

Senate Moves Ahead On Gay Rights Bill

WASHINGTON (AP) — Invoking the Declaration of Independence, proponents of a bill that would outlaw discrimination against gays in the workplace argued on Tuesday that the measure is rooted in fundamental fairness for all Americans.

Republican opponents of the measure were largely silent, neither addressing the issue on the second day of Senate debate nor commenting unless asked. Written statements from some rendered their judgment that the bill would result in costly, frivolous lawsuits and mandate federal law based on sexuality.

The Senate moved closer to completing its work on the Employment Non-Discrimination Act that would prohibit workplace discrimination against gay, bisexual and transgender Americans. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., said a final vote in the Senate is possible by week's end.

Senate passage of the bill would represent a major victory for advocates of gay rights just months after the Supreme Court affirmed gay marriage and granted federal benefits to legally married same-sex couples and three years after Congress ended the ban on gays serving openly in the military.

Illinois was poised to become the 15th state to legalize gay marriage after a vote in the state House on Tuesday.

Toronto Mayor Admits Smoking Crack

TORONTO (AP) — Toronto Mayor Rob Ford acknowledged for the first time Tuesday that he smoked crack "probably a year ago," when he was in a "drunken stupor," but he refused to resign despite immense pressure to step aside as leader of Canada's largest city.

Ford said he loves his job and "for the sake of the taxpayers, we must get back to work immediately."

Allegations that the mayor had been caught on video smoking crack surfaced in news reports in May. Ford initially insisted the video did not exist, sidestepped questions about whether he had ever smoked crack and rebuffed growing calls to step down.

The mayor was forced to backtrack last week after police said they had obtained a copy of the video in the course of a drug investigation against a friend of Ford's.

"Yes, I have smoked crack cocaine," Ford told reporters earlier outside his office. "There have been times when I've been in a drunken stupor. That's why I want to see the tape. I want everyone in the city to see this tape. I don't even recall there being a tape or video. I want to see the state that I was in."

Corporate Profits Up, Despite Economy

WASHINGTON (AP) — Look at the U.S. economy and you'll notice an unusual disconnect.

The economy is being slowed by a tight job market, scant pay raises and weak business investment. Yet corporate profits are reaching record highs and fueling record stock prices. What gives?

How are companies managing to earn so much money in a sluggish economy? And why aren't their profits goosing the economy?

For starters, weak job growth has held down pay. And since the recession struck six years ago, businesses have been relentless in cutting costs. They've also stockpiled cash rather than build new products or lines of business. And they've been earning larger chunks of their profits overseas.

NJ Mall Shooting Leaves People Baffled

TEANECK, N.J. (AP) — Relatives and friends of a young man who fired shots in New Jersey's largest mall, trapping terrified shoppers for hours before killing himself, struggled Tuesday to reconcile those actions with a person they described as pleasant and well-liked.

Investigators don't believe the gunman, identified as 20-year-old Richard Shoop, intended to shoot anyone when he began firing at the ceiling and elsewhere at the Garden State Plaza in Paramus, about 15 miles northwest of New York City, shortly before the mall's closed Monday night. There were no other injuries.

"We think he went in with the intent that he was not going to come out alive," Bergen County Prosecutor John Molinelli said.

News of Shoop's suicide stunned friends and relatives. As recently as last week, Shoop had spoken about a potential new job and seemed especially happy about it, according to a woman who said she had known him since they were little.

"He told me that he was going to get a new job at this TV place and he was going to make good money," Madison Barbarini said. "He told me that he was doing really well and it seemed like he was really happy. Things just don't add up. Why would he do this? It doesn't make sense."

Zapruder Film Remains Vital Evidence

NEW YORK (AP) — If anything of consequence occurs in this era of smartphones and multi-G wireless networks, a horde of "citizen journalists" will doubtless be on hand to capture and broadcast the sights and sounds. But of hundreds of witnesses in Dallas's Dealey Plaza on Nov. 22, 1963, only a handful managed to record the biggest news story of a generation: the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

And of the documents they produced, only one stands out: the Zapruder film.

It's not much: About 6 feet of narrow, cellulose material, containing fewer than 500 grainy images and running just 26 seconds long. And yet the home movie that clothier Abraham Zapruder shot with his Bell & Howell camera may be the single most important piece of evidence in perhaps the most argued-about crime in the nation's history.

Zapruder was in a unique position to capture the events that day a half-century ago.

Standing on a 4-foot-high concrete pedestal, his receptionist bracing him from behind, the 58-year-old Russian immigrant followed the progress of JFK's Lincoln limousine as it rolled toward him down Elm Street. He thought the popping noises he heard were part of some joke, he later told the Warren Commission, and "then I saw his head opened up."

Chef Charlie Trotter Dies At 54

CHICAGO (AP) — With a culinary style he likened to improvisational jazz, Charlie Trotter changed the way Americans view fine dining, pushing himself, his staff, his food and even his diners to limits rarely seen in an American restaurant. Yet it was his reluctance to move beyond those limits that may have defined the last years of his life.

Trotter, 54, died Tuesday, a year after closing his namesake Chicago restaurant that was credited with putting his city at the vanguard of the food world and training dozens of the nation's top chefs, including Grant Achatz and Graham Elliot.

Paramedics were called around 10 a.m. to Trotter's Lincoln Park home, where they found him unresponsive. An ambulance crew transported Trotter to Northwestern Memorial Hospital, where he was declared dead after unsuccessful attempts to revive him, Chicago Fire Department spokesman Larry Langford said. An autopsy was planned for Wednesday.

Trotter was hospitalized in New York City this summer after having a seizure, close family friend and early Trotter mentor Norman Van Aken said Tuesday. Van Aken said he didn't know what caused the seizure.

For decades, Trotter's name was synonymous with cutting-edge cuisine. He earned 10 James Beard Awards, wrote 10 cookbooks and in 1999 hosted his own public television series, "The Kitchen Sessions with Charlie Trotter."

Council To Redskins: Change Nickname

WASHINGTON (AP) — For the second time in its history, the D.C. Council has called on the Washington Redskins to change their nickname.

By a 10-0 vote, the council approved a resolution Tuesday urging the team to abandon the nickname, which some consider offensive to Native Americans. One member abstained, and two were absent.

The council has no power over the team, which plays its home games in Maryland and has its training facility in Virginia. It previously called for a name change in 2001.

President Barack Obama said recently that he would consider changing the name if he owned the team. Redskins owner Daniel Snyder has called the name "a badge of honor" but says he respects the feelings of those who are offended.

Decision 2013

Christie Rolls To NJ Win; McAuliffe Elected Va. Gov.

BY THOMAS BEAUMONT

Associated Press

His pitch bipartisan and inclusive, Republican Gov. Chris Christie cruised to re-election Tuesday in Democratic-leaning New Jersey amid talk of a possible 2016 presidential run. Democrat Terry McAuliffe narrowly won the Virginia governor's race, leading what Democrats hoped would be their first sweep of statewide offices in decades.

New Yorkers chose Bill de Blasio as mayor, electing the first Democrat since 1989.

In other, widely scattered off-year balloting, Houston rejected a plan to turn Astrodome into a convention hall, likely dooming it to demolition, while Colorado agreed to tax marijuana at 25 percent. Alabama Republicans were choosing between two of their own — from different wings of the party — in a too-close-to-call special congressional runoff election in a conservative state.

Taken together, the results in individual states and cities yielded no broad judgments on how the American public feels about today's two biggest national political debates — government spending and health care — which are more likely to shape next fall's midterm elections.

Even so, Tuesday's voting had local impact, and it mattered in ways big and small.

The outcomes of both governors' races signaled that, in the midst of a deep division within the Republican Party, pragmatism won out over ideology.

In Virginia, McAuliffe turned back a late-game push by state Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli, a Republican. Both Bill and Hillary Rodham Clinton made appearances for McAuliffe in the final weeks, and so did President Barack Obama over the weekend. The Democrat also dramatically outspent his GOP rival in TV ads in the final weeks.

Cuccinelli had sought to prove that a tea party-backed conservative could win the governorship of a swing-voting state. He brought big-name supporters to the state, too, including Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida, Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky and Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal — all potential presidential contenders.

Virginia Democrats hoped they were on their way to holding all statewide-elected offices for the first time since 1970 and turning back of the conservatism that has dominated for the past four years under one-term limited Gov. Bob McDonnell. The state's two U.S. senators already are Democrats. Aside from McAuliffe, Democrats also won the lieutenant governorship. The race for the attorney general's office was neck and neck.

The race had turned McAuliffe's way last month partly because of the partial government shutdown. Preliminary results of an exit poll conducted for The Associated Press and the television networks found that about a third of Virginia voters said

White House Sidesteps On ACA Change

WASHINGTON (AP) — Under growing pressure, the administration refused repeatedly to state a position Tuesday on legislation formalizing President Barack Obama's oft-stated promise that people who like their existing coverage should be allowed to keep it under the new health care law.

Senate Democrats spoke dismissively of the proposals, signaling they have no intention of permitting a vote on the issue that marks the latest challenge confronting supporters of "Obamacare."

An earlier controversy appeared to be ebbing on a law that has generated more than its share of them. Even so, one strong supporter of the health care law, Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse, D-R.I., good-naturedly told an administration official, "Good luck getting through this mess."

Whitehouse spoke to Marilyn Tavenner, the head of the agency deeply involved in implementing the law. She had assured lawmakers that initial flaws with the government's website were systematically yielding to around-the-clock repair effort.

"Users can now successfully create an account and continue through the full application and enrollment process," said Tavenner, head of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. "We are now able to process nearly 17,000 registrants per hour, or 5 per second, with almost no errors."

She encouraged consumers to log onto the site and check it out, and said the administration had estimated that enrollments will total 800,000 by the end of November.

At the same time, she repeatedly refused to tell inquiring Republicans how many enrollments have taken place to date, saying that information would be made available at mid-month.

Across the Capitol, that reluctance drew a subpoena from Rep. Dave Camp, the Michigan Republican who chairs the House Ways and Means Committee. He said the material was "critical government information" that the administration has refused to provide voluntarily, and demanded that it be turned over by Friday.



DENNIS VAN TINE/ABACA PRESS/MCT
New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie chats with patrons at Peterpank Diner in South Amboy, N.J., on Tuesday.

they were personally impacted by the shutdown, and nearly half said Republicans deserved the blame for it.

Although Republicans were expected to hold the Legislature, Democrats also could break through Republicans' veto-proof majority in the state House, and all that could set the stage of in a presidential battleground ahead of the next White House race.

Also with potential presidential overtones, Christie's resounding victory was intended to send a message to the GOP that a Republican with an inclusive pitch could win in Democratic territory.

"As your governor, it has never mattered where someone is from, whether they voted for me or not, what the color of their skin was, or their political party," Christie said in his victory speech. "For me, being governor has always about getting the job done, first."

Indeed, his triumph showed his ability to draw support from Democrats, independents and minorities. Much like George W. Bush did in his re-election race as governor in Texas in 1998, Christie now may have fodder to argue that he is the most electable in what might well be a crowded presidential primary field.

Later this month, Christie assumes the chairmanship of the Republican Governors Association, giving him another platform for a possible national campaign.

Christie's victory makes him the only Republican governor considering the presidency and serving with a Democratic legislature. He was opposed by state Sen. Barbara Buono.

Preliminary exit poll results in New Jersey suggest about that about half of New Jersey voters think Christie would make a

good president, yet he would lag behind Hillary Clinton in a hypothetical 2016 matchup.

Elsewhere on Tuesday, the party's internal squabbles played out in the special congressional runoff primary election in Alabama. It featured veteran politician Bradley Byrne, the choice of the GOP establishment, against tea party favorite Dean Young.

The race was the first test of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's promise to try to influence primaries. The group has pumped at least \$200,000 into supporting Byrne, who has almost two decades in politics. Young argues that the Chamber endorsement is evidence that Byrne is the choice of big Washington interests.

Other races to watch:

—Big city mayors: In New York, de Blasio won handily over Republican Joe Lhota after Michael Bloomberg's dozen-year tenure. Atlanta, Boston, Detroit, Minneapolis, Seattle and other cities also chose mayors.

—Washington state: Voters weighed in on a ballot issue over mandatory labeling of genetically modified food, a contest that has drawn hefty financial contributions in opposition from the likes of PepsiCo., Monsanto and General Mills, which last year spent \$46 million to defeat a similar measure in California.

—Colorado: Colorado voters agreed to tax marijuana at 25 percent and apply the proceeds to regulating the newly legalized drug and building schools. And 10 rural counties refused to approve secession from the state. One county narrowly voted to secede, but it was a symbolic gesture.



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