

Wildfire In Arizona Grows, Threatens Towns

SPRINGERVILLE, Ariz. (AP) — Bulldozers scraped away brush and trees on Tuesday to create a barrier between two eastern Arizona mountain towns and a mammoth wildfire. Crews removed brush from around homes and firefighters were sent to protect other buildings from the flames.

All the while, the 7,000 residents of Eagar and Springerville prepared to leave if the second-largest wildfire in state history edges closer.

"If given the word, then I'm gonna go," Eagar resident Gerald McCardle said. "We're already packed. We packed last night, and we're out of here."

Officials say the blaze has already burned 486 square miles and is about 10 miles outside the towns. Winds have been driving the flames 5 to 8 miles a day since the fire began a week ago, possibly from an unattended campfire.

Strong afternoon winds are already kicking up and could send the flames to within several miles of the towns, triggering evacuation orders.

Pawlenty Rolls Out Economic Policy

CHICAGO (AP) — Republican presidential candidate Tim Pawlenty pitched an economic plan Tuesday that includes deep cuts in personal and business taxes to spur the struggling U.S. economy but would add to deficits in the short term in the hope that badly needed jobs would follow.

The former Minnesota governor's plan aims for a bullish 5 percent annual growth that would balance the federal budget while forgoing trillions of dollars in tax revenue. Pawlenty's pitch assumes the benefits of his plan would kick in and eventually make up for its initial costs.

His own team acknowledged the assumptions were aggressive. One critic called it "patently ridiculous."

"Growing at 5 percent a year rather than the current level of 1.8 percent would net us millions of new jobs, trillions of dollars in new wealth, put us on a path to saving our entitlement programs," Pawlenty said in his first detailed speech on economic policy since he formally declared his White House ambitions a little over two weeks ago.

The economy averaged 4.9 percent growth between 1983 and 1987, and grew at a 4.7 percent rate between 1996 and 1999. A sustained annual growth of 5 percent for a decade would be unprecedented in modern times.

Clinton was heading for the United Arab Emirates, where she and other members of the so-called Contact Group on Libya will assess the effort to get Gadhafi to leave and increase support for the country's opposition.

NATO has stepped up its operation this week, launching a ferocious series of nearly 30 daytime airstrikes on Tripoli to limit Gadhafi's ability to fight the rebels and attack civilians.

Gadhafi responded by angrily denouncing the rebels and vowing not to surrender.

The meeting Clinton is to attend Thursday in Abu Dhabi is aimed at refining the strategy and setting the stage for a post-Gadhafi Libya despite his refusal to back down and attempts to crush the rebels.

Clinton To Persian Gulf To Plot Libya Strategy

WASHINGTON (AP) — Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton will confer later this week with NATO nations and others prosecuting an air campaign in Libya that has recently become more intense and apparently more focused on Libyan strongman Moammar Gadhafi.

Clinton is to attend Thursday in Abu Dhabi is aimed at refining the strategy and setting the stage for a post-Gadhafi Libya despite his refusal to back down and attempts to crush the rebels.

NATO has stepped up its operation this week, launching a ferocious series of nearly 30 daytime airstrikes on Tripoli to limit Gadhafi's ability to fight the rebels and attack civilians.

Gadhafi responded by angrily denouncing the rebels and vowing not to surrender.

The meeting Clinton is to attend Thursday in Abu Dhabi is aimed at refining the strategy and setting the stage for a post-Gadhafi Libya despite his refusal to back down and attempts to crush the rebels.

CDC: Food Poisonings Increased Last Year

ATLANTA (AP) — More Americans got food poisoning last year, with salmonella cases driving the increase, the government reported Tuesday. Illness rates for the most common serious type of E. coli fell last year. There was a rise in cases caused by other strains of the bacteria, although that bump may just reflect more testing was done for them, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said.

An unusually aggressive strain of E. coli is behind the current large outbreak of food poisoning in Europe, mostly in Germany. That strain has never caused an outbreak in the U.S.

The CDC estimates that 50 million Americans each year get sick from foodborne illnesses, including about 3,000 who die.

The report released Tuesday is based on foodborne infections in only 10 states, or about 15 percent of the American population. But it has information that other databases lack and is believed to be a good indicator of food poisoning trends.

More than 19,000 cases of food poisoning were reported in those states last year. That was up from 17,500 cases in 2009, and about 18,500 in 2008.

An unusually aggressive strain of E. coli is behind the current large outbreak of food poisoning in Europe, mostly in Germany. That strain has never caused an outbreak in the U.S.

The CDC estimates that 50 million Americans each year get sick from foodborne illnesses, including about 3,000 who die.

The report released Tuesday is based on foodborne infections in only 10 states, or about 15 percent of the American population. But it has information that other databases lack and is believed to be a good indicator of food poisoning trends.

More than 19,000 cases of food poisoning were reported in those states last year. That was up from 17,500 cases in 2009, and about 18,500 in 2008.

Syria Warns Of More Marches On Israeli Border

DAMASCUS, Syria (AP) — A Syrian government newspaper said Tuesday that more Syrians and Palestinians plan to march to the Israeli border, warning Israel the day will come when hundreds of thousands of refugees return to their occupied villages.

Israeli forces opened fire on Palestinian and Syrian protesters Sunday, killing as many as 23 people who tried to cross into the Israeli-occupied Syrian Golan Heights.

The article referred to Palestinian refugees in camps in Syria, as well as Syrians who fled the Golan Heights when Israel captured the strategic plateau in the 1967 Mideast war.

The Tishreen newspaper said the Sunday march was only an "introduction," adding Syrians and Palestinians were now determined to recover their territory through resistance.

It said Israel should expect 600,000 refugees to march "at any time" back to their villages and farms from where their families were forcefully uprooted.

Israel's military responded with a stern warning. It said in a statement that breaching the frontier lines "is a violation of international agreements," and the military would "operate as necessary to prevent the recurrence of similar incidents in the future."

"Provocative rioters who breach the Israeli security fence place themselves in danger and must accept the responsibility for their actions," the statement said.

The deaths from Sunday's march led to violent tensions among Palestinian factions in Syria and a gunfight within the Yarmouk refugee camp in Damascus.

The article referred to Palestinian refugees in camps in Syria, as well as Syrians who fled the Golan Heights when Israel captured the strategic plateau in the 1967 Mideast war.

The Tishreen newspaper said the Sunday march was only an "introduction," adding Syrians and Palestinians were now determined to recover their territory through resistance.

It said Israel should expect 600,000 refugees to march "at any time" back to their villages and farms from where their families were forcefully uprooted.

Israel's military responded with a stern warning. It said in a statement that breaching the frontier lines "is a violation of international agreements," and the military would "operate as necessary to prevent the recurrence of similar incidents in the future."

"Provocative rioters who breach the Israeli security fence place themselves in danger and must accept the responsibility for their actions," the statement said.

The deaths from Sunday's march led to violent tensions among Palestinian factions in Syria and a gunfight within the Yarmouk refugee camp in Damascus.

The deaths from Sunday's march led to violent tensions among Palestinian factions in Syria and a gunfight within the Yarmouk refugee camp in Damascus.

OBITUARIES

Lucille Zeigler

Lucille H. Zeigler, 94, of Yankton died Monday, June 6, 2011, at Avera Yankton Care Center, Yankton.

2 p.m. Thursday afternoon.
Visitations begin at 9 a.m. Thursday at the funeral home.

Naomi Scott

CENTER, Neb. — Naomi Scott, 72, of Center, Neb., died Tuesday, June 7, 2011, at her residence.
Her services are pending at Wintz Funeral Home, Hartington, Neb.



605-665-5700 • 1-800-529-2450

For Emergency Flood Response

We provide thorough & reliable restoration services to reverse flood damage to your home or business.

Water Removal • Sewage Mitigation • Mold Remediation
Structural Drying • Dehumidification • Deodorizing • Consulting



24-Hour Emergency Service • Direct Insurance Billing

Few Options At Hand

Obama Expresses Concern About Slowing Economy

BY MARTIN CRUTSINGER
AND CHRISTOPHER S. RUGABER
AP Business Writers

WASHINGTON — With few options at hand and his poll numbers sagging, President Barack Obama expressed concern Tuesday about the sudden slowdown in the economy but said he is not worried about a second recession and the nation should "not panic."

The president spoke about the new economic trouble in detail for the first time since a report late last week showed job growth had slowed sharply in May. He tried to reassure Americans worried about high unemployment and expensive gas that the nation is on a slow, if not steady, path to recovery.

"I am concerned about the fact that the recovery that we're on is not producing jobs as quickly as I want it to happen," Obama said at an appearance with visiting German Chancellor Angela Merkel. "We don't yet know whether this is a one-month episode or a longer trend."

Either way, there appears to be little Washington can do about it.

Federal Reserve chief Ben Bernanke, speaking in Atlanta on Tuesday, acknowledged the economy has lost momentum but said nothing to suggest the Fed was about to take any bold new action to further shore it up.

And with lawmakers fighting over the nation's budget deficit and long-term debt, there is no political appetite for a second major federal stimulus bill like the one passed by Congress in 2009.

At the same time, the president is confronted with a slate of figures presenting chal-

enges to both the economic recovery and his own re-election prospects. Just as the field of Republican challengers begins to take shape, a Washington Post-ABC News survey found that public disapproval of Obama's handling of the economy has reached a record high, 59 percent.

The poll found that Obama and former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney are tied among all Americans in a hypothetical race for president. It gave Romney a slight edge, less than the margin of error, among registered voters.

Seventeen months before the election, unemployment is 9.1 percent. When Obama took office, it was 7.8 percent. Most economists think the rate will be above 8 percent at election time next year. Since World War II, no president has been re-elected with unemployment higher than 7.2 percent.

The day brought the latest in a stream of downbeat economic news, a government report that said businesses advertised fewer job openings in April than in March. There were 4.6 unemployed people, on average, for each available job in April. In a healthy economy, the ratio is more like 2-to-1.

Even if all the open positions were filled, 10.7 million people would still be unemployed. That compares with 7.7 million who were unemployed when the recession began in December 2007. The recession ended in June 2009.

Obama's early Republican presidential challengers have seized on the economy to try to take advantage. One of them, former Minnesota Gov. Tim Pawlenty, accused Obama on Tuesday of being satisfied with a second-rate economy "produced by his third-

rate policies."

The former Minnesota governor proposed cutting taxes on business by more than half and simplifying the tax code to just three tiers, with a top marginal rate for individuals of 25 percent. The top marginal rate now is 35 percent. Pawlenty would also eliminate taxes on capital gains.

Obama and his advisers have mainly played down the souring economic news. Recoveries are often uneven, they note, especially after severe downturns like the Great Recession. The president noted that hiring had been robust for three straight months before the bleak jobs report for May.

He promoted steps the administration has already taken, such as tax breaks for business investment, and a long-term agenda of debt reduction and spending on education, infrastructure and energy research.

At a time of high public concern about the economy, discouraging data can make people wonder, "Well, are we going to go back to this terrible crisis?" Obama said. "And that affects consumer confidence, and it affects business confidence, it affects the capital market. And so our task is to not panic."

The CEO of General Motors added to the concern, suggesting Tuesday that the government stabilize the economy by coming up with a 10-year plan to handle the nation's almost \$14 trillion debt.

He said he was worried about what he called a jobless economic recovery, and said the nation is still paying for easy credit from the mid-1990s to 2007.

"I think it's going to take a while to shake out and wring out the excesses," CEO Dan Akerson said.

WASHINGTON — With few options at hand and his poll numbers sagging, President Barack Obama expressed concern Tuesday about the sudden slowdown in the economy but said he is not worried about a second recession and the nation should "not panic."

The president spoke about the new economic trouble in detail for the first time since a report late last week showed job growth had slowed sharply in May. He tried to reassure Americans worried about high unemployment and expensive gas that the nation is on a slow, if not steady, path to recovery.

"I am concerned about the fact that the recovery that we're on is not producing jobs as quickly as I want it to happen," Obama said at an appearance with visiting German Chancellor Angela Merkel. "We don't yet know whether this is a one-month episode or a longer trend."

Either way, there appears to be little Washington can do about it.

Federal Reserve chief Ben Bernanke, speaking in Atlanta on Tuesday, acknowledged the economy has lost momentum but said nothing to suggest the Fed was about to take any bold new action to further shore it up.

And with lawmakers fighting over the nation's budget deficit and long-term debt, there is no political appetite for a second major federal stimulus bill like the one passed by Congress in 2009.

At the same time, the president is confronted with a slate of figures presenting chal-

enges to both the economic recovery and his own re-election prospects. Just as the field of Republican challengers begins to take shape, a Washington Post-ABC News survey found that public disapproval of Obama's handling of the economy has reached a record high, 59 percent.

The poll found that Obama and former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney are tied among all Americans in a hypothetical race for president. It gave Romney a slight edge, less than the margin of error, among registered voters.

Seventeen months before the election, unemployment is 9.1 percent. When Obama took office, it was 7.8 percent. Most economists think the rate will be above 8 percent at election time next year. Since World War II, no president has been re-elected with unemployment higher than 7.2 percent.

The day brought the latest in a stream of downbeat economic news, a government report that said businesses advertised fewer job openings in April than in March. There were 4.6 unemployed people, on average, for each available job in April. In a healthy economy, the ratio is more like 2-to-1.

Even if all the open positions were filled, 10.7 million people would still be unemployed. That compares with 7.7 million who were unemployed when the recession began in December 2007. The recession ended in June 2009.

Obama's early Republican presidential challengers have seized on the economy to try to take advantage. One of them, former Minnesota Gov. Tim Pawlenty, accused Obama on Tuesday of being satisfied with a second-rate economy "produced by his third-

rate policies."

The former Minnesota governor proposed cutting taxes on business by more than half and simplifying the tax code to just three tiers, with a top marginal rate for individuals of 25 percent. The top marginal rate now is 35 percent. Pawlenty would also eliminate taxes on capital gains.

Obama and his advisers have mainly played down the souring economic news. Recoveries are often uneven, they note, especially after severe downturns like the Great Recession. The president noted that hiring had been robust for three straight months before the bleak jobs report for May.

He promoted steps the administration has already taken, such as tax breaks for business investment, and a long-term agenda of debt reduction and spending on education, infrastructure and energy research.

At a time of high public concern about the economy, discouraging data can make people wonder, "Well, are we going to go back to this terrible crisis?" Obama said. "And that affects consumer confidence, and it affects business confidence, it affects the capital market. And so our task is to not panic."

The CEO of General Motors added to the concern, suggesting Tuesday that the government stabilize the economy by coming up with a 10-year plan to handle the nation's almost \$14 trillion debt.

He said he was worried about what he called a jobless economic recovery, and said the nation is still paying for easy credit from the mid-1990s to 2007.

"I think it's going to take a while to shake out and wring out the excesses," CEO Dan Akerson said.

WASHINGTON — Fellow Democrats pointedly refused to defend Rep. Anthony Weiner on Tuesday, telegraphing an unmistakable eagerness for him to resign after he admitted sending a lewd photo of himself to a woman via Twitter and lying about it.

Republicans swiftly sought political profit from the New York Democrat's predicament, which threatened to deepen when conservative blogger Andrew Breitbart said he had a sexually explicit photo of the 46-year-old congressman.

His political career in extreme jeopardy, Weiner had no public appearances. His spokesman did not respond to repeated requests for comment.

On Monday, after days of denials, the New York lawmaker admitted he had engaged in "several inappropriate conversations conducted over Twitter, Facebook, email and occasionally

on the phone with women I had met online."

Alternately apologetic and defiant, he said he neither met nor had physical relationships with any of them, and added, "I am not resigning."

In fact, there is little that party leaders can do to force an errant lawmaker to quit, although House Republicans have moved decisively in the past year to purge their ranks of two men who wound up in embarrassing situations.

Most Democrats maintained an uncomfortable silence about Weiner's future, part of what several senior congressional officials described as a hope that over a few days, Weiner would reconsider his refusal to resign. If not, several noted pointedly, his district might be eliminated when lines are adjusted before the 2012 elections to account for a population shift that will cost New York two House seats.

But Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid broke the silence.

WASHINGTON — Fellow Democrats pointedly refused to defend Rep. Anthony Weiner on Tuesday, telegraphing an unmistakable eagerness for him to resign after he admitted sending a lewd photo of himself to a woman via Twitter and lying about it.

Weiner Draws No Defense From Democrats

BY DAVID ESPO
AP Special Correspondent

WASHINGTON — Fellow Democrats pointedly refused to defend Rep. Anthony Weiner on Tuesday, telegraphing an unmistakable eagerness for him to resign after he admitted sending a lewd photo of himself to a woman via Twitter and lying about it.

Republicans swiftly sought political profit from the New York Democrat's predicament, which threatened to deepen when conservative blogger Andrew Breitbart said he had a sexually explicit photo of the 46-year-old congressman.

His political career in extreme jeopardy, Weiner had no public appearances. His spokesman did not respond to repeated requests for comment.

On Monday, after days of denials, the New York lawmaker admitted he had engaged in "several inappropriate conversations conducted over Twitter, Facebook, email and occasionally

on the phone with women I had met online."

Alternately apologetic and defiant, he said he neither met nor had physical relationships with any of them, and added, "I am not resigning."

In fact, there is little that party leaders can do to force an errant lawmaker to quit, although House Republicans have moved decisively in the past year to purge their ranks of two men who wound up in embarrassing situations.

Most Democrats maintained an uncomfortable silence about Weiner's future, part of what several senior congressional officials described as a hope that over a few days, Weiner would reconsider his refusal to resign. If not, several noted pointedly, his district might be eliminated when lines are adjusted before the 2012 elections to account for a population shift that will cost New York two House seats.

But Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid broke the silence.

WASHINGTON — Fellow Democrats pointedly refused to defend Rep. Anthony Weiner on Tuesday, telegraphing an unmistakable eagerness for him to resign after he admitted sending a lewd photo of himself to a woman via Twitter and lying about it.

Republicans swiftly sought political profit from the New York Democrat's predicament, which threatened to deepen when conservative blogger Andrew Breitbart said he had a sexually explicit photo of the 46-year-old congressman.

His political career in extreme jeopardy, Weiner had no public appearances. His spokesman did not respond to repeated requests for comment.

On Monday, after days of denials, the New York lawmaker admitted he had engaged in "several inappropriate conversations conducted over Twitter, Facebook, email and occasionally

on the phone with women I had met online."

Alternately apologetic and defiant, he said he neither met nor had physical relationships with any of them, and added, "I am not resigning."

In fact, there is little that party leaders can do to force an errant lawmaker to quit, although House Republicans have moved decisively in the past year to purge their ranks of two men who wound up in embarrassing situations.

Most Democrats maintained an uncomfortable silence about Weiner's future, part of what several senior congressional officials described as a hope that over a few days, Weiner would reconsider his refusal to resign. If not, several noted pointedly, his district might be eliminated when lines are adjusted before the 2012 elections to account for a population shift that will cost New York two House seats.

But Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid broke the silence.

WASHINGTON — Fellow Democrats pointedly refused to defend Rep. Anthony Weiner on Tuesday, telegraphing an unmistakable eagerness for him to resign after he admitted sending a lewd photo of himself to a woman via Twitter and lying about it.

Republicans swiftly sought political profit from the New York Democrat's predicament, which threatened to deepen when conservative blogger Andrew Breitbart said he had a sexually explicit photo of the 46-year-old congressman.

His political career in extreme jeopardy, Weiner had no public appearances. His spokesman did not respond to repeated requests for comment.

On Monday, after days of denials, the New York lawmaker admitted he had engaged in "several inappropriate conversations conducted over Twitter, Facebook, email and occasionally

on the phone with women I had met online."

Alternately apologetic and defiant, he said he neither met nor had physical relationships with any of them, and added, "I am not resigning."

WASHINGTON — Fellow Democrats pointedly refused to defend Rep. Anthony Weiner on Tuesday, telegraphing an unmistakable eagerness for him to resign after he admitted sending a lewd photo of himself to a woman via Twitter and lying about it.

Republicans swiftly sought political profit from the New York Democrat's predicament, which threatened to deepen when conservative blogger Andrew Breitbart said he had a sexually explicit photo of the 46-year-old congressman.

His political career in extreme jeopardy, Weiner had no public appearances. His spokesman did not respond to repeated requests for comment.

On Monday, after days of denials, the New York lawmaker admitted he had engaged in "several inappropriate conversations conducted over Twitter, Facebook, email and occasionally

on the phone with women I had met online."

Alternately apologetic and defiant, he said he neither met nor had physical relationships with any of them, and added, "I am not resigning."

In fact, there is little that party leaders can do to force an errant lawmaker to quit, although House Republicans have moved decisively in the past year to purge their ranks of two men who wound up in embarrassing situations.

Most Democrats maintained an uncomfortable silence about Weiner's future, part of what several senior congressional officials described as a hope that over a few days, Weiner would reconsider his refusal to resign. If not, several noted pointedly, his district might be eliminated when lines are adjusted before the 2012 elections to account for a population shift that will cost New York two House seats.

But Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid broke the silence.

WASHINGTON — Fellow Democrats pointedly refused to defend Rep. Anthony Weiner on Tuesday, telegraphing an unmistakable eagerness for him to resign after he admitted sending a lewd photo of himself to a woman via Twitter and lying about it.

Republicans swiftly sought political profit from the New York Democrat's predicament, which threatened to deepen when conservative blogger Andrew Breitbart said he had a sexually explicit photo of the 46-year-old congressman.

His political career in extreme jeopardy, Weiner had no public appearances. His spokesman did not respond to repeated requests for comment.

On Monday, after days of denials, the New York lawmaker admitted he had engaged in "several inappropriate conversations conducted over Twitter, Facebook, email and occasionally

on the phone with women I had met online."

Alternately apologetic and defiant, he said he neither met nor had physical relationships with any of them, and added, "I am not resigning."

In fact, there is little that party leaders can do to force an errant lawmaker to quit, although House Republicans have moved decisively in the past year to purge their ranks of two men who wound up in embarrassing situations.

Most Democrats maintained an uncomfortable silence about Weiner's future, part of what several senior congressional officials described as a hope that over a few days, Weiner would reconsider his refusal to resign. If not, several noted pointedly, his district might be eliminated when lines are adjusted before the 2012 elections to account for a population shift that will cost New York two House seats.

But Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid broke the silence.

WASHINGTON — Fellow Democrats pointedly refused to defend Rep. Anthony Weiner on Tuesday, telegraphing an unmistakable eagerness for him to resign after he admitted sending a lewd photo of himself to a woman via Twitter and lying about it.

Republicans swiftly sought political profit from the New York Democrat's predicament, which threatened to deepen when conservative blogger Andrew Breitbart said he had a sexually explicit photo of the 46-year-old congressman.

His political career in extreme jeopardy, Weiner had no public appearances. His spokesman did not respond to repeated requests for comment.

On Monday, after days of denials, the New York lawmaker admitted he had engaged in "several inappropriate conversations conducted over Twitter, Facebook, email and occasionally

on the phone with women I had met online."

Alternately apologetic and defiant, he said he neither met nor had physical relationships with any of them, and added, "I am not resigning."

In fact, there is little that party leaders can do to force an errant lawmaker to quit, although House Republicans have moved decisively in the past year to purge their ranks of two men who wound up in embarrassing situations.

"I wish there were some way that I can defend him, but I can't," the Nevada Democrat told reporters. Asked what he would do if Weiner called for advice, he replied he would tell him "call somebody else."

Republicans sought political gain.

"Congressman Weiner's actions and deception are unacceptable and he should resign," GOP chairman Reince Priebus said in a written statement.

"We do not need an investigation to know he lied and acted inappropriately, we need a resignation," he said, referring to a request from House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi for the House ethics committee to investigate the case.

Speaking of Pelosi and Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz of Florida, the Democratic party chairwoman, Priebus said they either "believe members of Congress are held to a different set of standards or they believe these actions demand his resignation."

WASHINGTON — Fellow Democrats pointedly refused to defend Rep. Anthony Weiner on Tuesday, telegraphing an unmistakable eagerness for him to resign after he admitted sending a lewd photo of himself to a woman via Twitter and lying about it.

Republicans swiftly sought political profit from the New York Democrat's predicament, which threatened to deepen when conservative blogger Andrew Breitbart said he had a sexually explicit photo of the 46-year-old congressman.

His political career in extreme jeopardy, Weiner had no public appearances. His spokesman did not respond to repeated requests for comment.

On Monday, after days of denials, the New York lawmaker admitted he had engaged in "several inappropriate conversations conducted over Twitter, Facebook, email and occasionally

on the phone with women I had met online."

Alternately apologetic and defiant, he said he neither met nor had physical relationships with any of them, and added, "I am not resigning."

In fact, there is little that party leaders can do to force an errant lawmaker to quit, although House Republicans have moved decisively in the past year to purge their ranks of two men who wound up in embarrassing situations.

Most Democrats maintained an uncomfortable silence about Weiner's future, part of what several senior congressional officials described as a hope that over a few days, Weiner would reconsider his refusal to resign. If not, several noted pointedly, his district might be eliminated when lines are adjusted before the 2012 elections to account for a population shift that will cost New York two House seats.

But Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid broke the silence.

WASHINGTON — Fellow Democrats pointedly refused to defend Rep. Anthony Weiner on Tuesday, telegraphing an unmistakable eagerness for him to resign after he admitted sending a lewd photo of himself to a woman via Twitter and lying about it.

Republicans swiftly sought political profit from the New York Democrat's predicament, which threatened to deepen when conservative blogger Andrew Breitbart said he had a sexually explicit photo of the 46-year-old congressman.

His political career in extreme jeopardy, Weiner had no public appearances. His spokesman did not respond to repeated requests for comment.

On Monday, after days of denials, the New York lawmaker admitted he had engaged in "several inappropriate conversations conducted over Twitter, Facebook, email and occasionally

on the phone with women I had met online."

Alternately apologetic and defiant, he said he neither met nor had physical relationships with any of them, and added, "I am not resigning."