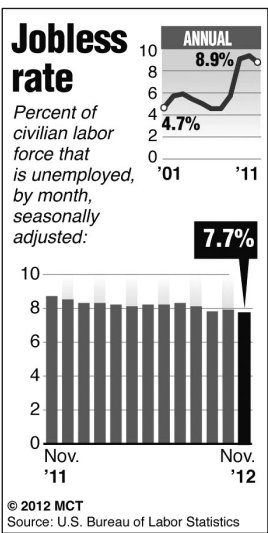
A budget agreement would coincide with gains in key sectors of the economy.

Builders are breaking ground on more homes, which should increase construction hiring. U.S. automakers just enjoyed their best sales month in nearly five years. And a resolution of the fiscal cliff could lead businesses to buy more industrial machinery and other heavy equipment. That would generate more manufacturing jobs.

"The ground is being prepared for faster growth," said Nigel Gault, an economist at IHS Global Insight.

House GOP leader John Boehner said Friday that the two sides had made little progress in talks seeking a deal to steer clear of the cliff.

The White House used Friday's mixed jobs report as an argument to push President Barack Obama's proposed tax-rate increases for top earners, public works spending and refinancing help for struggling



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homeowners.

Superstorm Sandy, contrary to expectations, dampened job growth only minimally in November, the government said. Job gains were roughly the same as this year's 150,000 monthly average, and the unemployment rate fell two-tenths of a percentage point to its lowest level since December 2008.

That suggests that fears about the cliff haven't led employers to cut staff, though they aren't hiring aggressively, either. The economy must produce roughly twice November's job gain to quickly lower the unemployment rate.

Friday's report included some discouraging signs. Employers added 49,000 fewer jobs in October and September combined than the government had initially estimated. Monthly job totals come from a survey of 140,000 companies and government agencies, which together employ about 1 in 3 nonfarm workers in the United States.

The unemployment rate, derived from a separate survey of households, fell because 229,000 people without jobs stopped looking for work and so were no longer counted as unemployed.

RECALLING THE DAY ...



G.J. MCCARTHY/DALLAS MORNING NEWS/MCT

Pearl Harbor survivor Kenneth Adams leans out as 6-month-old Kalani Parsons, the great-granddaughter of fellow survivor Charles Peters, touches his medals during the Pearl Harbor 71st Anniversary Memorial Service at Laurel Land Memorial Park in Dallas Friday.

Pearl Harbor Dead Remembered On 71st Anniversary Of Attack

BY AUDREY MCAVOY Associated Press

PEARL HARBOR, Hawaii — More than 2,000 people at Pearl Harbor and many more around the country are marking the 71st anniversary of the Japanese attack that killed thousands of people and launched the United States into World War II.

The USS Michael Murphy, a recently christened ship named after a Pearl Harbor-based Navy SEAL killed in Afghanistan, sounded its ship's whistle Friday to start a moment of silence at 7:55 a.m., marking the exact time the bombing began in 1941.

Crew members lined the edge of the Navy guided-missile destroyer in the harbor where the USS Arizona and USS Utah, battleships that sank in the attack, still lie. Hawaii Air National Guard F-22 fighter jets flew overhead in a special "missing man" formation to break the silence.

"Let us remember that this is where it all began. Let us remember that the arc of history was bent

at this place 71 years ago today and a generation of young men and women reached deep and rose up to lead our nation to victory," Rhea Suh, Interior Department assistant secretary, told the crowd. "Let us remember and be forever grateful for all of their sacrifices."

About 30 survivors, many using walkers and canes, attended the commemoration.

Edwin Schuler, of San Jose, Calif., said he remembered going up to the bridge of his ship, the USS Phoenix, to read a book on a bright, sunny Sunday morning in 1941 when he saw planes dropping bombs.

"I thought: 'Whoa, they're using big practice bombs.' I didn't know," said Schuler, 91.

Schuler said he's returned for the annual ceremony about 30 times because it's important to spread the message of remembering Pearl Harbor.

Ewalt Shatz, 89, said returning to Pearl Harbor "keeps the spirit going, the remembering of what can happen."

Schatz, who now lives in River-

side, Calif., was on board the USS Patterson that morning when the alarm sounded. His more experienced shipmates were down below putting a boiler back together so Shatz found himself manning a 50-caliber machine gun for the first time. The Navy credited him with shooting a Japanese plane.

"That was some good shooting," said U.S. Pacific Fleet commander Adm. Cecil Haney who recounted Shatz' experience in the keynote address. "Thank you for your courage and tenacity — our nation is truly grateful."

Online, Pearl Harbor became a popular topic on Facebook and other social networks, trending worldwide on Twitter and Google Plus as people marked the anniversary with status updates, personal stories of family and photos.

The Navy and National Park Service, which is part of the Interior Department, hosted the ceremonies held in remembrance of the 2,390 service members and 49 civilians killed in the attack.

praised the request and urged Congress to enact it as quickly as possible.

"This is a powerful first step," said New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo at a news conference in New York City. He said the Obama administration is open to more funding if needed in the future. "We're going to be OK, if we get this funding. This is going to be a significant asset for this state."

Cuomo, a Democrat, and New Jersey GOP Gov. Chris Christie came to Washington this week to press for as large a disaster aid package as possible. Friday's request was at the top end of what had been expected and came after Obama allies like Sen. Charles Schumer, D-N.Y., had criticized the White House following reports it had settled on a \$50 billion figure.

Christie — who endured some criticism from Republicans for praising Obama at the tail end of the campaign — joined Cuomo in praising the administration.

Syria Runs Risks Using Chemical Weapons

WASHINGTON (AP) — Growing fear that civil war in Syria could unleash the world's first use of chemical weapons in nearly three decades is based on two grim scenarios — neither considered likely but both carrying risks of civilian massacre and a major escalation of violence.

The first is that President Bashar Assad, in a last-ditch effort to save his regime, would order chemical attacks — either as a limited demonstration to the rebels of his willingness to use the internationally banned weapons, or in a large-scale offensive designed to turn the tide of a conflict that already has killed an estimated 40,000.

The second is that some portion of Assad's arsenal could be moved to Iran or Lebanon or fall into the hands of foreign fighters with ties to terrorist groups who are helping Syrian rebels.

What kinds of chemicals are in question? What weapons? News confirmed by The Associated Press this week that an unknown number of weapons in Syria were recently loaded with the nerve agent sarin brought the West's fears into sharp relief.

Egypt Postpones Voting On Draft Constitution

CAIRO (AP) — Egypt postponed the start of early voting on a disputed draft constitution Friday, signaling an attempt by President Mohammed Morsi's government to back down and give room for negotiations with the opposition as it faces mass protests calling for the referendum to be canceled.

The announcement made by the head of Egypt's election committee Ismail Hamdi came a day after Morsi appealed for dialogue even as he accused tens of thousands of protesters marching on his palace of being infiltrated by thugs. He has so far made no concrete concessions to defuse the crisis that has plunged the country into new turmoil and the two sides appeared at a deadlock.

Egypt political crisis has been building up since Morsi issued a decree on Nov. 22 that gave him absolute powers and immunity from judicial oversight.

The crisis intensified when Morsi called for a Dec. 15 national referendum on the draft constitution produced by Islamists-led constituent assembly after rushing it in a marathon session. Liberals had quit the assembly, which was already facing legal appeals to disband it. The draft came with loopholes and was infused with articles that liberals fear would pave the way for Islamizing Egypt.

The opposition has rejected talks, saying Morsi must first cancel the referendum and meet other demands.

Supreme Court Will Hear Gay Rights Cases

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court will take up California's ban on same-sex marriage, a case that could give the justices the chance to rule on whether gay Americans have the same constitutional right to marry as heterosexuals.

The justices said Friday they will review a federal appeals court ruling that struck down the state's gay marriage ban, though on narrow grounds. The San Francisco-based appeals court said the state could not take away the same-sex marriage right that had been granted by California's Supreme Court.

The court also will decide whether Congress can deprive legally married gay couples of federal benefits otherwise available to married people. A provision of the federal Defense of Marriage Act limits a range of health and pension benefits, as well as favorable tax treatment, to heterosexual couples.

The cases probably will be argued in March, with decisions expected by late June.

Gay marriage is legal, or will be soon, in nine states — Connecticut, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Vermont, Washington — and the District of Columbia. Federal courts in California have struck down the state's constitutional ban on same-sex marriage, but that ruling has not taken effect while the issue is being appealed.

Other Half Of Powerball Jackpot Claimed

PHOENIX (AP) — The second winner in last week's \$587.5 million Powerball drawing is a married man in his 30s from the wealthy Phoenix suburb of Fountain Hills, lottery officials said Friday.

The man remained anonymous, and his prize was announced by officials who said he bought \$10 worth of tickets and kept the winning slip in the visor of his car before coming forward.

The man opted to take the pretax cash option of \$192 million. Lottery officials said his wife owns half the prize because Arizona is a community property state.

"He and his wife couldn't believe it," lottery official Karen Bach said. "They checked the numbers over and over again — absolutely shocked."

Bach said the man is financially savvy and wants to take time to make a solid financial plan and set up a charitable entity to aid causes that he and his wife support.

Nurse Involved In Pregnancy Hoax Call Dies

LONDON (AP) — The news that Prince William and the former Kate Middleton were expecting their first child — joyous news for a couple looking forward to starting a family — immediately turned bittersweet with the simultaneous announcement that the duchess was being hospitalized for acute morning sickness. Then there was an invasion of her privacy by two disc jockeys who impersonated Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Charles to gain information on her condition.

By Friday, the sadness merely deepened, with the news that the nurse who unwittingly took the hoax call had died.

The royal couple quickly issued a statement expressing their condolences over the death of Jacintha Saldanha, the 46-year-old mother of two duped by the DJs, who had suddenly found herself at the vortex of a global incident. They stressed they had not complained about the hoax call, and indeed offered praise for the staff. The hospital, too, stressed that Saldanha had not been reprimanded.

And yet the week can only be described as tragic, with the happiness so tarnished by the latest developments.

Saldanha was found dead early Friday at apartments affiliated with King Edward VII hospital in central London, where she worked for four years.

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