

# Obama Vetoes Keystone XL Pipeline Bill

BY JOSH LEDERMAN  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Defying the Republican-run Congress, President Barack Obama rejected a bill Tuesday to approve construction of the Keystone XL oil pipeline, wielding his veto power for only the third time in his presidency.

Obama offered no indication of whether he'll eventually issue a permit for the pipeline, whose construction has become a flashpoint in the U.S. debate about environmental policy and climate change. Instead, Obama sought to reassert his authority to make the decision himself, rebuffing GOP lawmakers who will control both the House and Senate for the remainder of the president's term.

"The presidential power to veto legislation

is one I take seriously," Obama said in a brief notice delivered to the Senate. "But I also take seriously my responsibility to the American people."

Obama vetoed the bill in private with no fanfare, in contrast to the televised ceremony Republican leaders staged earlier this month when they signed the bill and sent it to the president. House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, said Republicans were "not even close" to giving up the fight and derided the veto as a "national embarrassment."

The move sends the politically charged issue back to Congress, where Republicans haven't shown they can muster the two-thirds majority in both chambers needed to override Obama's veto. North Dakota Sen. John Hoeven, the bill's chief GOP sponsor, said Republicans are about four votes short in the Senate and need about 11 more in the House.

Although the veto is Obama's first since Republicans took control on Capitol Hill, it was not likely to be the last. GOP lawmakers are lining up legislation rolling back Obama's actions on health care, immigration and financial regulation that Obama has promised to similarly reject.

"He's looking at this as showing he still can be king of the hill, because we don't have the votes to override," Republican Sen. Jim Inhofe of Oklahoma, a vocal opponent of Obama's climate change agenda, said in an interview. "If he vetoed this, he's going to veto many others that are out there."

First proposed more than six years ago, the Keystone XL pipeline project has sat in limbo ever since, awaiting a permit required by the federal government because it would cross an international boundary. The pipeline would connect Canada's tar sands with refineries on the Texas Gulf Coast that specialize in processing

heavy crude oil.

Republicans and the energy industry say the \$8 billion project would create jobs, spur growth and increase America's independence from Mideast energy sources. Democrats and environmental groups have sought to make the pipeline a poster child for the type of dirty energy sources they say are exacerbating global warming.

For his part, Obama says his administration is still weighing the pipeline's merits, and he has repeatedly threatened to veto any attempts by lawmakers to make the decision for him. Environmental groups said they were confident Obama's veto was a prelude to a full rejection of the pipeline. But TransCanada, the company proposing the pipeline, said it "remains fully committed" to building. And the Canadian government said it was not a matter of if, but when.

## New Peace Deal Reached For Ukraine

MINSK, Belarus (AP) — The peace deal reached Thursday for Ukraine, if it holds, would be a partial win for both Moscow and Kiev: Ukraine retains the separatist eastern regions and regains control of its border with Russia, while Russia holds strong leverage to keep Ukraine from ever becoming part of NATO.

But neither side came away from the marathon talks unscathed.

There's no sign Russia will soon escape the Western sanctions that have driven its economy down sharply, and Kiev's price for regaining control of the border with Russia is to grant significant new power to the east.

But the complicated calculus of whether any side came out truly ahead can't be determined unless a single, straightforward term is fulfilled: halting the shooting and artillery salvos that have killed more than 5,300 people since April. That is supposed to happen on Sunday, at one minute after midnight.

A cease-fire called in September never fully took hold and fighting escalated sharply in the past month. Questions remain about whether either side possesses the will or discipline to ensure a truce this time.

## Egyptian Court Orders Journalists Freed

CAIRO (AP) — A court ordered two Al-Jazeera journalists freed on bail Thursday after more than a year in detention on terrorism charges in a case that human rights groups have called a sham.

If authorities aim to eventually exonerate Mohamed Fahmy and Baher Mohammed, their strategy for doing so remains murky and slow as they apparently seek a face-saving way out of a legal process that has drawn international criticism of Egyptian justice.

A solution was found for a third Al-Jazeera defendant, Australian Peter Grete, when he was deported two weeks ago to his great relief. But Thursday's decision indicated the court was moving ahead with a retrial of Fahmy and Mohammed.

The decision to release Fahmy and Mohammed brought tears of joy and relief by their relatives in the Cairo courtroom.

Al-Jazeera called the decision "a small step in the right direction" but said the court should dismiss "this absurd case" and release both journalists unconditionally." The trial's next session is set for Feb. 23.

## Fathers Demand Hate Crime Prosecution

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. (AP) — The fathers of the three Muslim students shot in their Chapel Hill, North Carolina apartment spoke with The Associated Press before their funeral on Thursday, calling on Americans to understand that they died in a hate crime.

Craig Stephen Hicks is charged with first-degree murder in the shootings Tuesday of Deah Shaddy Barakat, 23, his wife Yusor Mohammad Abu-Salha, 21, and her sister Razan Mohammad Abu-Salha, 19.

"I believe, hoping, praying hard that justice will be served and that at least he will face the death penalty. Going to an apartment, knocking on the door and shooting three innocent people — What other charge can there be? I can't imagine," Namee Barakat said.

## Oregon Democrats Urge Gov. To Resign

SALEM, Ore. (AP) — Oregon's top Democrats urged Gov. John Kitzhaber to resign Thursday, saying he cannot lead the state effectively amid a growing ethics scandal involving his fiancée, a green-energy consultant accused of using their relationship to land contracts for her business.

Senate President Peter Courtney said he and House Speaker Tina Kotek asked Kitzhaber, a Democrat who recently started his fourth term, to step down.

"I finally said, 'This has got to stop,'" Courtney told reporters after he and Kotek met with the governor. "I don't know what else to do right now. It seems to be escalating. It seems to be getting worse and worse."

The state treasurer also joined in the call for Kitzhaber to relinquish his office.

"Unfortunately, the current situation has become untenable, and I cannot imagine any scenario by which things improve," said Ted Wheeler, another Democrat. "Oregon deserves a governor who is fully focused on the duties of state."

# 28 Injured In Fiery Train Crash

BY CHRISTOPHER WEBER AND  
TAMI ABDOLLAH  
Associated Press

OXNARD, Calif. — A commuter train bound for Los Angeles derailed before dawn Tuesday in a fiery collision with a pickup truck abandoned by its driver after it got stuck on the tracks.

There was a loud boom and the screech of brakes before three of the train's five cars toppled over, injuring 28 people, four critically.

"It seemed like an eternity while we were flying around the train. Everything was flying," said passenger Joel Bingham. "A brush of death definitely came over me."

Lives were likely saved by passenger cars designed to absorb a crash that were purchased after a deadly collision a decade ago, Metrolink officials said. The four passenger cars remained largely intact as did the locomotive.

Police found the disoriented driver of the demolished Ford F-450 pickup truck about a mile or two from the crossing, said Jason Benites, an assistant chief of the Oxnard Police Department.

The driver, Jose Alejandro Sanchez Ramirez, 54, of Yuma, Arizona, was arrested on suspicion of felony hit-and-run, Benites said at an afternoon news conference.

Sanchez Ramirez was hauling a trailer to deliver produce and told police he tried to turn right at an intersection but turned prematurely onto the tracks and got stuck. He was hospitalized for observation.

The crossing has been the scene of many collisions over the years.

The train, the first of the morning on the Ventura route, had just left its second stop of



AL SEIB/LOS ANGELES TIMES/TNS  
A firefighter stands in the intersection where a Metrolink train collided with a vehicle on the tracks early Tuesday in Oxnard, Calif. The collision, which occurred at the south Rice Avenue crossing at East 5th St. in Oxnard derailed three of the passenger train's cars and injured at least 28 people.

Oxnard on its way to downtown Los Angeles, about 65 miles away, when it struck the truck around 5:45 a.m. There were 48 passengers aboard and three crew members, who were all injured.

The engineer saw the abandoned vehicle and hit the brakes, but there wasn't enough time to stop, Oxnard Fire Battalion Chief Sergio Martinez said.

Bingham said the lights went out when the train fell over. He was banged up from head to toe but managed to find an escape for himself and others where the train was resting above an indentation in the ground.

"I was just shaking," he said. "I opened the window and told everybody, 'Come to my voice.'"

Firefighters set up red, yellow and green tarps to catego-

rize people according to their injuries. Many of the 23 people who weren't injured stood nearby wrapped in white blankets.

Others were taken to several nearby hospitals and treated for a variety of ailments.

"Patients have complained of dizziness, of headaches, of lower back pain, of pains related to being bumped, thrown, hit and so forth," said Dr. Bryan Wong, chief medical officer at Ventura County Medical Center.

One patient described how he had been working on his laptop and a moment later there was a sudden jerking motion that happened so quickly he wasn't able to grab hold of anything, Wong said. He was violently tossed against a wall of the train.

The train typically would

be accelerating out of the Oxnard station past verdant farm fields at about 55 mph, Metrolink spokesman Scott Johnson said. With braking, he estimated it would have hit the truck at between 40 mph and 55 mph.

The train was pushed by a locomotive in the rear, allowing trains to change direction without having to turn around or swap engines. It's a configuration that has been criticized for putting passengers in a vulnerable position in a crash.

After such a crash killed 11 people and injured 180 others in Glendale in 2005, Metrolink invested heavily to buy passenger cars with collapsible bumpers and other features to absorb impact.

Metrolink spokesman Jeff Lustgarten said the Oxnard crash showed the technology worked.

# Republicans Offer Vote On Homeland Security Bill

BY DAVID ESPINO  
AND ERICA WERNER  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A partial agency shutdown looming, Senate Republicans offered Tuesday to permit a vote on Homeland Security funding legislation stripped of immigration provisions backed by conservatives but strongly opposed by President Barack Obama and fellow Democrats.

"We could have that vote very quickly," Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., said as his party struggled to escape a political predicament of their own making involving an agency with major anti-terrorism responsibilities.

McConnell said he did not know how the Republican-controlled House would respond if a stand-alone spending bill

passed the Senate. Underscoring the realities of divided government, Senate Democratic leader Harry Reid of Nevada initially said he wouldn't agree to the proposal unless it had the backing of House Speaker John Boehner, in a sign it would be likely to clear the House.

With House Republicans scheduled to meet privately Wednesday to discuss the issue, Boehner's office issued a statement that neither accepted nor rejected the proposal McConnell outlined to end weeks of gridlock.

"The speaker has been clear: The House has acted, and now Senate Democrats need to stop hiding. Will they continue to block funding for the Department of Homeland Security or not?" said Boehner spokesman Michael Steel.

Some House conservatives

criticized the proposal, but one lawmaker allied with the leadership predicted it might win approval. Noting that a federal judge in Texas has issued an order blocking implementation of Obama's plan to shield millions of immigrants from deportation, Rep. Tom Cole of Oklahoma said the court had "effectively stopped the president's executive action," at least for now. "So I don't think we'd run the risk of shutting down Homeland Security," he added.

Even in the Senate, though, McConnell's plan had its GOP critics.

Texas Sen. Ted Cruz, a tea party favorite and potential 2016 presidential contender, called it a mistake. "Congress is obliged to use every constitutional check and balance we have to rein in President Obama's lawlessness," he said

in a statement.

Senate Republican officials said McConnell's offer of a vote on a stand-alone funding bill also envisions a vote on a separate measure to repeal a directive from Obama last fall that shields about 4 million immigrants from deportation even though they live in the United States illegally. That measure would almost certainly fail in the Senate at the hands of Democrats.

At the same time, the proposal would eliminate an attempt by the House to repeal an earlier presidential order that allows tens of thousands of immigrants to remain in the country if they were brought here illegally as youngsters by their parents. Officials said Boehner's office had been informed of McConnell's plans before they were made public.

## Bible

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Why undertake such a painstaking process?

"Because we didn't need to," Ternes said, referring to the labor of love.

During his hour-long talk, he described the process which brought together the Queen of England's top calligrapher and the St. John's monks to produce the handwritten illustrated Bible.

In 1998, Saint John's Abbey and University in Collegeville, Minnesota, commissioned renowned calligrapher Donald Jackson — the senior scribe to the Queen of England — to produce the handwritten, illustrated Bible. The work began in 2000 and took more than a decade to complete.

In England, Jackson is considered a modern-day rock star because of his incredible handwriting, Ternes said. "Donald has created every royal wedding certificate except for William and Kate," Ternes said. "And why (did he miss that one)? Because he was working on this Bible."

Jackson showed a passion

for calligraphy while growing up in Wales. As a child he sat at art museums and imitated the calligraphy found in the manuscripts.

"At 10 years old, Donald was following the masters," Ternes said. "At age 13, he was set two goals in his life. When he was old enough, he wanted to work for the Queen of England — which he did in his 20s. And he said he wanted to hand write Scripture."

And from that young boy's vision sprang forth what would become one of the greatest productions of the Bible.

The collaboration itself is amazing and was a lifetime in the making, Ternes said. "Here we had a child from Wales who would eventually meet with monks in the middle of a cornfield in Minnesota," he said.

The connection was made in 1981 when Jackson attended a calligraphy conference at St. John's. While at the conference, he visited the abbey church — a grand structure that seats 2,000 and represented one of the first contemporary Catholic churches when it opened in 1961.

"Donald stood in the middle of the church and said, 'These guys (monks) got it. They know quality and longevity. If they can envision this, then this is where I want to be (with the Bible proj-

ect)," Ternes said.

However, Jackson showed his trademark patience by waiting until the time was right. In 1995, he asked the St. John's community how they were preparing for the millennium in 2000.

The Benedictine monks admitted they didn't really have a specific project.

"Donald asked, 'How about the Word of God?'" Ternes said. "How do you reply? How do you respond?"

The monks discussed the proposal for another three years before commissioning Jackson for the work. Another two years went into the planning and framework.

"On Ash Wednesday 2000, Donald Jackson said, 'Let's start.' And what were the first words he created? 'In The Beginning,'" Ternes said.

In a video during Tuesday's presentation, Jackson said he asked the monks if they would support his vision of creating a 21st century Bible for 21st century life.

"I asked, 'Do you want me to make the Word of God live on a page?' And (the monks) said, 'We want it,'" Jackson said.

The response started the first commissioned hand-written Bible by a Benedictine

monastery since the 1500s.

Ternes showed many of the "tools" which will ensure The Saint John's Bible will live for centuries, possibly even 1,500 to 2,000 years.

He showed black ink sticks made in the 1870s. Jackson bought the sticks 40 years before starting The Saint John's Bible with the instinct that he would someday take on such a project.

"Donald bought 144 sticks of black ink — and he used 142," Ternes said. "He paid pennies for each stick that would cost \$1,000 a stick now."

Ternes described the painstaking process of combining candle smoke, honey and egg whites to ensure the print and images would stick to the surface and survive the test of time. A special cured leather used as a quill was baked in hot sand at 350 degrees for two minutes and then given 12 to 15 cuts.

Ternes also described the use of calf skin rather than paper, with one skin creating four pages for the book that consisted of more than 1,100 pages.

The project brought together a team of 23 artists, scribes and support staff who worked together 15 years on the one work. Amazingly, a photo session represented the only time that the entire staff was together in one room.

The project used the New Revised Standard Version, which is embraced by most Christian denominations, Ternes said.

The book includes about 160 art works, Ternes said. He showed a work illustrating the Creation story and asked the audience to take a few moments to study the art and then offer their interpretations to their neighbors.

Ternes then pointed out the symbolism throughout the work, including the use of gold.

One image is purposely missing, he said. "Where is God? We would never show a picture of God, but we would show the premise of God," he explained.

An ecumenical team offered its suggestions for the book, and Jackson and the creative team emailed copies and feedback back and forth.

"They would take four to eight months for every image, and there were 160 images," Ternes said. "You can see why this process took years."

And with 1,127 pages in the

Bible, only nine corrections were needed, Ternes said.

The Saint John's Bible incorporates the Abraham traditions of Christianity, Judaism and Islam in its artwork, he said.

The Bible also includes Jesus' family tree and a golden strand of DNA, he added.

The Saint John's Bible editions could still exist 1,000 years from now, Ternes said. The collection is considered one of the greatest commissioned works since the Sistine Chapel, he added.

In the end, the historic Bible and its message are as individual as the person reading it, Ternes told the MMC audience.

"The legacy will be whatever you choose to do with it," he said.

You can follow Randy Dockendorf on Twitter at [twitter.com/RDockendorf](https://twitter.com/RDockendorf). Discuss this story at [www.yankton.net](http://www.yankton.net).

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