

### Egypt's Islamists Confront Military, Vie For Votes

CAIRO (AP) — Tens of thousands of Islamists and young activists massed Friday in Tahrir Square, confronting Egypt's ruling military council with the largest crowd in months to protest the generals' attempt to give themselves special powers over a future elected government.

While united against the army, however, conservatives and liberals were jockeying among themselves for votes in crucial parliamentary elections only 10 days away.

The stakes are higher for all sides than at any time since the uprising ousted President Hosni Mubarak in February. The victors will help choose who will draft a new constitution, thus defining the character of post-revolutionary Egypt.

Most of this year's rallies in Tahrir Square since Mubarak's ouster have been led by liberal- or left-leaning groups, but Islamists dominated Friday's protest. Members of the Muslim Brotherhood, Egypt's best-organized group, carried signs and waved flags bearing the logo of its Freedom and Justice party. Elsewhere, ultraconservative Salafis in long robes and bushy beards called for application of Islamic Sharia law.

For most of the day, liberal groups showed little organized presence.

### FDA: Avastin Should Not Be Used For Cancer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The government delivered a blow to some desperate patients Friday as it ruled the blockbuster drug Avastin should no longer be used to treat advanced breast cancer.

Avastin is hailed for treating colon cancer and certain other malignancies. But the Food and Drug Administration said it appeared to be a false hope for breast cancer. Studies haven't found that it helps those patients live longer or brings enough other benefit to outweigh its dangerous side effects.

"I did not come to this decision lightly," said the FDA's commissioner, Dr. Margaret Hamburg. But she said, "Sometimes despite the hopes of investigators, patients, industry and even the FDA itself, the results of rigorous testing can be disappointing."

Avastin remains on the market to treat certain colon, lung, kidney and brain cancers. Doctors are free to prescribe any marketed drug as they see fit. So even though the FDA formally revoked Avastin's approval as a breast cancer treatment, women could still receive it — but their insurers may not pay for it. Some insurers already have quit in anticipation of FDA's long-expected ruling.

However, "Medicare will continue to cover Avastin," said Brian Cook, spokesman for the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. The agency "will monitor the issue and evaluate coverage options as a result of action by the FDA but has no immediate plans to change coverage policies."

### Ron Paul Digging Gaining Traction In Iowa

ANAMOSA, Iowa (AP) — Texas Rep. Ron Paul is emerging as a significant factor in the Republican presidential race, especially in Iowa.

He's been long dismissed by the GOP establishment, but the libertarian-leaning candidate is now turning heads beyond his hardcore followers — and rising in some polls — just weeks before the state holds the leadoff presidential caucuses and four years since his failed 2008 bid.

Paul's sharp criticism of government spending and U.S. monetary policy hasn't changed since then.

And while his isolationist brand of foreign policy may be a non-starter for some establishment Republicans, its appeal among independents is helping Paul gain ground in a crowded Republican field. His boost is an indication of just how volatile the Republican presidential race is in this state and across the country.

"The good news is the country has changed in the last four years in a way I never would have believed," Paul told about 80 Republicans and independents at the Pizza Ranch restaurant in this town on Friday. "In the last four years, something dramatic has happened."

### Crystal Cathedral's Future Looms Uncertain

SANTA ANA, Calif. (AP) — The sale of the Crystal Cathedral to the Catholic church could mark an end to the storied televangelist ministry broadcast around the world that came crashing down in hard times.

While the church's spiritual leaders vow to carry on in a new location, the cathedral's own financial expert says it is impossible to see the future once the congregation loses its famed, glass-spired home.

What began more than 50 years ago as a weekly prayer service atop a drive-in movie theater snack bar in Orange County evolved into a televangelist empire broadcasting from the striking sanctuary that became an icon of the Rev. Robert H. Schuller's ministry.

The church raked in millions in donations through its "Hour of Power" television program to pay for the elaborate building and 40-acre grounds in Garden Grove filled with Biblical messages and statues. But it saw revenue plummet in 2008, and despite massive budget cuts, sought bankruptcy protection last year.

Now, congregants question the future of the church without the building they have come to love — and that has given the ministry its name. And many worry the "Hour of Power" broadcast — the source of 70 percent of the church's revenue — is doomed once the congregation moves to a new location that is unfamiliar to viewers and pales in comparison to the glimmering church that lets worshippers see the sky and swaying palm trees through its glass-paned walls.

### Woman Attempts To Cross Antarctica Alone

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina (AP) — Reaching the end of the Earth has become almost routine these days: One hundred years after Norway's Roald Amundsen beat Britain's R.F. Scott to the South Pole, more than 30 teams are trying for it this year.

Some will kite-sail over the vast Antarctic ice and snow. Others will drive in from the coast. A wealthy handful will be dropped off one degree north of the South Pole, for relatively leisurely guided treks of about 70 miles to the pole.

But Felicity Aston has been there, done that. Weather and her own considerable stamina permitting, the 33-year-old British adventurer will only pause at the pole long enough to pick up more food and fuel. Her plan is to keep on skiing, by herself, all the way to the other side of the frozen continent — and become the first person using only muscle power to cross Antarctica alone.

If she manages to complete this journey of more than 1,000 miles (1,700 kilometers) in late January, she would also set a record for the longest solo polar expedition by a woman, at about 70 days.

# U.S. House Falls Short On Balanced Budget Amendment To Constitution

BY DAVID LIGHTMAN  
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WASHINGTON — A constitutional amendment requiring the federal budget to always be in balance — a signature Republican strategy to curb federal spending dramatically — failed Friday to win enough votes for passage in the House of Representatives, dooming the effort for the remainder of this Congress.

The House voted 261-165 for the amendment, 23 votes short of the two-thirds majority required for passage. Voting for passage were 236 Republicans and 25 Democrats, while four Republicans and 161 Democrats opposed the measure.

The vote was a blow to Republican leaders. They have been touting the amendment for years as a way to force lawmakers to take politically difficult steps to reduce the nation's \$15 trillion debt — and to embarrass Democrats who are reluctant to handcuff government's ability to ease the pain of economic crises.

GOP leaders insisted on Friday's vote as part of the August debt-reduction deal. They crafted the amendment to be similar to one that won 300 votes, including 72 Democrats, in 1995.

Friday, though, Democratic reluctance and strong opposition from the White House led to the amendment's demise. Most of

the Democrats supporting the amendment were Blue Dog Coalition conservatives.

"It's become clear that a constitutional amendment is the only way to force Congress' hand toward fiscal responsibility," said Rep. Mike Ross, D-Ark.

But most Democrats were vehemently opposed.

"The corrective is forging a political consensus, not amending the Constitution," said Rep. Gerald Connolly, D-Va. "In fact, to leap to the latter as an expedient is to admit the collapse of our democratic institutions and to abandon all faith in our collective ability to respond to one issue, albeit a major one, of the day."

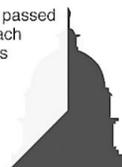
Some Republicans sympathized.

## How to amend the Constitution

### 1. Propose an amendment

Proposal must be passed by two-thirds of each house of Congress

or  
by a national convention called by Congress



### 2. Ratify an amendment

Proposal must be ratified by the legislatures of three-fourths of the states

or  
by conventions in three-fourths of the states



### 3. About amendments

- ✓ Only 27 have been ratified
- ✓ Six other amendments have been submitted to the states, but not ratified
- ✓ Cannot be vetoed by president

Source: U.S. Constitution Center © 2011 MCT

"I was wrong," said Rep. David Dreier, R-Calif., when he backed the amendment in 1995. "We all know very well we're not going to balance the budget overnight, and I don't think that amending the Constitution is going to do anything to help us get there."

As the House debated, members of the congressional supercommittee remained stalemated. That's the 12-member bipartisan panel trying to devise a plan to cut at least \$1.2 trillion from the deficit over the next decade. By law it must report

its plan to the Congressional Budget Office by midnight Monday.

Co-chairman Rep. Jeb Hensarling, R-Texas, said that talks were continuing, but he reported no progress. "We are painfully aware

of the deadline staring us in the face," he said.

The amendment debated Friday by the House would have forced Congress to spend only what is collected annually in revenue, unless three-fifths majority votes in both chambers agreed otherwise. A three-fifths majority also would have to vote to raise the debt ceiling.

The president would have to submit a balanced budget to Congress, but the requirement could be waived for military emergencies.

Democrats railed against what they called Republican hypocrisy. Instead of trying to amend the Constitution, a process almost certain to fail, why not make the tough choices that the supercommittee needs to reach a deal?

"Don't talk about it. Just do it," said House Minority Whip Steny Hoyer, D-Md. "Don't just preach fiscal responsibility. Practice it. It will take no courage to vote for this amendment, but it will take courage to balance our budget by paying for what we buy."

Republicans had viewed Democrats like Hoyer as attractive political targets, since he voted yes to the similar proposal 16 years ago.

Hoyer said he stood by his 1995 vote, but "there's a lot of water over the bridge since that time," notably a lack of fiscal discipline that has led to record federal deficits.

# Supercommittee Deadlocked, Gridlock Looms

BY ANDREW TAYLOR AND DAVID ESPO  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Deadline nearing, the deficit-reduction talks in Congress sank toward gridlock Friday after supercommittee Democrats rejected a late Republican offer that included next-to-nothing in new tax revenue. Each side maneuvered to blame the other for a looming stalemate.

The panel faces a deadline of next Wednesday, the day before Thanksgiving, and lawmakers on both sides stressed they were ready to meet through the weekend in a last-ditch search for compromise.

But there was little indication after a day of closed-door meetings that a breakthrough was likely, both Democrats and Republicans emphasizing long-held political positions.

"Where the divide is right now is over taxes, and whether the wealthiest Americans should share in the sacrifices," said Washington Sen. Patty Murray, the Democratic co-chair of the panel.

But Michael Steel, a spokesman for House Speaker John Boehner, said Republicans had offered "a balanced, bipartisan plan - the fact that it was rejected makes it clear that Washington Democrats won't cut a dime in government spending without job-killing tax hikes."

While prospects for a deal faded, House Democrats checked a Republican attempt to pass a balanced budget amendment to

the Constitution. The vote was 261-165, or 23 shy of the two-thirds majority required. GOP lawmakers voted overwhelmingly in favor, while Democrats generally opposed it, sealing its doom.

The vote on a noisy House floor contrasted to the secretive proceedings inside the supercommittee, a panel that projected optimism when it began its quest for a deficit deal late last summer but has yet to come to any significant compromise.

Republicans disclosed during the day they had outlined an offer on Thursday for about \$543 billion in spending cuts — leaving Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security untouched — and \$3 billion in higher tax revenue.

Most if not all of the recommended savings were items that Democrats have agreed to in earlier talks, but only party officials said, on condition they part of a larger deal in which Republicans agreed to additional tax increases.

Democrats have long demanded that Republicans agree to significant amounts of higher taxes on the wealthy as part of any deal, and they quickly rejected the offer, according to officials in both parties.

It was unclear where the talks would turn next, but the GOP proposal suggested the discussions had effectively moved into a range of savings far below the \$1.2 trillion the committee has been seeking.

It also appeared Republicans were jettisoning a plan for \$300 billion in higher tax revenue, an

offer that had exposed internal GOP divisions when it was presented two weeks ago. It also has failed to generate momentum for a compromise among Democrats.

If the panel fails to reach agreement, \$1.2 trillion in automatic spending cuts are to take effect beginning in 2013, a prospect that lawmakers in both parties say they want to avoid.

That is particularly true among defense hawks, who argue that the Pentagon cannot sustain the estimated \$500 billion in cuts that would be required on top of the \$450 billion already in the works.

In a letter to Murray and Rep. Jeb Hensarling, R-Texas, the GOP chairman of the supercommittee, the head of the House Armed Services Committee warned of "immediate, dire and in some cases irrevocable" damage to the nation's military. "Our ability to respond to national security crises or humanitarian disasters would be disrupted," added Rep. Howard P. (Buck) McKeon, R-Calif.

Republicans familiar with the GOP plan said it included \$543

billion in spending cuts, fees and other non-tax revenue, as well as the \$3 billion corporate jet provision. There also would be \$98 billion in reduced interest costs.

Officials familiar with the offer said it would save the government \$121 billion by requiring federal civilian workers to contribute more to their pension plans, shave \$23 billion from farm and nutrition programs and generate \$15 billion from new auctions of broadcast spectrum to wireless companies.

It also would claim about \$100 billion in savings from Pentagon civilian personnel costs and another \$35 billion by increasing the fee that mortgage giants Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac charge lenders to guarantee repayment of new loans. The fee increase would add \$15 a month to the monthly cost of an average new mortgage.

The per-ticket security fee to pay for Transportation Security Administration operations at the nation's airports would increase, and \$18 billion would come from savings within Postal Service accounts.

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