

Russia Pushes For Reforms In Syria

BEIRUT (AP) — Days after blocking a U.S.-backed peace plan at the U.N., senior Russian officials pushed for reforms Tuesday during an emergency meeting with Syrian President Bashar Assad, promoting a settlement to end the uprising without removing him from power.

Thousands of flag-waving government supporters cheered the Russians in the Syrian capital of Damascus, while to the north, Assad's forces pounded the opposition city of Homs — underscoring the sharp divisions propelling the country toward civil war.

The violence has led to the most severe international isolation in more than four decades of Assad family rule, with country after country calling home their envoys.

France, Italy, Spain and Belgium pulled their ambassadors from Damascus, as did six Gulf nations, including Saudi Arabia. Germany, whose envoy left the country this month, said he would not be replaced. The moves came a day after the U.S. closed its embassy in Syria and Britain recalled its ambassador.

Turkey, once a strong Assad supporter and now one of his most vocal critics, added its voice to the international condemnation, with Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan saying his country cannot remain silent about massacres in Syria. He said Turkey would "launch a new initiative with countries that stand by the Syrian people instead of the regime."

New Energy Pumped Into Reproduction Politics

DAYTON, Ohio (AP) — A political firestorm over abortion and birth control spread suddenly on Tuesday. A high-ranking official resigned from the Komen breast-cancer charity after its backtracking treaty with Planned Parenthood, and Republican presidential candidates blistered the Obama administration for a recent ruling on Catholic hospitals and contraception.

The White House made a point of declaring it wanted to allay the concerns of church-affiliated employers — many would be required to provide birth control coverage to their workers under the new rules — but there was no word on how those concerns might be addressed.

The two-track drama pumped new furor into longstanding disputes that sometimes take a backseat in political campaigns because the lines are so familiar and firmly drawn. Last week's Komen-Planned Parenthood dispute stirred many women's groups that support legal abortion. And the Obama ruling touched a nerve with moderate Roman Catholics who support contraceptives but also defend their church's right to run its hospitals and other institutions according to religious convictions.

Republican presidential candidates pounced on what they considered a blunder by President Barack Obama. They believe his administration's ruling will alienate moderate Catholic voters who could prove crucial in November in Ohio, Pennsylvania and elsewhere.

There also could be political repercussions from the Susan G. Komen for the Cure controversy. The breast-cancer charity, facing fierce criticism, mostly from women's groups, quickly overturned its decision last week to cut off funding to Planned Parenthood. Planned Parenthood is a major provider of abortions, but it also screens women for breast cancer and other health problems.

Pa. Prosecutors Want Sandusky Kept Indoors

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) — Prosecutors asked Tuesday to have Jerry Sandusky kept indoors as part of his bail conditions, citing complaints that the former Penn State football assistant was seen outside and watching children in a schoolyard from the back porch of his home, where he remains under house arrest while awaiting trial on child molestation charges.

The state attorney general's office argued in a court filing that Sandusky's bail conditions should be revised so that he is not allowed outside except to seek medical treatment. Prosecutors said they opposed Sandusky's request to be allowed contact with his grandchildren as he awaits trial on 52 child sex-abuse charges.

"Several individuals from the adjacent elementary school have expressed concerns for the safety of children at their school and the adjacent neighborhood," prosecutors wrote. "Such concerns will only mushroom if defendant is permitted to roam at will outside his house."

The allegation he was watching children was outlined in an exhibit attached to the filing, a memo from a state investigator to a county probation officer that said a teacher and intern had reported concern for the children's safety.

"They advised the neighbor that yesterday they had the children outside for recess as it was a warmer day, and that they both witnessed Mr. Sandusky on his rear house deck watching the children play," wrote investigator Anthony Sassano on Jan. 26.

Appeals Court:

Same-Sex Marriage Ban Unconstitutional

BY LISA LEFF

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Same-sex marriage moved one step closer to the Supreme Court on Tuesday when a federal appeals court ruled California's ban unconstitutional, saying it serves no purpose other than to "lessen the status and human dignity" of gays.

A three-judge panel of the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals gave opponents of gay marriage time to appeal the 2-1 decision before ordering the state to allow same-sex weddings to resume.

"I'm ecstatic. I recognize that we have a way to go yet. We may have one or two more legal steps," said Jane Leyland, who was gathered with a small crowd outside the federal courthouse in downtown San Francisco, cheering as they learned of the ruling.

She married her longtime partner, Terry Gilb, during the five-month window when same-sex marriage was legal in California.

"But when we first got together, I would have never dreamed in a million years that we would be allowed to be legally married, and here we are."

The ban known as Proposition 8 was approved by voters in 2008, with 52 percent of the vote. The court said it was unconstitutional because it singled out a minority group for disparate treatment for no compelling reason.

The justices concluded that the law had no purpose other than to deny gay couples marriage, since California already grants them all the rights and benefits of marriage if they register as domestic partners.

The appeals court focused its decision exclusively on California's ban, even though the court has jurisdiction in nine Western states.

Whether same-sex couples may ever be denied the right to marry "is an important and highly controversial question," the court said. "We need not and do not answer the broader question in this case."

Six states allow gay couples to wed — Con-



WALLY SKALIJ/LOS ANGELES TIMES/MCT
Gay activists Ivy Bottini receives a hug from Rick Watts after a press conference in West Hollywood, California, Tuesday, February 7, 2012. A Federal appeals court struck down California's ban on same-sex marriage clearing the way for the U.S. Supreme Court to rule on gay marriage.

necticut, New Hampshire, Iowa, Massachusetts, New York and Vermont, as well as the District of Columbia. California, as the nation's most populous state and home to more than 98,000 gay couples, would be the gay rights movement's biggest prize of them all.

The 9th Circuit panel concluded that a trial-court judge had correctly interpreted the Constitution and Supreme Court precedents when he threw out Proposition 8.

The measure "serves no purpose, and has no effect, other than to lessen the status and human dignity of gays and lesbians in California, and to officially reclassify their relationships and families as inferior to those of opposite-sex couples,"

Judge Stephen Reinhardt, one of the court's most liberal judges, wrote in the 2-1 opinion.

Opponents of gay marriage planned to ask the Supreme Court to overturn the ruling, which came more than a year after the appeals court panel heard arguments in the case.

"We are not surprised that this Hollywood-orchestrated attack on marriage — tried in San Francisco — turned out this way. But we are confident that the expressed will of the American people in favor of marriage will be upheld at the Supreme Court," said Brian Raum, senior counsel for the Alliance Defense Fund, a Christian legal aid group based in Arizona that helped defend Proposition 8.

Santorum Seizes Early Minnesota Lead, Wins Missouri

BY DAVID ESPO
AND PHILIP ELLIOTT

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Rick Santorum seized a solid lead Tuesday night in Minnesota's Republican caucuses, bidding to extinguish front-runner Mitt Romney's modest campaign winning streak and launch a comeback of his own in the race for the party's presidential nomination.

Romney was running a distant third in returns from one quarter of the state's precincts, trailing both Santorum and Texas Rep. Ron Paul in a state he had won during his 2008 run for the nomination.

Colorado Republicans held caucuses as well, and the 70 delegates at stake in the two states combined were the biggest one-day total so far in the GOP race to name an opponent for President Barack Obama.

Santorum triumphed in the third state on the ballot Tuesday, winning a little-contested Missouri primary that was worth

bragging rights but no delegates. They will be chosen beginning in caucuses expected to draw far more competition from Romney, Gingrich and Paul next month.

Returns from 25 percent of Minnesota's precincts showed Santorum with 44 percent support, Paul with 27 percent and Romney — who won the state in his first try for the nomination four years ago — with 17 percent. Former House Speaker Newt Gingrich trailed with 11 percent.

The first few hundred votes counted in Colorado trended Santorum's way, as well, but the count there lagged well behind Minnesota's.

Romney prevailed in both Minnesota and Colorado in 2008, the first time he ran for the nomination, but the GOP has become more conservative in both states since then under the influence of tea party activists.

There were 37 Republican National Convention delegates at stake in Minnesota and 33 more in Colorado.

Santorum, a former Pennsylvania senator, campaigned aggressively in all three states, seeking a breakthrough to revitalize a campaign that has struggled since his narrow first-place finish in the Iowa caucuses a month ago.

Paul, a Texas lawmaker, has yet to win a primary or caucus. He arrived at a caucus site in Coon Rapids, Minn., in early evening to shake hands with early arrivers, and had to squeeze his way through a crowd of autograph seekers.

Romney began the day the leader in the delegate chase, with 101 of the 1,144 needed to capture the nomination at the Republican National Convention this summer in Tampa. Gingrich had 32, Santorum 17 and Paul nine.

Taken together, the number of delegates at stake Tuesday was the largest one-day total yet in the Republican race to pick a rival for President Barack Obama. Even so, the campaigning was a pale comparison to the

Iowa caucuses or primaries last month in New Hampshire, South Carolina and Florida.

Television advertising was sparse; neither Colorado nor Minnesota hosted a candidates' debate, and there was relatively little campaigning by the contenders themselves until the past few days.

The same was true in last weekend's Nevada caucuses, which Romney won on the heels of a Florida primary victory days earlier. The same pattern holds in Maine, where caucuses finish on Saturday.

Not until primaries in Michigan and Arizona on Feb. 28 is the campaign likely to regain the intensity that characterized the first few weeks of the year.

Then it roars back to life with a 10-state Super Tuesday on March 6 with 416 convention delegates at stake. Georgia, where Gingrich launched his career in Congress, is the biggest prize that night with 76 delegates. Next is Ohio, which has 63 delegates at stake and where early voting has already begun.



Remember Your Valentine



Lavish you and your loved one
this Valentine's Day.

COUPLES MESSAGE Enjoy time together with a side-by-side 60-minute Swedish couples massage, fruit, dessert and sparkling cider. \$97

WELLNESS CLASSIC FACIAL Relax with steam vapor, gentle cleansing, massage and exfoliation. Men, women and young adults will feel renewed after this 60-minute facial. \$62

CHOCOLATE SPECIALTY MASSAGE 60-minute Swedish massage with chocolate massage oil and chocolate for dessert. \$52

PARAFFIN WAX Indulge dry aching hands and feet. Paraffin bath followed by massage warms and relaxes while improving circulation. \$15 Hands or \$20 Hands & Feet

RELAXATION DOLLARS Receive a \$14 voucher when you spend \$50! Redeem vouchers March 1-April 30, 2012 on any 60 minute or longer massage, facial or waxing service. Cannot be combined with any other coupon, discount or used towards gift certificates. One voucher per service.

~Ask about our Pamper Packages~



Avera
Sacred Heart
Massage Therapy

All of our services available as gift certificates!

Call (605) 668-8376 for appointments.

Put the finishing touches on your romance.

Give her a gift of glamour!



Plus so much more!

Taste of Love.....

Steak & Shrimp Combo

2/\$20.99

Tuesday, Feb. 14th Only



BONANZA
Steakhouse

2409 Broadway
665-6394

Rita's Purse-o-Nalities

Chic & trendy styles at great prices!

Hours: 10 a.m.-6 p.m.
Monday-Sunday
Yankton Mall • 2101 Broadway
Yankton, SD • 605-260-8362
purseonalities@live.com