

Sen. GOP Say They'll Block Tax Increase

BY ANDREW TAYLOR
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama's plan to raise taxes on wealthier people while preserving cuts for everyone else appears increasingly likely to founder before Election Day.

Senate GOP leaders declared on Monday that Republicans are, to a person, opposed to legislation that would extend only middle-class tax relief — which Obama has repeatedly promised to deliver — if Democrats follow through on plans to let tax rates rise for the wealthiest Americans. The GOP senators forcefully made their case one day after House Republican leader John Boehner suggested he might vote for Obama's plan if that ends up the only option.

Both Republicans and Democrats are using the looming expiration of Bush-era tax cuts as a defining battle in elections to determine control of Congress.

It would take numerous Democratic defectors to pass the Republicans' version — extending all the Bush tax cuts — or

the issue could be left for a post-election congressional session if Republicans block the measure with a filibuster. Obama last week declined to say whether he would veto a bill that preserved the tax breaks for the wealthy.

On Sunday, Boehner said he would support renewing tax cuts for the middle class but not the wealthy if that was his only choice. Though Boehner was clear that he supports extending the full range of tax cuts, the White House jumped on his remarks as a possible change of heart.

But Sen. Jon Kyl of Arizona, the GOP whip, said Monday his party won't give ground.

"Just before the recess we had a meeting and we discussed this, and every Republican was absolutely supportive of the idea that there shouldn't be any increases in taxes," Kyl said.

Renewing the tax cuts for everyone would cost the government almost \$4 trillion over the next decade, according to congressional analysts, who also assume that Congress won't allow the alternative minimum tax to hit millions of middle class tax-

payers with eye-popping tax hikes.

With polls showing broad public anger over spiraling federal deficits, Obama wants to exclude individuals earning over \$200,000 and couples making over \$250,000 — who account for \$700 billion of that \$4 trillion total. They represent about 3 percent of taxpayers, according to the Tax Policy Center, a Washington think tank.

"Only in Washington could someone propose a tax hike as an antidote to a recession," GOP leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky said.

McConnell has said a bill extending the tax cuts for only low- and middle-income earners cannot pass the Senate, but he declined to reiterate that threat on Monday. Republicans control 41 seats, the minimum needed for a successful bill-killing filibuster, though McConnell spokesman Don Stewart declined to say whether all 41 Republicans would support a filibuster.

To amplify his point, McConnell on Monday introduced a bill to extend to Bush tax cuts indefinitely for all income ranges. Some Democrats, like Sens.

Kent Conrad of North Dakota, Evan Bayh of Indiana and Ben Nelson of Nebraska, are siding with Republicans against raising taxes on anyone during a fragile economic recovery.

"I don't think it makes sense to raise any federal taxes during the uncertain economy we are struggling through," Sen. Joe Lieberman, a Connecticut independent who aligns with Democrats, said Monday. "The more money we leave in private hands, the quicker our economic recovery will be. And that means I will do everything I can to make sure Congress extends the so-called Bush tax cuts for another year."

But Lieberman said he would not vote to hold up extension of the middle-class cuts to win leverage to extend those for wealthier people as well.

At issue is a year-end deadline to renew a variety of tax cuts enacted in 2001 — when the federal government was running a surplus. They include lower rates, a \$1,000 per-child tax credit, relief for married couples, and lower taxes on investments and large estates.

Pipes At Risk Of Explosion Nationwide

BY GARANCE BURKE AND
JASON DEAREN
Associated Press Writers

SAN BRUNO, Calif. — An ominous theme has emerged from the wreckage of a deadly pipeline explosion in California: There are thousands of pipes just like it nationwide.

Utilities have been under pressure for years to better inspect and replace aging gas pipes — many of them laid years before the suburbs expanded over them and now are at risk of leaking or erupting.

But the effort has fallen short. Critics say the regulatory system is ripe for problems because the government largely leaves it up to the companies to do inspections, and utilities are reluctant to spend the money necessary to properly fix and replace decrepit pipelines.

"If this was the FAA and air travel we were talking about, I wouldn't get on a plane," said Rick Kessler, a former congressional staffer specializing in pipeline safety issues who now works for the Pipeline Safety Trust, an advocacy group based in Bellingham, Wash.

Investigators are still trying to figure out how the pipeline in San Bruno ruptured and ignited a gigantic fireball that torched one home after another in the neighborhood, killing at least four people. Pacific Gas and Electric Co., the pipeline's owner, said Monday it has set aside up to \$100 million to help residents recover.

Experts say the California disaster epitomizes the risks that communities face with old gas lines. The pipe was more than 50 years old — right around the life expectancy for steel pipes. It was part of a transmission line that in one section had an "unacceptably high" risk of failure. And it was in a densely populated area.

The blast was the latest warning sign in a series of deadly infrastructure failures in recent years, including a bridge collapse in Minneapolis and a steam pipe explosion that tore open a Manhattan street in 2007. The steam pipe that ruptured was more than 80 years old.

The section of pipeline that ruptured was built in 1956, back when the neighborhood contained only a handful of homes. It is a scenario that National Transportation Safety Board vice chairman Christopher Hart has

seen play out throughout the nation, as suburbs have expanded.

"That's an issue we're going to have to look on a bigger scale — situations in which pipes of some age were put in before the dense population arrived and now the dense population is right over the pipe," he said.

Thousands of pipelines nationwide fit the same bill, and they frequently experience mishaps. Federal officials have recorded 2,840 significant gas pipeline accidents since 1990, more than a third causing deaths and significant injuries.

"In reality, there is a major pipeline incident every other day in this country," said Carl Weiner, Pipeline Safety Trust's executive director. "Luckily, most of them don't happen in populated areas, but you still see too many failures to think something like this wasn't going to happen sooner or later."

Congress passed a law in 2002 that required utilities for the first time to inspect pipelines that run through heavily-populated areas. In the first five years, more than 3,000 problems were identified — a figure Weiner said underscores the precarious pipeline system.

Pentagon Proposes Sale Of Warplanes To Saudis

BY ANNE GEARAN
AP National Security Writer

WASHINGTON — The Obama administration is seeking a go-ahead from Congress to sell up to \$60 billion worth of sophisticated warplanes to Saudi Arabia and could add another \$30 billion worth of naval arms in a deal designed to counter the rise of Iran as a regional power.

The deal would apparently represent the largest single U.S. arms sale ever approved. It would allow Saudi Arabia, the most militarily advanced of the Arab Gulf states and one of the richest countries in the world, to buy top-line U.S.-made helicopters and fighter jets with ranges that would span the Middle East and beyond.

Unlike some previous sales to Saudi Arabia, this one is not expected to be derailed by opposition in Congress or from U.S. backers of Israel, who have worried in the past about blunting Israel's military edge over its Arab neighbors.

Iran is now seen by Israel, the Gulf Arab states and the West as a significant and unpredictable threat that has changed the old calculus of the region's balance of power.

The U.S. is realigning its defense policies in the Persian Gulf as Iran improves the range and accuracy of missiles and other weapons that could threaten Israel or U.S. allies in Europe. Besides the Saudi deal, the U.S. has pending or proposed arms sales to Kuwait, Oman, and the United Arab Emirates, and has repositioned some U.S. forces and military assets around the Gulf.

OBITUARIES

Eleanor (Lauer) Brandt

Eleanor Edith Brandt was born October 28, 1928 in rural Delmont, SD to Elmer C. and Maria (Pullman) Lauer. She died Saturday, September 11, 2010 at the Wagner Community Hospital after complications of Myelofibrosis, a rare blood disease, which she battled courageously for eighteen months. Eleanor attained the age of 81 years, 10 months, and 17 days.

Eleanor's funeral service will be 10:30 a.m. Tuesday, September 14, 2010 at Zion Lutheran Church in Avon, with burial in the church cemetery, rural Avon. Visitation will be at the church Monday from 12 noon to 7 p.m., followed by a 7 p.m. prayer service. Crosby-Jaeger Funeral Home of Avon is in charge of the arrangements.

Eleanor was baptized at her home in Delmont by Rev. Charles Weiting on November 18, 1928, and was confirmed in the Christian faith by Rev. Otto A. Pinnat at Zion Lutheran Church in Avon, SD on March 29, 1942. Her confirmation verse was Psalm 37:4, "Delight thyself in the Lord and He shall give the desires of thine heart." She attended Belmont Country School in Douglas County near Delmont for six years. She then attended Avon Zion Lutheran Parochial School for two and a half years. She graduated from Avon High School in 1946. On June 3, 1948, she married Raymond Brandt at Zion Lutheran Church in Avon. Together, they had six children. Eleanor was an active member



Brandt

in her church. She served on the church council and was a Sunday School teacher. Over the years Eleanor was employed by several businesses including S.B. Gelfand Grocery; F. Weidenbach Grocery; Ed Schuh Gamble Store; Gurney Seed & Nursery and the Avon Livestock Sale Barn where she was well known for her homemade pies.

Eleanor also worked on the family dairy farm while raising their children. She sold Avon Products and had her own lawn ornament business. Eleanor was an active 4-H leader for many years and served as the 4-H County Board Secretary. She was very proud of her 100 year farm in Delmont. Known for her green thumb, she raised beautiful gardens and enjoyed being a member of the Avon Flower Club. Eleanor had a special knack for cooking and baking pies. Eleanor loved spending time with her entire family and enjoyed attending their activities. She had love and total commitment to her family, friends, and God. She always said "I have the best family in the world."

Eleanor's memory will live forever in the hearts of her husband of 62 years, Raymond, and their sons Dennis Brandt and wife Lyla; Rodger Brandt and wife Sandy; Dwayne Brandt and wife Debbie all of Avon and daughter Norma Noller of Kearney, Neb., eleven grandchildren, and eight great-grandchildren and one on the way. Eleanor was preceded in

death by her parents, infant brother Theodore, infant sister Erna, infant son Luverne, daughter Judy Pullmann in 1976, son-in-law Art Pullmann in 1976, brother Paul in 1979, and son-in-law Pat Noller in 2008.

Yankton Press & Dakotan
September 13, 2010

Felix Dilger

SALEM, Ore. — Dr. Felix Luke Dilger, 88, formerly of Yankton, died Aug. 15, 2010.

Funeral services were held Saturday, Aug. 21, with a private interment later at Willamette National Cemetery, Portland, Ore.

Memorials may be directed to the St. Joseph Conference or St. Vincent de Paul Society.

Arrangements were by the Virgil T. Golden Funeral Service, Salem, Ore.

George Easterling

WAGNER — George Easterling, 86, of Wagner died Sunday (Sept. 12, 2010) at his home after an extended illness.

Funeral services are at 2 p.m. Friday at Wagner Community Church, Wagner. Burial is in the ZCBI Cemetery, rural Wagner.

Visitation is 4-7 p.m. Thursday at the church, with the family present from 6-7 p.m., followed by a prayer service at 7 p.m.

Crosby-Jaeger Funeral Home in Wagner is in charge of arrangements.

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8:15 Pam Kettering

NATION/WORLD DIGEST

FBI Says Violent Crime Fell Again Last Year

WASHINGTON (AP) — The FBI said Monday that violent crime reported to police in 2009 declined for the third straight year.

The 5.3 percent drop in violent crime was accompanied by a 4.6 percent drop in property crime, marking the seventh consecutive year that nonviolent crime has dropped.

Each of the violent crime categories decreased from 2008, as did each of the property crime categories.

Murder fell by 7.3 percent, robbery by 8 percent, aggravated assault by 4.2 percent and rape by 2.6 percent. Motor vehicle theft was down by 17.1 percent, larceny by 4 percent and burglary by 1.3 percent.

Data for the FBI's report comes from 17,985 governmental units and universities and colleges representing over 96 percent of the nation's population.

Crews Resume Drilling Relief Well

HOUMA, La. (AP) — A chief drilling official says BP crews have resumed drilling a relief well meant to allow them to permanently seal the blown-out well in the Gulf of Mexico.

John Wright, who is in charge of the operation aboard the Development Driller III vessel, said in an e-mail Monday to The Associated Press that drilling has resumed.

BP and the government have said it would take about four days from the time crews started drilling again to intersect the blown-out well. Once the relief well intersects the blown-out well, crews will pump in mud and cement to permanently seal the well.

The flow of crude was first stopped with a cap in mid-July. The April 20 rig explosion killed 11 workers and led to 206 million gallons of oil spewing from BP's undersea well.

Zimbabwe Court Frees U.S. Workers On Bail

HARARE, Zimbabwe (AP) — A Zimbabwean court has freed on bail four Americans arrested and accused of treating AIDS patients without proper medical licenses.

A magistrate ordered the six health workers, who included a New Zealand national and a Zimbabwean, to pay a \$200 bail and to reappear in court on Sept. 27. They could face a fine and deportation. The court ordered them to surrender their passports and live at their Mother of Peace Orphanage outside Harare until their trial.

The six are also accused of distributing AIDS medications without a pharmacist's supervision or license.

The California church that sponsors their work says the church has been working in Zimbabwe for more than a decade and that this is the first time licensing questions have been raised.

Imam: Working On Solution For Mosque

NEW YORK (AP) — The imam leading the effort to build an Islamic center near ground zero says he's working on a solution to resolve the debate over whether it should be moved.

Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf said Monday that all options are being explored toward a solution "that will resolve this crisis, diffuse it."

Abdul made his remarks before the Council on Foreign Relations. He also raised the question of whether the project is worth the controversy. He says the answer is "a categorical yes." He says the center would be a place for all faiths to come together in mutual respect.

He says that "the world is watching what we do here" and that it is important to "live up to our ideal."

Cuba To Cut 500,000 Gov't Workers

HAVANA (AP) — Cuba says it will fire at least half a million state workers by mid-2011 and will free up private enterprise to help them find new work — radically remaking employment on the communist island.

The layoffs will start immediately and run through the first half of next year, according to an announcement Monday by the nearly 3 million-strong Cuban Workers Confederation — the only labor union the government tolerates.

To soften the blow, it said the government would authorize simultaneous increases in job opportunities in the non-state sector, allowing more Cubans to become self-employed, to form cooperatives run by employees rather than government bureaucrats and to increase private control of state land and infrastructure through long-term leases.

Family Of Jailed American Appeal Iran Bail

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — The lawyer for an American woman detained in Iran says her family is appealing to authorities to drop a demand for \$500,000 bail in exchange for her release because it cannot afford the amount.

Masoud Shafiei tells The Associated Press he is aware that Swiss diplomats — who handle U.S. affairs in Iran — are asking that the bail be dropped or lowered for Sarah Shourd. He says the family of the 32-year-old woman is apparently facing difficulty raising the money.

Shafiei says he has no word Monday on Iran's response. Iran's judiciary granted the bail on health grounds Sunday. Shourd was detained in July 2009 along the border with Iraq with two American friends, who are also jailed in Tehran.

Iran has issued indictments on spy-related charges.

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