

### Chu Says White House Did Not Pressure Him

WASHINGTON (AP) — An unapologetic Energy Secretary Steven Chu defended a half-billion-dollar federal loan to a solar-panel manufacturer that went belly up, even as he told a House committee Thursday he was unaware of dozens of key details that led to the debacle over Solyndra Inc.

Under hours of hostile questioning from Republicans on the House Energy and Commerce Committee, Chu declined several opportunities to say he was sorry, but acknowledged that in hindsight the deal was "extremely unfortunate" and "regrettable."

"Certainly knowing what I know now, we'd say 'no,'" Chu said during a daylong hearing before the energy panel's subcommittee on investigations. "But you don't make decisions fast-forwarding two years in the future and then go back. I wish I could do that."

Rep. Cliff Stearns, R-Fla., chairman of the subcommittee, said after the hearing that Chu should be fired.

"I just think he has failed the test. The fact that he's unaware of so many things makes me think that he's not the best person for the position," Stearns said.

### House Approves Bill Averting Shutdown

WASHINGTON (AP) — A weekend government shutdown that neither party wants would be averted under a compromise spending bill the House approved Thursday despite complaints from lawmakers left and right about provisions ranging from school lunch standards to the size of federally backed loans.

The House approved the measure 298-121, and the Senate was likely to pass it and send the measure to President Barack Obama later in the day.

Despite the bill's passage, the vote highlighted fissures in the House GOP majority as 133 Republicans voted for the legislation and 101 voted against. Though none spoke against the bill during debate, conservatives were unhappy that the bipartisan legislation would spend too much and potentially leave taxpayers on the hook for even more by expanding the size of mortgages that could be insured by the Federal Housing Administration in wealthy areas from \$625,500 to \$729,750.

"We have a moral obligation to not lay additional burdens on our posterity," Rep. Scott Garrett, R-N.J., said in an interview earlier Thursday.

Democrats supported the measure overwhelmingly, with only 20 of them voting "no." Liberals mocked a provision blocking Obama administration efforts to prod schools to put healthier foods on their lunch menus, including a proposal to no longer consider the tomato paste on pizza to be a vegetable.

### Perry Picks Fight With Pelosi

PEARL, Miss. (AP) — Texas Gov. Rick Perry, who's running for president, is picking a fight with House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi, who's not. Perry, who is struggling to steady his bid for the GOP nomination, launched an outsider's campaign against Washington culture this week and on Thursday challenged Pelosi to debate his plan to overhaul Congress.

She declined the offer, then mocked Perry's forgetful moment in a recent candidates' debate.

Pelosi said: "I'm going to be in Portland in the morning. I'm going to be visiting some of our labs in California in the afternoon. That's two. I can't remember what the third thing is I'm going to be doing."

In the debate, Perry couldn't remember the third of three federal departments he wants to eliminate.

### Israel Finds Common Ground With Africans

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel has identified eastern Africa as an important strategic interest and is stepping up ties with nations in the region in a joint effort to control the spread of Islamic extremists, officials said Thursday.

In effect, Israel would become a player siding with Christian-led African nations in conflicts with Muslim movements, a fault line that has sharpened around the continent in recent years. Israeli moves come as the United States as well has hiked up military support for African governments, in large part to combat al-Qaida-linked groups.

Israel's prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, hosted the leaders of Uganda and Kenya earlier this week, following a meeting at the United Nations in September with the president of the newly liberated South Sudan, the mainly Christian and animist nation that gained independence from Muslim Arab-led Sudan in July.

The outcome of the meetings — and the extent of Israel's moves to ally with the Africans — remains murky. Kenya's leader went so far as to say Israel promised to provide security assistance to his country to help protect its borders Israeli officials say such claims are premature, but say an alliance with Kenya and other eastern African countries is natural.

"We have joint interests and we believe that mutual cooperation can be beneficial to us all," said Israeli government spokesman Mark Regev.

### U.S. Birth Rates Dip With The Economy

ATLANTA (AP) — The economy may well be the best form of birth control.

U.S. births dropped for the third straight year — especially for young mothers — and experts think money worries are the reason.

A federal report released Thursday showed declines in the birth rate for all races and most age groups. Teens and women in their early 20s had the most dramatic dip, to the lowest rates since record-keeping began in the 1940s. Also, the rate of cesarean sections stopped going up for the first time since 1996.

Experts suspected the economy drove down birth rates in 2008 and 2009 as women put off having children. With the 2010 figures, suspicion has turned into certainty.

"I don't think there's any doubt now that it was the recession. It could not be anything else," said Carl Haub, a demographer with the Population Reference Bureau, a Washington, D.C.-based research organization. He was not involved in the new report.

# Protesters March Nationwide

## Hundreds Arrested, Mostly In New York

BY KAREN MATTHEWS  
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Occupy Wall Street protesters clogged streets and tied up traffic around the U.S. on Thursday to mark two months since the movement's birth and signal they aren't ready to quit, despite the breakup of many of their encampments by police. Hundreds of people were arrested, most of them in New York.

The demonstrations — which took place in cities including Los Angeles, Las Vegas, Boston, Washington and Portland, Ore. — were for the most part peaceful. Most of the arrests were for blocking streets, and the traffic disruptions were brief.

Chanting "All day, all week, shut down Wall Street," more than 1,000 protesters gathered near the New York Stock Exchange and sat down in several intersections. Helmeted police officers broke up some of the gatherings, and operations at the stock market were not disrupted.

As darkness fell, a coalition of unions and progressive groups joined Occupy demonstrators in staging rallies at landmark bridges in several U.S. cities to protest joblessness.

In New York, a crowd of several thousand people, led by banner-carrying members of the Service Employees International Union, jammed Manhattan's Foley Square and then marched peacefully across the Brooklyn Bridge on a pedestrian promenade.

As they walked, a powerful light projected the slogan "We are the 99 percent" — a reference to the Americans who aren't super-rich — on the side of a nearby skyscraper. Police



SHARON GEKOSKI-KIMMEL/PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER/MCT  
Occupy Philadelphia and supporters get arrested after blocking Market Street at 30th Street during rush hour in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Thursday, November 17, 2011.

officers dressed in wind breakers, rather than riot gear, arrested at least two dozen people who walked out onto the bridges' roadway but otherwise let the marchers pass without incident.

The protests came two days after police raided and demolished the encampment at lower Manhattan's Zuccotti Park that had served as headquarters of the Occupy movement and as demonstrators and union allies tried to regain their momentum.

"This is a critical moment for the movement given what happened the other night," said demonstrator Paul Knick, a software en-

gineer from Montclair, N.J. "It seems like there's a concerted effort to stop the movement, and I'm here to make sure that doesn't happen."

At least 300 people were arrested in New York. Some were bloodied during the arrests. One man was taken into custody for throwing liquid, possibly vinegar, into the faces of several police officers, authorities said. Many demonstrators were carrying vinegar as an antidote for pepper spray.

A police officer, Matthew Walters, needed 20 stitches on his hand after he was hit with a piece of thrown glass, police said.

## Man Charged With Trying To Assassinate Obama

BY JESSIE L. BONNER AND JESSICA GRESKO  
Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho — An Idaho man accused of firing an assault rifle at the White House believed he was Jesus and thought President Barack Obama was the Antichrist, according to court documents and those who knew him.

At one point, he even suggested to an acquaintance the president was planning to implant computer tracking chips into children.

Oscar Ramiro Ortega-Hernandez, 21, was charged Thursday with attempting to assassinate the president or his staff. He is accused of firing nine rounds at the White House last Friday night — one of them cracking a window of the first family's living quarters — when Obama and the first lady were away. If convicted, Ortega faces up to life in prison.

Ortega was arrested Wednesday at a western Pennsylvania hotel when a desk clerk there recognized him and called police.

Ortega's public defender, Christopher Brown, declined comment after his first court hearing in Pennsylvania. Ortega's mother has said he has no history of mental illness, though when authorities were looking for him, they reported he had "mental health issues."

In Idaho Falls, where Ortega is from, a computer consultant told The Associated Press that the two met July 8 after Ortega asked for help editing a 30-minute infomercial. Monte McCall said that during the meeting at Ortega's family's Mexican restaurant, Ortega pulled out worn sheets of yellow paper with handwritten notes and started to talk about his predictions that the world

would end in 2012.

"He said, 'Well, you know the president is getting ready to make an announcement that they're going to put GPS chips in all the children, so they're safe,'" McCall said. "... And then he said, 'That's just what the Antichrist is going to do to mark everybody.'"

Kimberly Allen, the mother of Ortega's former fiancée, said he had been well-mannered and kind in the four years she had known him. But he recently began making statements to her daughter that were out of character, including that he believed he was Jesus. Allen said the family was worried when he went to Utah recently, where he said he had business, and didn't come back. Ortega's family reported him missing Oct. 31.

Allen said they were flabbergasted to hear he was wanted in Washington.

"I believe that the boy needs help," said Allen, of Shelley, Idaho.

Her daughter, Jessica Galbraith, was engaged to Ortega and is the mother of their 2-year-old son. She declined to comment Thursday except to say: "I love him, and I'm here for him."

It was unclear why or when they split.

Reached by the AP on Thursday, Ortega's mother said she didn't have anything to say. She earlier told the Post Register in Idaho Falls her son has no history of mental illness.

"He has different ideas than other people, just like everyone, but he was perfectly fine the last time I saw him," Maria Hernandez told the newspaper. "He might be saying weird stuff that sounds crazy, but that doesn't mean (he) is crazy. He might be confused and scared."

## Barbs, And Little Else, Exchanged On Deficit

BY DAVID ESPO  
AP Special Correspondent

WASHINGTON — Republicans and Democrats exchanged barbs but little else Thursday as Congress' super-committee limped toward a Nov. 23 deadline with no tangible evidence of progress on a deficit-reduction plan.

"They've never really put paper on the table. It's very frustrating," House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, said of Democrats.

Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., a committee co-chair, countered.

"I believe that we have opened a door to negotiations in these last final hours that if they (Republicans) can come to an agreement on their side on revenue ... we'll be able to move forward," she told reporters.

Barring a compromise to reduce deficits by at least \$1.2 trillion over a decade, automatic spending cuts of that amount will begin taking effect in 2013. Lawmakers in both parties say they want to avoid that, particularly defense hawks.

In addition, neither side appears to want to be the first to walk away from the bargaining table, particularly given the high hopes that committee members expressed when they embarked on their quest for a compromise.

The provision for automatic cuts was "designed to be ugly because we didn't want anybody to go there. And I'm going to do everything I can to ensure that we don't go there," Boehner said at a news conference.

Republicans and Democrats met separately during the day, and officials said a bipartisan group did, as well, although not all members of the supercommittee attended.

More than deficit reduction is

at stake.

Democrats are hoping to use the legislation to enact at least a portion of President Barack Obama's jobs program as part of the bill, including an extension of payroll tax cuts and unemployment benefits, and infrastructure construction.

In addition, lawmakers in both parties favor legislation to protect upper middle class constituents from the impact of the alternative minimum tax, and money is needed to make sure doctors treating Medicare patients are paid after Jan. 1.

Overall, the talks have been stymied over taxes — which Republicans historically refuse to raise — and benefit programs such as Medicare and Social Security — which Democrats normally are loath to cut — the same politically charged issues that have bedeviled similar attempts to rein in federal deficits in recent years.

Ironically, prospects for agreement seemed to sour when Republicans proposed to increase tax revenue by \$250 billion as part of an overhaul of the IRS code that would reduce the top tax rate from 35 percent to 28 percent and cut back on numerous tax deductions.

Republicans cited the offer as a potential breakthrough, given their longstanding opposition to tax increases, and it has sparked dissent inside the party.

But far from welcoming the proposal, Democrats attacked it as a tax cut for the wealthy in disguise.

Simultaneously, Democrats on the committee yielded to pressure from liberals to jettison an earlier proposal they had made to slow the growth in annual cost-of-living increases for Social Security benefits.

## Charge

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lent inmate death at Springfield, a low-medium security prison opened in the 1980s that houses non-violent offenders.

Osteen was sentenced in December 2006 to five years for fourth-offense Driving While Intoxicated (DWI) out of Pennington County. His sentence was scheduled to expire Tuesday, the day of the altercation.

Lashley was sentenced in February 2010 to two consecutive 10-year terms with five years suspended for a fifth DWI offense from Minnehaha County.

Winder said the affidavit for Osteen uses information obtained from video surveillance of the altercation.

According to the video, Osteen and Lashley were at the end of a hallway, outside their room.

The altercation between the two inmates began when Lashley was seen grabbing at Osteen in the upper torso and neck areas. Then, Osteen struck Lashley in

the face, and Lashley's head snapped back a minimum of two times. There was a brief struggle, and then the altercation ended.

Then, Lashley picked something up from the floor and walked back from the hallway to his room. A short while later, Ashley left his room and went down the hallway to the bathroom, and Osteen was behind him.

Osteen got a mop and was then seen cleaning up the hallway, as if mopping up blood. Lashley exited the bathroom and returned

to his room. Osteen put the mop away and walked back to the desk where the staff is stationed.

A short time later, Lashley didn't come back out of his room for the inmate count. An officer who checked on Lashley saw him sitting in a chair with his head back and unresponsive.

The officer went over to Lashley, who remained unresponsive. The officer called for help, and Lashley was taken by ambulance to the Tyndall hospital, where the inmate was pronounced dead.

### Thanksgiving Day Deadlines

The Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan will be closed Thursday, November 24, for the Thanksgiving holiday.

The following deadlines will apply:  
Friday, November 25 newspaper – Monday, November 21, 5 p.m.  
Out On The Town – 12 p.m., Wednesday, November 23  
Saturday, November 26 and Monday, November 28 newspapers – 5 p.m., Tuesday, November 22  
Tuesday, November 29 newspaper – 3 p.m., Wednesday, November 23

There will be no newspaper on Thursday, November 24, 2011.



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