

GOP Senator: Hagel 'Seems Clueless' On Iran

WASHINGTON (AP) — Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham said Tuesday Chuck Hagel "seems clueless" on U.S. policy toward Iran and he urged the Obama administration to reconsider its defense secretary nominee.

In a statement, the South Carolina lawmaker stopped short of saying he would filibuster the choice if the president pushes forward as expected. No Democrat has come out in opposition to Hagel and he picked up more support on Tuesday as Sen. Kay Hagan, D-N.C., announced that after meeting with Hagel, that she would vote for the former two-term Republican senator and decorated Vietnam combat veteran.

Two Republican senators back Hagel and several others, including Sen. John McCain, say they wouldn't support a filibuster.

"Chuck Hagel is a good man, but these are dangerous times," Graham said. "What kind of signal are we sending to the Iranians when our nominee for secretary of defense seems clueless about what our policy is? I hope the Obama administration will reconsider his nomination."

Grandmother: Boy Held Hostage Seems OK

MIDLAND CITY, Ala. (AP) — By all accounts, a 5-year-old in Alabama endured an unforgettable horror: Held for a week in a closet-size bunker underground, a captive of a volatile killer, his only comforts a Hot Wheels car and other treats passed to him by officers.

Yet after being whisked to safety by federal agents in a raid that left his kidnapper dead, the boy appeared to be acting like a normal kid: He was running around, playing with a toy dinosaur and other action figures, eating a turkey sandwich and watching "SpongeBob SquarePants," relatives and Dale County Sheriff Wally Olson said.

"We know he's OK physically, but we don't know how he is mentally," Betty Jean Ransbottom, the boy's grandmother, told The Associated Press on Tuesday. She added that she feared the ordeal would stay with the child, who turns 6 on Wednesday, the rest of his life.

Meanwhile, authorities grateful for a happy ending embarked on a careful investigation. Agents swept the 100-acre property for explosives for a second day as part of an investigation so painstaking that authorities had not yet removed the body of the abductor, 65-year-old Jimmy Lee Dykes, officials said.

FBI officials have offered few details publicly about the standoff and the raid that ended it. For days, officers passed food, medicine and other items into the bunker, which was similar to a tornado shelter and apparently had running water, heat and cable television.

Lawsuit Casts Financial Crisis Blame On S&P

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. government says Standard & Poor's knowingly inflated its ratings on risky mortgage investments that helped trigger the 2008 financial crisis.

The credit rating agency gave high marks to mortgage-backed securities because it wanted to earn more business from the banks that issued the investments, the Justice Department alleges in civil charges filed in federal court in Los Angeles.

The government is demanding that S&P to pay at least \$5 billion in penalties.

The case is the government's first major action against one of the credit rating agencies that stamped their approval on Wall Street's soon-to-implode mortgage bundles. It marks a milestone for the Justice Department, which has long been criticized for failing to act aggressively against the companies that contributed to the crisis.

Dell Sells Itself To Founder In \$24.4B Deal

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Slumping personal computer maker Dell is bowing out of the stock market in a \$24.4 billion buyout that represents the largest deal of its kind since the Great Recession dried up the financing for such risky maneuvers.

The complex agreement announced Tuesday will allow Dell Inc.'s management, including eponymous founder Michael Dell, to attempt a company turnaround away from the glare and financial pressures of Wall Street.

Dell stockholders will be paid \$13.65 per share to leave the company on its own. That's 25 percent more than the stock's price of \$10.88 before word of the buyout talks trickled out three weeks ago. But it's a steep markdown from the shares' price of \$24 six years ago when Michael Dell returned for a second go-round as CEO.

Budget Battle

Obama Calls For Stopgap Deal

BY JIM KUHNHENN AND ANDREW TAYLOR
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Eager to buy time and avoid economic pain, President Barack Obama urged Congress on Tuesday to pass targeted short-term spending cuts and higher taxes as a way to put off sweeping, automatic cuts that would slice deeply into military and domestic programs starting March 1.

Obama's appeal came as Congress' budget office projected a yearly federal deficit under \$1 trillion for the first time in his presidency and as Republicans applied political pressure on the president to submit balanced budgets, pushing fiscal issues back to the forefront in Washington after weeks devoted to immigration and guns.

A short-term deficit-trimming measure would once again delay the broad and onerous spending cuts that are unpopular with both political parties, underscoring the government's difficulty adopting long-term budget policies. Obama conceded the problem, even though he has previously scoffed at temporary budget reprieves.

"Let's keep on chipping away at this problem together, as Democrats and Republicans, to give our workers and our businesses the support that they need to thrive in the weeks and months ahead," Obama said in a short statement in the White House briefing room.



DENNIS BRACK/BLACK STAR VIA ABACA PRESS/MCT
President Barack Obama makes an announcement on sequestration in the White House Press Briefing Room Tuesday. The President will ask Congress to come up with tens of billions of dollars in short-term spending cuts and tax revenue to put off the automatic across the board cuts that are scheduled to kick in March 1.

Illustrating the challenge for the government, the Congressional Budget Office said the government will run a \$845 billion deficit this year. That's down from last year's \$1.1 trillion but still high enough to require the government to borrow 24 cents of every dollar it spends. The report predicted the deficit would decline to \$430 billion by 2015, the lowest since President George W. Bush's last year in office.

However, as more baby boomers retire and claim Medicare and Social Security, deficits would move higher and again reach near \$1 trillion in

the latter portion of the 10-year window.

"We have a large budget imbalance. We have large projected deficits, debt that will remain at a historically high share of GDP and will be rising at the end of the coming decade," said CBO director Douglas Elmendorf. "What that implies is that small changes in budget policy will not be sufficient to put the budget on a sustainable path."

The slight reduction in the projected deficit for this year is due to anticipated higher revenue caused by a higher tax rate on top earners

AP: Superdome Power Issues Were A Concern

BY KEVIN MCGILL AND MICHAEL KUNZELMAN
Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — Concerned the Superdome might not be able to handle the energy needed for its first Super Bowl since Hurricane Katrina, officials spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on upgrades to decayed utility lines, according to documents obtained by The Associated Press.

The improvements apparently weren't enough, however, to prevent an embarrassing and puzzling 34-minute power outage during the third quarter of the game between the Baltimore Ravens and San Francisco 49ers on Sunday.

Two days later, officials still

had not pinpointed the cause of the outage. The Superdome's management company, SMG, and the utility that supplies the stadium, Entergy New Orleans, announced Tuesday that they would hire outside experts to investigate.

"We wanted to leave no stone unturned," Entergy spokesman Chanel Lagarde told the AP. He said the two companies had not been able to reach a conclusion on the cause and wanted a third-party analysis.

"We thought it was important to get another party looking at this to make sure we were looking at everything that we need to examine," Lagarde said.

SMG Vice President Doug Thornton told a news conference

at City Hall later Tuesday that the hiring of a third party does not signify a disagreement between SMG and Entergy.

"It's important for us to have total transparency and we have agreed among ourselves that we will exchange records," Thornton said. "We were metering the power. They were doing the same on their side. We need to figure out what the root cause of this is and fix it."

Documents obtained Monday through a records request by The Associated Press show that Superdome officials worried months ago about losing power during the NFL championship.

Tests on the electrical feeders that connect incoming power from utility lines to the stadium showed decay and "a chance of failure," state officials warned in a memo

negotiated over the New Year's holiday, the end of a temporary payroll tax cut, a slowly improving economy and a slower rate of growth for health care costs.

Meanwhile Tuesday, on the House floor, Republicans took up legislation to require Obama to submit a budget that would balance within a decade or specify when it would come to balance. The move was more of an attempt at political messaging than legislation likely to become law.

Obama was to have delivered his budget to Congress on Monday, but it's not expected until next month.

The automatic cuts Obama is seeking to avoid are part of a 10-year, \$1 trillion deficit reduction plan that was supposed to spur Congress and the administration to act on long-term fiscal policies to stabilize the nation's debt. Though Congress and the White House have agreed on about \$2.5 trillion in cuts and higher taxes since the beginning of 2011, they have been unable to close the deal on their ultimate goal of reducing deficits by about \$4 trillion over a decade.

Obama did not specify a time span or a dollar amount for a stop-gap measure, and neither he nor White House aides provided any detailed spending cuts or tax increases that could be used to postpone the deeper, automatic cuts. In order to put off cuts until the end of the fiscal year, Sept. 30, Congress would have to find \$85 billion in deficit reduction.

dated Oct. 15. The documents, obtained by the AP through a records request, also show that Entergy expressed concern about the reliability of the service before the Super Bowl.

The memo said Entergy and the Superdome's engineering staff "had concerns regarding the reliability of the Dome service from Entergy's connection point to the Dome."

The memo was prepared for the Louisiana Stadium & Exposition District, the state body responsible for the Superdome.

Authorities subsequently authorized spending nearly \$1 million on Superdome improvements, including more than \$600,000 for upgrading the dome's electrical feeder cable system, work that was done in December.

THE AWARD-WINNING PRINT & ONLINE FAMILY FEATURE

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HARVEST OF THE MONTH

ONIONS

Double Onions

Red onions are often used in salads and sandwiches because they add a bright pop of color to these dishes. Find the two identical red onions.

ANSWER: C & D are the same.

ONIONSTONIONSHONIONSEONIONS
YONIONSANIONSRONIONSE
ONIONSPONIONSANIONSONIONS
KONIONSEONIONSDONIONSWONI
ONSIONIONSTONIONSHONIONS
VONIONSIONSTONIONSONIONS
MONIONSIONSONIONSONION
SAONIONSNONIONSONIONSF
ONIONSIONSONIONSEONIONS

Standards Link: Reading Comprehension: Follow written directions.

Pickled Red Onions

1 red onion
1 dried chile pepper
3/4 cup vinegar
3 tsp sugar
1 bay leaf
1 pinch of salt
5 dried cloves

With an adult, heat vinegar, salt, seasonings and chile until boiling.

Add sliced red onions, then let simmer for about a minute.

Remove from heat and let cool completely.

Refrigerate the onions and liquid. Use with grilled meats and in salads.

Nothing to Cry About

If you've ever _____ an onion, or been in a kitchen when someone else does, you know that onions can bring _____ to your eyes.

Cutting an onion breaks down the onion's _____, causing acids inside to mix, releasing an invisible gas. This gas reacts with the water in your eyes, causing them to _____ and tears to flow.

No More Tears

One of the secrets _____ use to avoid all those tears is to chill the onion before cutting it. This _____ down the chemical reaction, allowing the chef to slice up the onion and get it _____ without tears.

Another way is to cut the onion under water. This keeps those stinging _____ submerged.

COOKING
SLICED
VAPORS
CELLS
TEARS
CHEFS

It's Only Natural

One of the best ways to get rid of "onion breath" is to chew a little fresh parsley.

Can you find your way to the center of this onion in under 30 seconds? GO!

Double Double Word Search

Find the words in the puzzle. Then look for each word in this week's Kid Scoop stories and activities.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| N | S | R | O | P | A | V | A | V | W |
| O | L | O | N | I | O | N | S | O | O |
| I | O | D | I | B | F | D | L | S | T |
| T | W | I | S | T | R | L | E | N | B |
| C | S | O | A | O | E | I | O | R | R |
| A | B | V | V | Y | C | A | G | W | E |
| E | U | A | O | R | O | R | R | H | A |
| R | L | N | Y | U | R | T | T | S | T |
| F | B | A | C | I | D | S | A | R | H |

Standards Link: Letter sequencing. Recognized identical words. Skim and scan reading. Recall spelling patterns.

Weekly Writing Corner

Chopping Onions

Students write a legend that describes why chopping onions makes people cry.

Why do onions make people cry? People cry because the onions tell a very sad story, and even the onion cries because the story is so sad. That is why onions will make you sad all day long. So, don't listen to the onions and their sad stories.

Milton, 5th grade

Once there was a Greek god who had a wonderful garden. He was very proud of his garden. One day he noticed some of the onions were missing. He stayed up late many nights trying to catch the thief. He could not find out who it was. He mixed a special potion and watered the onions in his garden with it. He said that from this day forward, anyone who cuts an onion will cry so that I can see who they are.

Ileana, 2nd grade

Chopping onions makes people cry because when onions are cut, they let out their smell. Everyone knows that when onions let out their smell, it means they are in pain and so it makes people cry with sadness.

Moire, 4th grade

Once upon a time, there was a very tragic onion who was always crying because when the little onion was growing on the farm, his parents were picked and were eaten. His little soul grew dark and sad. Soon he was the only onion left on the farm. When he was picked and then chopped, his sad soul lifted right into the farmer's face. The farmer began to cry. This is the legend of the onion and why it makes people cry when it is chopped.

Keegan, 4th grade

Once upon a time there was an onion monster. He squirted onion juice at everyone. Everyone cried.

Ryan, 1st grade

FROM THE Kid Scoop LESSON LIBRARY
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Measuring Madness

Measure two pictures in today's newspaper. What is the TOTAL area of both pictures? Now find three smaller pictures and calculate the area. Do the two larger photos have a greater area than three photos combined?

Standards Link: Math: Measurement.

Write On!

Dimples?

Why do golf balls have dimples?

Send your story to:
Press & Dakotan
C/o Noelle Schlechter
319 Walnut Street
Yankton, SD 57078
605-665-7811, ext 112

Deadline: March 3 Published: Week of Mar. 31
Please include your school and grade.