

Government Edges Closer To Shutdown

BY ANDREW TAYLOR AND DONNA CASSATA
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Moving closer to the brink of a government shutdown, House Republicans vowed Thursday they won't simply accept the stopgap legislation that is likely to remain after Senate Democrats strip away a plan to dismantle President Barack Obama's health care law.

The defiant posture sets the stage for weekend drama on Capitol Hill after the Senate sends the fractious House a straightforward bill to keep the government operating through Nov. 15 rather than partly closing down at midnight Monday. The Senate is likely to act Friday after Democrats use their procedural advantages to remove the House's tea party-inspired provision to "defund Obamacare."

Speaker John Boehner of Ohio and several rank-and-file Republicans said the House simply won't accept a "clean" spending measure, even though that's been the norm in Congress on dozens of occasions since the 1995-96 government closures that bruised Republicans and strengthened the hand of Democratic President Bill Clinton. "I don't see that happening,"

Boehner said. Still, he declared that "I have no interest in a government shutdown" and he doesn't expect one to occur on Tuesday.

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid of Nevada said the Democratic-led chamber will not relent.

"The Senate will never pass a bill that guts the Affordable Care Act," Reid declared.

A partial government shutdown would keep hundreds of thousands of federal workers off the job, close national parks and generate damaging headlines for whichever side the public held responsible.

Washington faces two deadlines: The Oct. 1 start of the new budget year and a mid-October date — now estimated for the 17th — when the government can no longer borrow money to pay its bills on time and in full.

The first deadline requires Congress to pass a spending bill to allow agencies to stay open. The mid-month deadline requires Congress to increase the government's \$16.7 trillion borrowing cap to avoid a first-ever default on its payments, which include interest obligations, Social Security benefits, payments to thousands of contractors large and small, and salaries for the military.

The standoff just four days before the end of the fiscal year increased the possibility of a shutdown, with no signs of compromise.

The No. 2 Democrat in the Senate, Dick Durbin of Illinois, said that because of the time it takes the Senate to approve even non-controversial bills, if the House amends a Senate-passed spending bill and returns it to the Senate over the weekend, "That is a concession on their part that we're going to shut down the government."

Not far from the Capitol, at a community college in Largo, Md., Obama insisted he would not negotiate over his signature domestic achievement, either on a bill to keep the government operating or legislation to raise the nation's borrowing authority.

"The entire world looks to us to make sure that the world economy is stable. You don't mess with that," Obama said of the debt ceiling/default measure. "And that's why I will not negotiate on anything when it comes to the full faith and credit of the United States of America."

Responding to Obama's non-negotiable stand, Boehner said, "Well, I'm sorry but it just doesn't work that way."

Court Upholds 50 Years For Liberia's Taylor

BY MIKE CORDER
Associated Press

LEIDSCHEMENDAM, Netherlands — More than a decade after fuelling a murderous campaign of terror in Sierra Leone by supplying rebels with arms, Charles Taylor was definitively convicted and imprisoned Thursday for 50 years, in a ruling that finally delivered justice for victims.

The appeals chamber of the Special Court for Sierra Leone upheld the 65-year-old former Liberian president's conviction on 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity, including terrorism, murder, rape and using child soldiers.

Taylor is the first former head of state convicted by an international war crimes court since World War II and Thursday's confirmation was welcomed as underscoring a



Taylor

new era of accountability for heads of state.

"This is a historic and momentous day for the people of Sierra Leone and the region," U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said in a statement.

"The judgment is a significant milestone in international criminal justice, as it confirms the conviction of a former head of state for aiding, abetting and planning war crimes and crimes against humanity."

Stephen Rapp, the ambassador for war crimes issues at the U.S. Department of State and former prosecutor at the Sierra Leone court, said the ruling "sends a clear message to all the world, that when you commit

crimes like this, it may not happen overnight, but there will be a day of reckoning."

However, it also appeared to establish dueling sets of jurisprudence at two international courts on opposite sides of The Hague on the question of when senior officials can support one side in another country's civil war — an issue world leaders must consider if they mull over arming rebels in Syria.

The Sierra Leone appeals panel rejected a controversial February ruling by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), which said that to prove a leader has aided and abetted a crime, the assistance has to be specifically directed at committing a crime. In that case, the former chief of staff of the Yugoslav national army was acquitted of aiding and abetting atrocities by Bosnian

Serb forces even though he had sent them arms and other supplies.

Taylor's case appeared to swing the pendulum back toward a lower burden of proof for prosecutors.

His lawyer complained that the two rulings have created "entirely chaotic jurisprudence" at international tribunals.

If Taylor had been prosecuted by the Yugoslav tribunal, "I dare say the outcome would have been different, and that courthouse is less than 10 kilometers (six miles) away from this courthouse," Morris Anyah said.

But international law expert Michael Scharf of Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio, said the ruling Thursday "righted the ship" after the Yugoslav court had made prosecuting leaders who support rebels much more difficult.

Lawyer

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made \$8,250 in donations during the first half of 2012 to 18 candidates for election to the Legislature.

Those contributions included \$1,000 apiece to then-Senate Republican leader Russ Olson of Wentworth; Sen. Corey Brown, R-Gettysburg, who is the Senate pres-

ident pro tem; and Sen. Dan Lederman, R-Dakota Dunes, who recently was chosen by his caucus as the Senate Republican assistant leader.

Swier reported those financial matters on a June 20, 2012, report filed with the secretary of state.

On Oct. 23, 2012, he filed a statement of organization for the PAC, normally is the first step and should have been done months earlier when the money was accepted from Free Conferencing.

Swier also filed on Oct. 23, 2012, a pre-general election finance report for the PAC showing a total of \$4,000 in contributions to others, including four legislative candidates and \$3,100 to the Senate Republican Campaign Committee, which was chaired by Olson and had Brown as treasurer.

The report filed by Olson and Brown for their PAC however showed only a \$1,050 contribution from Swier's PAC.

The PAC's year-end re-

port showed a final contribution of \$250 to Rushmore political action committee which was operated by Lederman. Lederman later said this was payment for a pheasant hunt which Swier didn't attend.

Swier has been embroiled in a years-long set of disputes before the state Public Utilities Commission over the business practices and licensing of Native American Telecom.

Swier drew attention in-

advertently to the campaign finance issue when he took a letter of support from Lederman to the commission. Lederman's Rushmore PAC previously donated to the election campaigns of two commissioners.

Swier's filings for the PAC appeared to show double entries of contributions to candidates. After news stories about the Swier PAC's activities were reported by this newspaper and others, Democrats who received con-

tributions declared they would return the money.

Swier, Native American Telecom and Free Conferencing were successful in blocking previous legislation that attempted to restrict certain telephone-business practices in South Dakota.

Swier became subject of a state investigation after the newspaper reports about the PAC's finances. Convictions have been infrequent in South Dakota for campaign finance violations.

USD

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tim of what we have rather than what we could be.

"You don't get to be what you can be as a state, as a county, as a city, as anything, without determining what you want and figuring out how to get there," he said. "By and large, you get there by tracking avenues that make a difference, that solve problems. It's not by skills."

Abbott added that while he is glad skills-related employers are in South Dakota, the state will not change because of their presence. "I hope we keep them all, but I hope we attract other businesses that are much more knowledge-based, and you get those kinds of things by emphasizing the ability to solve the very problems that they're trying to solve," he said.

While Abbott said that he loves South Dakota, "our state has a tremendous aversion to taxes. ... We don't want to pay for them. We want excellence. We don't care to pay for it."

The state is not unusual in that regard, he said, but

added that its low tolerance for failure also creates problems.

"I don't believe in throwing money at a problem, but I think it's pretty clear we do not support education, either K-12 or public higher ed., to the extent that we should."

In essence, the current system pits K-12 and higher ed against each other, Abbott said.

"We should be lockstep, hand in hand," he said. "We should not be pitted against one another for the ... gleanings."

As a result, Abbott said it is hard to conclude, looking forward, that universities will be appropriated significantly more dollars on an annual basis.

"The demographics are not on our side," he said. "My generation is rapidly growing older, and simply, the demands for services by older folks are (increasing). ... That's just the way it is. And, there is a common belief that public higher education is too expensive. Period. "Fair or unfair, true or untrue, the fact is, perception becomes reality if that's what you think," he said.

Abbott said he does not

think this is the case.

"I regret that at this current time, students pay for about 60 percent of their education, compared to the 40 that I paid. But I still think comparatively speaking, across the country, that we are a very good value," he said. "But the public doesn't know that because what they hear is, 'Education is too expensive.'"

As a result, Abbott said he does not envision more than modest appropriations.

"Our state provides less than 30 percent of our funding, so every time the state raises our salaries by 3 percent, we have a whole bunch of people that we have to cover that we would not get state dollars for. So that requires an increase in tuition," he said.

Abbott said he was told Wednesday that actuaries had underestimated health care increases for the second year, which will lead to even more adjustments.

"It's pretty clear that we're going to have to pony up as a state for health plans," he said. "Nobody wants not to do that — we want to do that — but that doesn't make it any more palatable."

Camp

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with the camp after learning of a medical condition affecting her family.

"The reason I heard about it was because our family had recently been diagnosed with having Fabry (disease)," she said. "Once we identified the person in our family who had it, everybody was tested, and we have 11 family members with this."

"I went (to the camp) with my brother — who actually has Fabry's — and we were both volunteers."

She added that having experienced the disease in her own family has further motivated her to help others who are dealing with the same illness.

"It was very fulfilling," she said. "I'm fortunate enough not

to have had it, but there's so many cousins, aunts, uncles and siblings that do have it, so it was a way for me to give back."

Cornay said the experience was a new one for her and the kids which she worked with.

"It was really interesting that there were so many ideas of what it means to have this disease," she said. "Some of the kids had come there and never met anybody else who had this disease. Some kids have been made fun of. So it was all across the spectrum from people who had never even heard of it before to people who have been living with it in their families for a long time."

For more information on Victory Junction, visit www.victoryjunction.org.

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