

Opposition To Health Care Law Flares

WASHINGTON (AP) — Implacable Republican opposition to Obamacare has Congress once more veering closer to gridlock.

In the House, more than 60 conservatives support tacking a one-year delay in implementing the health care law onto a bill needed to prevent a partial government shutdown on Oct. 1.

Senior leaders warn the GOP could suffer significant political reverses if the party goes along with the plan and President Barack Obama and Democrats resist, as they have made clear they will, but it is strongly backed by senators with tea party ties and their influential allies outside Congress. Its leading advocate, Rep. Tom Graves of Georgia, said the proposal unifies the rank and file "around two objectives we have, keeping the government open and protecting our constituents from the harmful effects of Obamacare."

Across the Capitol, where energy legislation is under debate, Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell is proposing to add a one-year delay in the requirements for individuals to purchase coverage and for businesses to provide it to their employees. Obama has already ordered the postponement for businesses.

Additionally, Sen. David Vitter, R-La., is threatening to hold up passage until the Senate agrees to vote on a proposal that would require lawmakers, their aides and presidential political appointees to obtain their coverage through exchanges that would be set up under the law beginning Oct. 1. They would also be required to pay the full cost of their insurance out of pocket, denying them the contribution that the government currently makes as their employer.

Some In Colorado Preferring To Stay

BOULDER, Colo. (AP) — In the days right after floodwaters rushed through the Rocky Mountain foothills, the helicopter crews that lifted stranded people to safety were greeted like heroes. Nearly a week later, they are often being waved away by stubborn mountain residents who refuse to abandon their homes.

Caleb Liesveld hiked several miles into tiny Pinewood Springs, midway between Longmont and Estes Park, to try to convince his parents to leave. His mother relented, but his father refused. The elder Liesveld was determined to use heavy equipment from the family's granite quarry to resurrect an old stagecoach road that would let residents get vehicles in and out.

"He wants to be productive, and I don't think he'd really know what to do with himself off the mountain," Caleb Liesveld said Tuesday.

In nearby Lyons, a number of residents were working together to clean rotting food out of abandoned restaurant refrigerators.

"We are a community. We all want to stay here and help," Molly Morton, who also declined rescuers' advice to leave or face months of isolation, said Tuesday in a phone interview.

NJ Boardwalk Fire Linked To Wiring

TOMS RIVER, N.J. (AP) — The massive fire that destroyed part of a Jersey shore boardwalk and dozens of businesses began accidentally in wiring damaged in Superstorm Sandy, and should prompt coastal property owners to get their own equipment inspected for similar danger, officials said Tuesday.

The boardwalk fire in Seaside Park and Seaside Heights started Thursday in aged wiring that had been compromised by salt water and sand during the Oct. 29 storm, federal and county investigators said at a news conference. The wind-whipped blaze destroyed more than 50 businesses in the two towns.

Gun Laws Didn't Block Navy Yard Shooter

BY ALICIA A. CALDWELL

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The gunman in the mass shootings at the Washington Navy Yard, Aaron Alexis, had a history of violent outbursts, was at least twice accused of firing guns in anger and was in the early stages of treatment for serious mental problems, according to court records and U.S. law enforcement officials.

But Alexis apparently managed to exploit seams in the nation's patchwork of complicated gun laws designed to keep weapons out of the hands of dangerous people. He was able to buy a shotgun in Virginia with out-of-state identification, even though that would have prevented him from buying a handgun.

It is illegal for gun dealers to sell handguns to such out-of-state buyers, but the Firearms Owners' Protection Act, passed by Congress in 1986, opened up interstate sales for shotguns and rifles. Virginia gun laws require only that an out-of-state buyer show valid identification, pass a background check and otherwise abide by state laws in order to buy a shotgun in the state. Alexis was never prosecuted for



OLIVIER DOULIERY/ABACA PRESS/MCT
A soldier stands guard at the front gate of the Washington Naval Yard on Tuesday in Washington, D.C. Aaron Alexis, discharged by the Navy in 2011, staged a two-hour rampage Monday at the Washington Navy Yard, killing 12 people before being shot to death by law enforcement officials.

the two misdemeanors involving guns.

Alexis bought the shotgun at Sharpshooters Small Arms Range in Lorton, Va. on Saturday, according to a statement from the attorney for the gun range.

Michael Slocum said in an email that Alexis rented a rifle, bought bullets and used the range before buying the shotgun and 24 shells. Slocum said Alexis passed a federal background check.

Law enforcement officials

visited the range Monday, reviewing the store's video and other records.

"What the 1986 Firearms Owners' Protection Act did was it made it more convenient for gun buyers," said Kristen Rand, the legislative director at the Violence Policy Center. "That's the road we've been on for a while: The convenience of gun owner always seems to trump the right of victims not to be shot."

Federal gun laws bar the

mentally ill from legally buying guns from licensed dealers. But the law requires that someone be involuntarily committed to a mental health facility or declared mentally ill by a judge, and that information must be reported to the FBI in order to appear on a background checks. In the wake of the 2007 shooting at Virginia Tech, state authorities changed state laws to make it tougher for the mentally ill to buy guns there.

Russia Opposes Use Of Force In Resolution On Syria

BY ALBERT AJI
AND BASSEM MROUE

Associated Press

DAMASCUS, Syria — Russia insisted Tuesday that a U.N. Security Council resolution governing Syria's handling of its chemical weapons not allow the use of force, but it suggested that could change if Damascus reneges on the deal to give up its stockpile.

The main Syrian opposition coalition, meanwhile, urged the international community to take swift action against the regime of President Bashar Assad in response to a U.N.

finding that the nerve agent sarin was used in a deadly attack near the capital last month.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said his country "spoke clearly" about rejecting the use of force when the chemical weapons agreement was worked out Saturday in Geneva between Washington and Moscow. The plan calls for an inventory of Syria's chemical weapons within a week, with all components of the program out of the country or destroyed by mid-2014.

But if signs emerge that Syria is not fulfilling the agree-

ment or there are reports of further chemical weapons use, "then the Security Council will examine the situation," Lavrov said, suggesting the issue could be reconsidered.

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said a resolution on the U.S.-Russia deal must be enforceable, telling reporters that the "most effective" way is under Chapter 7 of the U.N. Charter. That deals with threats to international peace and security and has provisions for enforcement by military or non-military means, such as sanctions.

While in principle all Secu-

urity Council resolutions are legally binding, Ban said, "in reality, we need clear guidelines under Chapter 7."

Lavrov made his remarks at a news conference in Moscow with French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius. France and the U.S. say a military option remained on the table, and they are pushing for the U.N. resolution to reflect that.

Diplomats said the five permanent council members — the U.S., Russia, China, Britain and France — made little progress at a meeting Tuesday on a draft resolution and would meet again Wednesday.

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- Never attempt to unplug equipment when power is engaged.
- Carry a fire extinguisher on each piece of powered equipment.
- Designate a safe play area for kids that is a safe distance from machinery.
- Plan an escape route when working around animals in tight areas.
- Wear protective equipment like masks and goggles to safeguard your lungs and eyes.

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