

**Romney Criticized For Unemployment Remark**

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney told a group of out-of-work Floridians Thursday that "I'm also unemployed," quickly drawing criticism from Democrats who said it showed the former Massachusetts governor and multimillionaire was out of touch.

Romney made the comment while criticizing President Barack Obama's economic plan to a small group of business owners and unemployed workers at a Tampa coffee shop. The former equity firm CEO told the group that he did have his eye on one particular job, however.

Florida Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz, the chair of the Democratic National Committee, issued a statement saying Romney's comments were "inappropriate and insensitive to the millions of Americans looking for work."

"This comment shows that Mitt Romney — a man who wants for nothing and whose only occupation for more than four years has been to run for president — is incredibly out of touch with what's going on in our country and around the dinner tables of those who are out of work," she said. "Being unemployed, Mr. Romney, is not a joke."

Romney spokesman Eric Fehrstrom called the Democratic criticism an "absurd distortion" of a statement that what was clearly made in jest.

**Obama, Commander Discuss Troop Withdrawal**

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Barack Obama's top general in Afghanistan has given him a range of options for withdrawing American forces as a July deadline for starting the drawdown approaches.

Obama spokesman Jay Carney said Gen. David Petraeus, along with other members of the national security team, met with the president at the White House Wednesday. Petraeus, the top U.S. and NATO commander in Afghanistan, has long been expected to give Obama multiple options for how to begin bringing U.S. forces home and at what pace.

"They discussed a range of options," Carney said. "As I think the general has said in the past publicly, this was a question of options, plural, and not option."

White House officials wouldn't divulge the details of the options Obama is considering. Carney said Obama will consult further with his national security team, including Petraeus, in the coming days, and announce his decision to the public soon.

The war is now in its 10th year. The U.S. has roughly 100,000 troops in Afghanistan, three times as many as when Obama took office. When the president sent an additional 30,000 U.S. forces to Afghanistan at the end of 2009, he did so with the caveat that some of those troops would start coming home in July 2011.

**Defense Begins Case In Anthony Murder Trial**

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — An FBI technician testified Thursday in the murder trial of a Florida mother that the duct tape found on 2-year-old Caylee Anthony's body was contaminated during testing by another technician.

Heather Seubert, who examined the tape at an FBI lab, told jurors that DNA on the tape did not match the victim, her mother Casey or her grandparents. Instead, it matched another forensic examiner who analyzed the duct tape.

The child's skeletal remains were found in a wooded area near the family's home in December 2008.

FBI lab technician Lorie Gottesman later testified that it was her DNA found on the duct tape. Gottesman, who is a forensic document examiner, said she wore gloves during her examination.

"I have no idea how it happened or when," she told jurors.

**All Eyes On NY For Gay Marriage Vote**

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) — Gay couples watched anxiously as a closely divided New York Senate started, then stalled, down the path toward a vote on whether to legalize gay marriage, a pivotal decision with national consequences that looked more and more likely to rest in the hands of just two Republican Catholics from conservative upstate areas.

One, Sen. Stephen Saland of the Hudson Valley's Poughkeepsie, is a widely respected veteran legislator who authored hundreds of crime and education laws. The other crucial swing vote is rookie Mark Grisanti of Buffalo, one of the young breed of Republicans who rode the 2010 GOP tide in a district where even many of the Democrats are conservative.

They are the two clearly undecided votes among Senate Republicans who defeated a gay marriage bill in 2009, but who may get another chance within days.

Gays and lesbians watching the every move of New York lawmakers are in the midst of a nail biter. It's a political issue that is deeply personal for many New Yorkers who are cycling through anxiety, excitement and frustration.

Albany resident Cynthia Stallard knows when and where she will marry her partner: in September in Brooklyn. Her frustration comes from not knowing whether New York will recognize their vows.

**Galaxy Flash Came From Black Hole Eating Star**

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Astronomers think they have solved the mystery of an extraordinary flash spied in a faraway galaxy, saying it came from a massive black hole that devoured a star after it wandered too close.

The awesome energy released by the feeding frenzy was first detected by NASA's Swift satellite on March 28 and was later confirmed by a fleet of space and ground telescopes.

Some scientists initially thought the bright flash was a gamma-ray burst from a star collapsing, but flaring from such an event typically lasts only a few hours.

Instead of fading, the cosmic outburst continued to burn bright and emit high-energy radiation months later.

Two separate teams pored through data and concluded that an unsuspecting star the size of our sun likely got sucked in by the powerful tug of a giant black hole much like a fly that can't escape a frog resting on a lily pad. The findings were published online Thursday in the journal Science.

**Lawyer: Claims About Shakur's Death Are False**

NEW YORK (AP) — A hip-hop mogul wanted by federal authorities on drug charges did not orchestrate a plot to ambush rapper Tupac Shakur outside a recording studio in the mid-1990s, his lawyer said Thursday.

The accusations against James Rosemond, owner of Czar Entertainment, were levied online and attributed to convicted killer Dexter Isaac, who is serving a life sentence in an unrelated murder-for-hire plot. Isaac says, according to the website AllHipHop.com, that he was paid \$2,500 by Rosemond to shoot and rob Shakur.

Shakur was hit five times in the shooting at the Quad Studios in Manhattan in 1994. He survived but was later gunned down in a slaying that remains unsolved.

The mystery surrounding Shakur's death in Las Vegas has fueled interest in the smallest of details about his life, as well as the old-school feud between East Coast and West Coast rap that some say contributed to his killing.

**Weiner Resigns Over Scandal**

BY KAREN ZRAICK AND ANDREW MIGA  
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Nearly three weeks after Rep. Anthony Weiner accidentally tweeted a photo of his bulging crotch, his final act as congressman was to attempt to resign with dignity.

He had gone from the halls of Congress to the front pages of the New York tabloids, providing ceaseless fodder as cringe-worthy evidence of his sexually charged online dalliances leaked out and top Democrats pushed for his resignation.

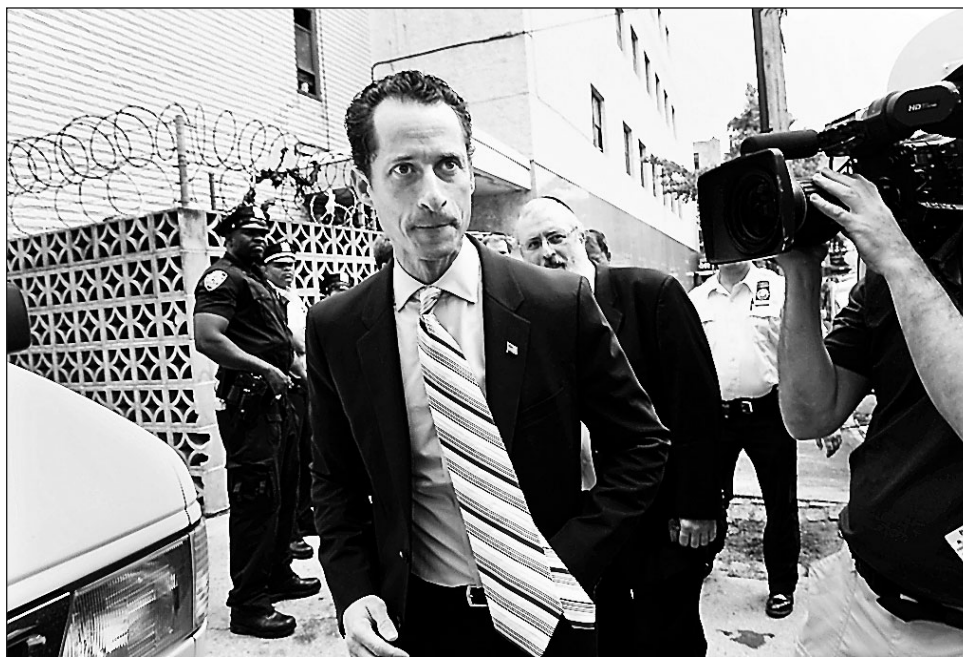
On Thursday afternoon, the 46-year-old struck a sober tone at the podium of the senior center in Brooklyn where he launched a campaign for City Council in 1992. He stood alone; his pregnant wife, Huma Abedin, remained at home while he officially ended the only career he has ever known.

But like other developments in the tawdry drama, the press conference was marked by profanity and low-brow antics. After recounting the beginning of his political career and proclaiming that there is "no higher honor" than to represent one's neighbors, he said he initially hoped to continue his work but then realized "the distraction that I have created has made that impossible." With that, he apologized and resigned.

The seniors, many of them former supporters, groaned. Some in the room cheered. One man yelled out:

"Buh-bye, pervert!"

Another jumped up seconds later and began to shout questions about the congressman's genitals. The din in the room reached a crescendo as dozens of cameras pivoted, reporters gasped and some of the seniors shouted for the man to sit down. Weiner grew slightly flushed but continued speaking. A police officer approached and told him to quiet



CAROLYN COLE/LOS ANGELES TIMES/MCT  
New York Rep. Anthony Weiner leaves the press conference he called to announce his resignation Thursday, June 16, 2011 in New York City, New York.

down for the remainder of Weiner's remarks, which lasted just under four minutes. As the congressman left the podium, the loud heckler bellowed: "Will you maintain your hot physique and your smooth sexy chest?"

The circus-like distraction had overshadowed the main event, a fitting metaphor for the congressman's career. The man behind it turned out to be a writer for the Howard Stern Show named Benjy Bronk.

Many of the spectators said the episode was a startling finale for a once-promising hometown politician.

"It was pathetic and sad," said online publisher Binyamin Jolkovsky, 42. "A guy built a

career, made it three-fourths of the way up the hill and then it all collapses."

Known as brash, liberal and ambitious, the seven-term congressman had run for mayor of New York in 2005 and had been expected to do so again. He had raised \$4 million in campaign funds so far.

On Thursday, he hinted that he would stay involved in public life in some capacity.

"I got into politics to help give voice to the many that simply did not have one," he said. "Now I'll be looking for other ways to contribute my talents to make sure we live up to that most New York and American of ideals."

He did not take questions.

**Pentagon: Relationship With Pakistan Is Critical**

LOLITA C. BALDOR  
AND ROBERT BURNS  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The U.S. must keep working to salvage its relationship with Pakistan in order to preserve security in the region and protect against potential proliferation of that country's nuclear weapons, top Pentagon leaders said Thursday.

Amid escalating tensions with Islamabad, Capitol Hill lawmakers have complained that Pakistan is not doing its part to go after terrorists within its borders, and they have pressed for cuts in U.S. aid to the country.

But Thursday Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, warned that the U.S. cannot afford to let its relationship with a key nuclear-armed country deteriorate.

"Those things that I fear in the future," Mullen told Pentagon reporters, are "the proliferation of that technology, and it's the opportunity and the potential that it could fall into the hands of terrorists, many of whom are alive and well and seek that in that region."

Anger and frustration with Islamabad has escalated in recent days amid reports that Pakistani intelligence officials arrested informants who helped the U.S. in its May 2 raid that killed Osama bin Laden.

Mullen, who has made repeated trips to Pakistan in an ambitious effort to build relations, said he has delivered no message to Islamabad warning that aid will be cut unless cooperation improves.

And Defense Secretary Robert Gates said that U.S. and Pakistan need one another, and that the lines of communication must stay open. And both he and Mullen repeated assertions that the bin Laden raid caused much consternation among the Pakistan leadership, and they must be given time to work through it.

**U.S. and Pakistan**

Highlights of recent developments:

**Late 2001**  
After years of diplomatic strain over Pakistan's nuclear program, U.S.-Pakistani relations improve after the Sept. 11 attacks; Pakistan agrees to support U.S. efforts to oust the Taliban in Afghanistan and help pursue terror suspects

**March 1, 2003**  
Pakistan agents capture Sept. 11 mastermind Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and turn him over to the U.S.

**2009**  
U.S. pledges \$1.5 billion annually in nonmilitary aid to Pakistan for five years

**2010**  
U.S. forces conduct an estimated 118 airstrikes using drones over northwest Pakistan; the Pakistani government protests, saying the strikes violate its sovereignty

**Jan. 27, 2011**  
CIA contractor shoots and kills two men in Lahore; he is released after the victims' families receive payments of \$2.3 million

**May 1**  
U.S. commando team secretly flies into Pakistan and raids a compound housing Osama bin Laden and others, killing the al-Qaida leader; Pakistani government decries the raid as a violation of its sovereignty, while U.S. leaders question whether bin Laden received help from persons in Pakistan's government

**June 15**  
Pakistan confirms the arrest of several Pakistanis, some of them identified in news reports as CIA informants who provided help that led to bin Laden's killing

Source: Congressional Research Service, U.S. State Department  
Graphic: Chicago Tribune © 2011 MCT

**'Barefoot Bandit' To Plead Guilty**

SEATTLE (AP) — Federal officials say the 20-year-old Washington state man known as the "Barefoot Bandit" is expected to plead guilty to criminal charges stemming from his 2-year run from the law in stolen boats, cars and planes.

The U.S. Attorney's Office said Thursday that Colton Harris-Moore will plead guilty on Friday in federal court. No further com-

ment was provided.

Authorities say Harris-Moore hopped across his way across the United States during his run, frequently stealing cars from parking lots after landing at small airports. In Indiana, he stole another plane and made for the Bahamas, where he was captured.

Harris-Moore earned the "Barefoot Bandit" moniker by committing some of crimes without shoes.

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