

GOP Debate: Perry Targeted For Criticism

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — Republican presidential contender Michele Bachmann said Thursday that social conservatives don't have to settle for a nominee who does not share their values, and rival Mitt Romney said the party should nominate someone from the private sector — double-team criticism of front-runner Rick Perry.

Romney and Bachmann opened a forum on faith and freedom ahead of Thursday night's televised GOP debate with sharp criticism of their chief rival. Other competitors were following at the event tailored to the religious voters who are a key part of the party's base of support.

Bachmann said 2012 is a time for the GOP to nominate someone "who is a true social conservative." She didn't mention her rivals by name, but she has criticized Perry's positions on illegal immigration and mandated vaccinations.

"Of any election, this is the one where conservatives don't have to settle," she said.

For his part, Romney pitched himself as a proven businessman who detoured into politics for one term as Massachusetts' governor.

US, Other Nations Walk Out At U.N. Assembly

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — American diplomats led a walkout at the U.N. General Assembly Thursday as Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad fiercely attacked the United States and major West European nations as "arrogant powers" ruled by greed and eager for military adventurism.

The two U.S. diplomats, who specialize in the Middle East, were followed out of the chamber by diplomats from more than 30 countries. They included the 27 European Union members, Australia, New Zealand, Somalia, Liechtenstein, Monaco, San Marino and Macedonia, a U.N. diplomat said. Israel boycotted the speech.

Ahmadinejad's fiery anti-U.S. and anti-Israeli rhetoric has been a staple of the General Assembly's ministerial meetings.

Last year, Ahmadinejad provoked a walkout by the U.S., EU, and others when he said a majority of people in the United States and around the world believe the American government staged the Sept. 11, 2001 terror attacks in an attempt to assure Israel's survival.

The provocative comments prompted the U.S. delegation to walk out of Ahmadinejad's U.N. speech, where he also blamed the U.S. as the power behind U.N. Security Council sanctions against Iran for its refusal to halt uranium enrichment, a technology that can be used as fuel for electricity generation or to build nuclear weapons.

House To Vote Thursday Night On Disaster Bill

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Republicans grappled Thursday with ways to revive a must-pass measure to provide billions of dollars in disaster relief and prevent a government shutdown at the end of next week.

House Majority Leader Eric Cantor, R-Va., said the House would vote anew on the legislation Thursday evening.

But it was unclear whether GOP leaders had decided on exactly what the new legislation would look like or whether they had enough votes to reverse Wednesday's embarrassing House rejection of the bill.

Cantor would provide no details after emerging from a closed-door meeting among Republicans. House Rules Committee Chairman David Dreier, R-Calif., said the legislation would be similar to the earlier version and perhaps contain additional savings to help pay for the disaster aid.

On Wednesday, the House voted 230-195 to reject the legislation, which contained \$3.7 billion in disaster aid and enough money to keep the government running into mid-November. The loss came at the hands of Democrats and tea party Republicans.

Administration Fights Severance Pay Lawsuit

WASHINGTON (AP) — Two days after repeal of the "don't ask, don't tell" policy against gays serving openly in the military, the Obama administration was in court Thursday opposing a lawsuit seeking full severance pay for those dismissed under the law.

The American Civil Liberties Union is seeking class action status for 142 people who only got half pay after their discharge because of being gay. But the Justice Department asked the U.S. Court of Federal Claims to dismiss the case.

Judge Christine Odell Cook Miller said she probably will let the case continue and questioned why the government wouldn't pay now that the law has changed.

"Your timing is exquisite — two days after the policy goes into effect eliminating 'don't ask, don't tell,' here we are," she said as she took the bench.

"I would consider this to be an unenviable argument to have at this time," she told the government's attorney later.

Defunct NASA Satellite To Fall Back To Earth

LOS ANGELES (AP) — While North America appears to be off the hook, scientists are scrambling to pinpoint exactly where and when a dead NASA climate satellite will plummet back to Earth on Friday.

The 6-ton, bus-sized satellite is expected to break into more than a hundred pieces as it plunges through the atmosphere, most of it burning up.

But if you're hoping for a glimpse, the odds are slim. Most sightings occur by chance because the re-entry path can't be predicted early enough to alert people, said Canadian Ted Molczan, who tracks satellites for a hobby.

In all his years of monitoring, Molczan has only witnessed one tumble back to Earth — the 2004 return of a Russian communications satellite.

Obama Challenges Boehner, McConnell

BY JIM KUHNHENN
Associated Press

CINCINNATI — Needling his top Republican adversaries on their own turf, President Barack Obama stood in the shadow of an outdated and heavily used Ohio River bridge Thursday and called his rivals out by name to demand action on his \$447 billion jobs bill.

Making a point to choose a bridge linking House Speaker John Boehner's home state of Ohio with Kentucky, the home of Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell, Obama struck a cheeky tone that underscored the politics of the moment.

"Mr. Boehner, Mr. McConnell, help us rebuild this bridge," he declared. "Help us rebuild America. Help us put construction workers back to work. Pass this bill."

The president's incursion into northern Kentucky and southern Ohio is one of his most direct and defiant challenges to leaders of the opposition party. And it illustrated a desire by the president's advisers to distinguish him from Republicans and to get them to share some of the blame for the struggling economy.

Rejected as pure politics by Boehner and McConnell, the president's in-your-face approach showed no sign of changing any minds in Congress.

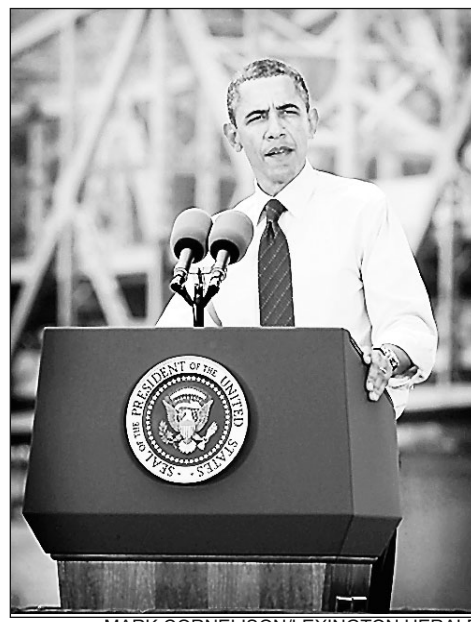
It also was a shift from the president's outreach to Boehner this summer, when the two men tried to work out a deal that would extend the nation's borrowing authority and cut long-term deficits as well.

Then, the president took Boehner golfing. Now, he's taking him to task.

"Part of the reason I came here is because Mr. Boehner and Mr. McConnell — those are the two most powerful Republicans in government," Obama said. "They can either kill this jobs bill, or they can help pass this jobs bill."

Obama said his legislation would put construction workers back to work around the country on projects like the Brent Spence Bridge, but the White House readily conceded that the choice of the aging span south of Cincinnati was symbolic. The bridge is scheduled to be repaired anyway starting in 2015.

"We have never suggested that ground would be broken on this project immediately," press secretary Jay Carney said on Air Force One en route to Ohio, though he said the president's job bill could speed up that timeline.



MARK CORNELISON/LEXINGTON HERALD LEADER/MCT
President Barack Obama delivers remarks at the Brent Spence Bridge in Ohio, urging Congress to pass the American Jobs Act, Thursday.

By selecting Ohio, Obama also raised his profile in politically important Ohio, a state that he won in 2008 but that George W. Bush also won twice. The Cincinnati Enquirer, however, greeted his visit with a downbeat banner front page headline: "Obama visit won't build new bridge."

McConnell and Boehner, both of whom have supported the bridge project, dismissed the visit as a political ploy.

"I would suggest, Mr. President, that you think about ways to actually help the people of Kentucky and Ohio, instead of how you can use their roads and bridges as a backdrop for making a political point," McConnell said on the Senate floor Thursday morning. "If you really want to help our state, then come back to Washington and work with Republicans on legislation that will actually do something to revive our economy and create jobs. And forget the political theater."

Said Boehner: "I am pleased the president is bringing attention to this much-needed project. But you know now is not the time for the president to go into campaign mode."

Both McConnell and Boehner oppose Obama's plans to pay for his jobs measures with new taxes, and his jobs package faces a tough fight on Capitol Hill, despite the aggressive campaign he's embarked on to sell it.

Alabama Executes Man Who Killed Store Clerk

BY HARRY R. WEBER
Associated Press

ATMORE, Ala. — A man described by a police informant as trying to make a name for himself was executed Thursday evening for the 1994 shooting death of an Alabama store clerk during a robbery.

Derrick O. Mason, 37, was administered an injection and pronounced dead minutes later at 6:49 p.m. local time at Alabama's Holman Prison. It was the third execution this week in the United States.

Strapped to the gurney, Mason gave a brief final statement, apologizing to the victim's family. He thanked the victim's father for getting in touch with him years ago and granting him his forgiveness. Just before the chemicals started pumping through the veins in Mason's arm, a prison chaplain held Mason's hand and knelt down and said a prayer before stepping back.

Mason's breathing slowed, his head tilted backward and his lips pursed several times before he became very still. Several minutes later, authorities closed the curtain on the death chamber.

During the execution, the

condemned man's mother Maggie Mason sat in the front row with her head bowed down. "He's resting for the first time," she said repeatedly. Later she held the hands of some other family members present and said: "He's gone."

Mason was convicted of killing 25-year-old Angela Cagle in Huntsville on March 24, 1994, by shooting her twice in the face at close range after ordering her to take her clothes off during an early morning robbery. The victim was found slain in the back room of a convenience store.

An unidentified man later told police that Mason committed the crime. The informant described the gun used, told police that Mason was "out of control" and "trying to make a name for himself," and then led authorities to Mason's car. Inside, police found a gun later determined to be the murder weapon. After he was arrested, Mason confessed, court records show.

Mason's execution capped a busy week in U.S. death chambers.

Georgia on Wednesday put Troy Davis to death for the 1989 death of a policeman, despite an international outcry and claims

he was innocent. In Texas, officials executed a white supremacist who dragged to death James Byrd Jr., a black man from East Texas.

Mason also was the fifth person executed in Alabama this year and the third to die since the state changed the first drug used in its execution cocktail from sodium thiopental to pentobarbital. The change follows a nationwide shortage of sodium thiopental.

Over the years, Mason argued that his Constitutional rights were violated because he was initially arrested on an unrelated misdemeanor assault war-

rant and therefore the gun found in his car should not have been admitted into evidence in the murder case. He also argued that his confession was involuntary because he was subjected to improper questioning, intoxicated and hungry during the interrogation, psychologically coerced, and misled by law enforcement officers.

Mason alleged that police interrogators grabbed him, pinned him down to his chair, and forced him to look at photographs, court records show. Appellate courts were not swayed by the arguments.

Texas Ends Final Meals

HOUSTON (AP) — Texas inmates who are set to be executed will no longer get their choice of last meals, a change prison officials made Thursday after a prominent state senator became miffed over an expansive request from a man condemned for a notorious dragging death.

Lawrence Russell Brewer, who was executed Wednesday for the hate crime slaying of James Byrd Jr. more than a decade ago, asked for two chicken fried steaks, a triple-meat bacon cheeseburger, fried okra, a pound of barbecue, three fajitas, a meat lover's pizza, a pint of ice cream and a slab of peanut butter fudge with crushed peanuts. Prison officials said Brewer didn't eat any of it.

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Hospice is a special kind of care designed to provide support for people in the final phase of terminal illness. Hospice is a steadily growing concept of humane and compassionate care that can be implemented in a variety of settings such as patient homes, hospitals and long-term care facilities. Hospice care seeks to enable patients to carry on an alert, pain free life and to manage other symptoms, so that their last days may be spent with dignity and quality, at home or in a home-like setting.

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