

Budget Politics

Spending Debate Heats Up

BY ANDREW TAYLOR

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — House Republicans plan to condition a short-term spending bill for averting a government shutdown next month on making Senate Democrats vote on — but not necessarily pass — a tea party-backed plan to dismantle President Barack Obama's health care overhaul.

The move would be a partial victory for conservatives demanding a House vote to "defund 'Obamacare'" as part of any must-pass stopgap funding bill. But GOP leaders are employing an unusual procedural trick to make sure that the tea party measure doesn't get in the way of smooth passage of a straightforward stopgap funding bill before the Oct. 1 start of the new budget year.

The unusual strategy would start with a House vote this week on a stopgap funding bill that includes the provision demanded by conservatives to block the

controversial health care law. The two issues, however, would automatically be decoupled when they're sent to the Senate. The maneuver would force Democrats controlling the Senate to vote first on defunding Obamacare before the House sends over a "clean" stopgap funding bill as a separate measure.

GOP leaders are set to unveil the idea to the rank and file at a closed-door meeting Tuesday morning and have slated a vote for later this week if enough Republicans buy into it.

"This plan keeps Republicans united against the implementation of Obamacare while forcing the Democrat-controlled Senate to choose whether to defund or defend this unpopular and ill-conceived law," said Rep. Michael Conaway, R-Texas.

The idea may not sit well with some conservatives who may see it as a tactical retreat that in the end won't touch Obama's health care law as its implementation marches ahead. It also would mean that House Republicans would need to

pass the measure without any help from Democrats unlikely to vote for it over its attack on Obamacare.

"Leadership doesn't get it. It's not about getting a vote; it's about the issue," said conservative Rep. Tim Huelskamp, R-Kan., who is often a thorn in the side of GOP leaders. "We've had 41 votes. The next vote should be on must-pass legislation."

The conservative Club for Growth, a group that sometimes supports Republicans challenging GOP incumbents it deems too moderate, came out swinging against the proposal.

"When members were at home over recess, did they hear their constituents ask for legislative tricks or principled leadership? Trying to fool Republicans into voting to fund Obamacare is even worse than offering a bill that deliberately funds it," said Club for Growth President Chris Chocola. "I hope this proposal is nothing more than a bad joke and is quickly discarded."

Cancer Patient Stuck With Higher Bills

WASHINGTON (AP) — Coping with advanced cancer, Bev Veals was in the hospital for chemo this summer when she got a call that her health plan was shutting down. Then, the substitute insurance she was offered wanted her to pay up to \$3,125, on top of premiums.

It sounds like one of those insurance horror stories President Barack Obama told to sell his health overhaul to Congress, but Veals wasn't in the clutches of a profit-driven company. Instead, she's covered by Obama's law — one of about 100,000 people with serious medical issues in a financially troubled government program.

Raw political divisions over health care have clouded chances of a fix for the Pre-Existing Condition Insurance Plan, leaving families like Veals and her husband Scott to juggle the consequences. That's not a good omen for solving other problems that could surface with "Obamacare."

"You don't advertise one thing and then give the customer another thing," said Veals, 49, who lives near Wilmington, N.C. "I finally felt for the first time going through this cancer that I had something dependable, and somebody pulled the plug."

In a statement, the federal Health and Human Services department said the program "continues to provide excellent coverage." But the department said it was unable to provide current enrollment numbers, which might reflect the impact of belt-tightening this summer that led North Carolina and 16 other states to turn their programs over to federal officials.

Zimmerman's Wife Won't Press Charges

LAKE MARY, Fla. (AP) — The sobbing wife of George Zimmerman called 911 Monday to report that her estranged husband was threatening her with a gun and had punched her father in the nose, but hours later she decided not to press charges against the man acquitted of all charges for fatally shooting Trayvon Martin.

Lake Mary police officers were still investigating the encounter as a domestic dispute, but no charges had been filed Monday afternoon. George Zimmerman, wearing a flannel shirt, baseball cap and with sunglasses on, left the home after being questioned by police.

Shellie Zimmerman, who has filed for divorce, initially told a 911 dispatcher that her husband had his hand on his gun as he sat in his car outside the home she was at with her father. She said she was scared because she wasn't sure what Zimmerman was capable of doing. But hours later she changed her story and said she never saw a firearm, said Lake Mary Police Chief Steve Bracknell.

For the time being, "domestic violence can't be invoked because she has changed her story and says she didn't see a firearm," Bracknell said.

On the 911 call, Shellie Zimmerman is sobbing and repeating "Oh my God" as she talks to a police dispatcher. She yells at her father to get inside the house, saying Zimmerman may start shooting at them.

NAACP Prepares To Find New President

WASHINGTON (AP) — Leaders of the nation's largest civil rights group pledged to continue fighting for voting rights, health care, a higher minimum wage and immigration reform, even as the NAACP begins searching for a new president and CEO.

After suffering turbulent leadership changes and scandals in the past, NAACP board members said the 104-year-old group is poised for a smooth transition this time as it seeks to replace outgoing President Benjamin Jealous. He announced on Sunday that he would step down at the end of the year.

Chairwoman Roslyn Brock said the board is disappointed Jealous is leaving after five years but that the group remains energized on issues nationwide.

"The NAACP is alive, and it's well," Brock said. "We have a strategic plan in place that will help guide our work for the next 50 years."

Brock said the NAACP's board is forming a search committee to find someone to succeed Jealous.

Apple May Unleash Cheaper iPhone

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Apple is expected to unveil its latest take on the iPhone Tuesday during an annual ritual that will probably cast a spotlight on the gadget maker's drive to regain market share and its sluggish pace of innovation.

In keeping with its tight-lipped ways, Apple Inc. hasn't disclosed what's on the agenda for the coming-out party scheduled to begin at 10 a.m. PDT at its Cupertino, Calif. headquarters.

But this is the time of year that Apple typically shows off the latest generation of its iPhone, a device that has reshaped the way people use computers since its debut in 2007. Apple took the wraps off the iPhone 5, the current model, last September. The company has never waited longer than a year to update the iPhone, which has generated \$88 billion in revenue during the past year.

Apple's timetable for rolling out products has vexed many investors who have watched the company's growth slow and profit margins decrease. Meanwhile, a bevy of smartphone makers, most of whom rely on Google Inc.'s free Android software, release wave after wave of devices that cost less than the iPhone. Those concerns are reflected in Apple's stock price, which has declined nearly 30 percent since peaking at \$705.07 at about the same time the iPhone 5 went on sale last year. The Standard & Poor's 500 index has risen about 14 percent during the same stretch.

Even though Apple's market value of roughly \$460 billion is more than any other company in the world, the deterioration in its stock price is escalating the pressure on CEO Tim Cook to prove he's the right leader to carry on the legacy of co-founder Steve Jobs. Since Cook became CEO two years ago, Apple has only pushed out new versions of products developed under Jobs, raising questions about whether the company's technological vision has become blurred under the new regime.

Clinton Endorses Plan To Punish Syria

BY KEN THOMAS

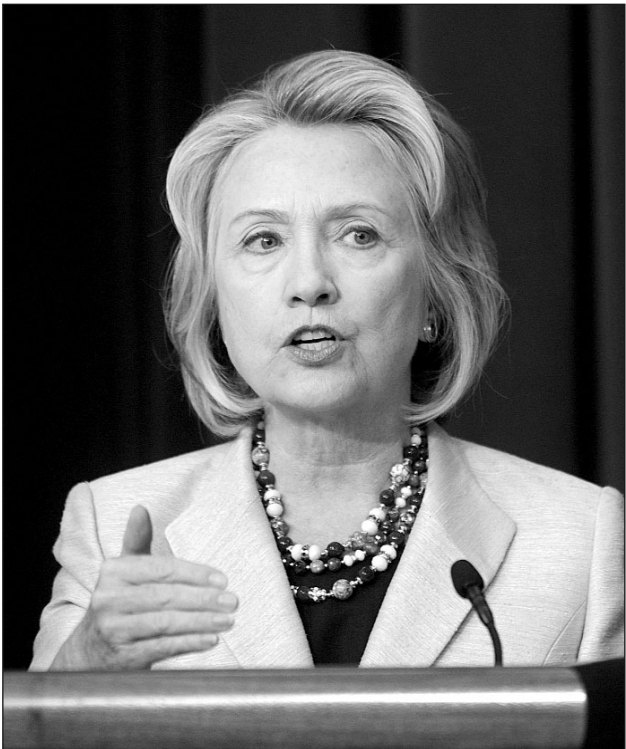
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton endorsed President Barack Obama's attempt to win congressional approval of a military strike in Syria, saying Monday that any move by the Assad regime to surrender its weapons to international control would be an "important step." But Clinton cautioned that the removal of its chemical weapons stockpile should not be an "excuse for delay and obstruction" by Syria.

Clinton met with Obama at the White House as the administration sought to sway skeptical lawmakers in Congress to approve a plan to punish Syria's government for last month's chemical weapons attack. The former first lady offered her first public statements on the Syrian crisis, adding her voice to a series of Obama allies who have supported the military action.

"I will continue to support his efforts and I hope the Congress will as well," Clinton said at forum on wildlife trafficking, an issue that was one of her priorities at the State Department.

Clinton noted that Secretary of State John Kerry had suggested a new proposal that would have Syria turn over its stockpiles but she said "the international community cannot ignore the ongoing threat of the Assad regime's stockpiling of chemical weapons."



OLIVIER DOULIERY/ABACA PRESS/MCT
Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton speaks about the U.S intervention in Syria during a White House Forum to Counter Wildlife Trafficking Monday in Washington.

"Now if the regime immediately surrenders its stockpile to international control as was suggested by Secretary Kerry and the Russians that would be an important step. But this cannot be another excuse for delay and obstruction and Russia has to support the international community's efforts sincerely or be held to account," she said.

"The world will have to deal with this threat as swiftly and comprehensively as possible," Clinton added.

Clinton has largely avoided weighty foreign policy issues since leaving the State Department in February but her backing of Obama's plan could help persuade wary Democrats considering the administration's plan to use force in

Syria in the aftermath of President Bashar Assad's alleged use on chemical weapons.

As the nation's top diplomat, Clinton supported intervening in Syria with a proposal in the summer of 2012, developed with then-CIA Director David Petraeus and then-Defense Secretary Leon Panetta, to arm vetted units of the Syrian rebels. The White House later rebuffed those efforts. Clinton also pushed attempts in the United Nations to develop a political transition in Syria and provide humanitarian aid to Syrians.

The former first lady is the Democrats' leading contender for the White House in 2016 if she decides to run for president again and any statements she makes on key policy issues could follow her into a future campaign.

Obama's quest for the Democratic nomination in 2008 was helped by his opposition to the Iraq war, a stance that he used effectively against Clinton. As a New York senator, Clinton voted in 2002 to authorize the Iraq war, but that position later put her in disfavor with many anti-war Democratic voters in many early voting states.

Clinton spoke about Syria at a White House forum on wildlife trafficking, where she was joined by her daughter, Chelsea Clinton, Interior Secretary Sally Jewell and other activists who discussed ways of disrupting the trafficking and poaching of African elephants and rhinos.

Consumer Borrowing Rises \$10.4B In July

BY MARTIN CRUTSINGER

AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON — Americans cut back on using their credit cards in July for the second straight month, while taking on more debt to buy cars and attend school. The decline in credit card use suggests consumers remain cautious, a trend that could hold back economic growth.

Consumers increased their borrowing \$10.4 billion in July from June to a record high of \$2.85 trillion, the Federal Reserve said Monday. That followed a gain of \$11.9 billion in June.

A category that includes auto loans and student loans increased \$12.3 billion in July to a record \$2 trillion. But a measure consumers' credit card debt fell \$1.8 billion to roughly \$850 billion. That followed an even larger \$3.7 billion decline in the credit card category in June.

July's pattern of consumers' borrowing habits illustrated trends that have surfaced in the post-recession economy: Americans are using credit for their most urgent needs, while forgoing debt for discretionary purchases.

The auto and student loan category is up 8.1 percent from a year ago and has risen in every month but one since May 2010. But credit card debt

has barely changed in the past year and is nearly 17 percent below its peak hit in July 2008 — seven months after the Great Recession began.

Slow but steady job growth and small wage gains have made many Americans more reluctant to charge goods and services to their plastic. That could hold back consumer spending, which accounts for 70 percent of economic activity. Americans may also be hesitant to take on more high-interest debt because of higher Social Security taxes.

At the same time, the weak economy is sending more people back to school. The Federal Reserve's consumer credit report does not separate student loans and auto loans. But the Federal Reserve Bank of New York quarterly re-

port on consumer credit shows student loan debt has been the biggest driver of borrowing since the Great Recession officially ended in June 2009.

Economists are hoping that as the impact of those higher taxes fades, consumer spending will strengthen in the second half of this year. That forecast is also counting on steady job growth to bolster income growth and support higher spending.

But there are forces still working to dampen growth, including thousands of federal furloughs which depressed income growth in July. And job growth has been weaker than first thought.

The government reported that employers added 169,000 jobs in August but 74,000

fewer jobs in June and July than previously reported.

The unemployment rate dropped to 7.3 percent, but lowest in nearly five years. But the rate fell because more Americans stopped looking for work and were no longer counted as unemployed.

The overall economy grew at an annual rate of 2.5 percent in the April-June quarter. But recent data has economists predicting that growth may be slowing in the July-September quarter to an annual rate of 2 percent.

The Fed's borrowing report tracks credit card debt, auto loans and student loans but not mortgages, home equity loans or other loans secured by real estate.




AM 1450

MORNING COFFEE


WEEKDAYS MONDAY-FRIDAY

Tuesday, September 10
7:40 am The Center (Christy Hauer)
8:20 am Ole Hansen Event (Buddy Hovland)


Wednesday, September 11
7:40 am YC Observer (Kathy Church, Kristy Wyland)
8:20 am Hy-Vee Foods (Chef Staci)



David J. Abbott, M.D.
Board Certified Otolaryngologist



Micah M. Likness, M.D.
Otolaryngologist



Catherine A. Wright, M.D.
Board Certified Otolaryngologist


A successful team is a group of many hands but of one mind.

— Bill Bethel

A total team approach is appropriate in so many circumstances, including your health care. At Ear, Nose & Throat Associates P.C. our specialists work together, with one goal in mind: to provide Yankton area residents with the highest quality of ear, nose and throat health care.


We are proud to welcome Micah M. Likness M.D. to our team of specialists. As an Otolaryngologist, Dr. Likness joins Dr. David J. Abbott, and Dr. Catherine A. Wright, Board Certified Otolaryngologists, Dr. Beth J. Beeman, Audiologist and Dr. Todd A. Farnham, Audiologist. Working together, they comprise the area's most comprehensive medical team for the head and neck area. With the addition of Dr. Likness, our patients will experience shorter wait times for appointments.

If you suffer from sinus problems, balance disorders, hearing difficulties, sleep apnea, snoring, or any other problem in the ear, nose or throat area, please call **605-665-0062** to make an appointment with any of our specialists.




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