

Gay Marriage May Go To Supreme Court

WASHINGTON (AP) — Both sides in the gay marriage debate agree on one thing: It's time for the Supreme Court to settle the matter.

Even a justice recently said she thinks so, too. The emerging consensus makes it likely that the justices soon will agree to take up the question of whether the Constitution forbids states from defining marriage as the union of a man and a woman. A final ruling isn't likely before June 2015, but a decision to get involved could come as soon as the end of this month.

"I don't see a lot of reasons for them to wait," says Dale Carpenter, a gay rights expert at the University of Minnesota law school. "You have almost no one at this point opposed to certiorari," the legal term for high court review.

Officials in five states in which marriage bans were struck down by federal courts have rushed their appeals to the Supreme Court, in time for consideration by the justices when they meet in private on Sept. 29. Moving at breakneck speed, at least for the legal system, Indiana and Wisconsin filed appeals on Tuesday, just five days after the federal appeals court in Chicago struck down their state bans. The Chicago decision itself came just nine days after judges heard arguments, extremely fast for a process that usually is measured in months. Officials in Oklahoma, Utah and Virginia also have appealed to the Supreme Court.

Flight 17 Wreckage Still In Ukraine

HRABOVE, Ukraine (AP) — A child's jump rope, its yellow handles blistered and charred. A burned book in Tagalog. Chunks of twisted fuselage. More than seven weeks after being shot from the sky, the wreckage from Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 still lay strewn Tuesday across the fields of eastern Ukraine.

As evidence of the July 17 aviation disaster that killed all 298 people on board remained exposed to the elements, investigators hundreds of miles away in the Netherlands — who have not yet visited the crash site because it is deemed too dangerous — released a preliminary report that left key questions unanswered.

The plane had no mechanical or other technical problem in the seconds before it broke up in the sky after being struck by multiple "high-energy objects from outside the aircraft," the report said.

There were multiple punctures in the cockpit and front section of the fuselage, it said — damage that could be caused by a missile that detonates in front of its target and peppers it with small chunks of metal. However, investigators did not identify the source of the fragments or say who fired them.

Although the report drew no conclusions about responsibility, U.S. State Department spokeswoman Marie Harf said the findings were consistent with "our original assessment, that it was likely shot down by one of these surface-to-air missiles fired from separatist-controlled territory in eastern Ukraine."

Canada Says Lost 1840s Ship Found

TORONTO (AP) — One of two British explorer ships that vanished in the Arctic nearly 170 years ago during a search for the fabled Northwest Passage has been found, Canada's prime minister announced Tuesday in a discovery that could unlock one of history's biggest mysteries and swell Canadian pride.

Last seen in the 1840s while under the command of Rear Adm. Sir John Franklin, HMS Erebus and HMS Terror have long been among the most sought-after prizes in marine archaeology and the subject of songs, poems and novels.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper's office said the well-preserved wreck of one of the vessels was found Sunday with the help of a remotely operated underwater vehicle. It was 11 meters (yards) below the surface, near King William Island, about 1,200 miles northwest of Toronto.

Harper said that it is unclear which ship it is, but that sonar images yielded enough information to confirm it was one of Franklin's.

"This is truly a historic moment for Canada," said Harper, who was beaming, uncharacteristically. "This has been a great Canadian story and mystery and the subject of scientists, historians, writers and singers, so I think we really have an important day in mapping the history of our country."

Ferguson Reforms Met With Rancor

FERGUSON, Mo. (AP) — Efforts by city leaders in the St. Louis suburb where an unarmed black 18-year-old was fatally shot by a white police officer to repair the local government's fractured relationship with its residents got off to a rocky start Tuesday at the first public meeting of elected officials since Michael Brown's death.

The shooting last month exposed an undercurrent of racial unrest in Ferguson and other nearby suburbs in mostly black communities of north St. Louis County and prompted days of sometimes violent protests.

The Ferguson City Council announced a set of proposals in a press release Monday that include reducing the revenue from court fines used for general city operations and reforming court procedures. Critics say reliance on court revenue and traffic fines to fund city services more heavily penalizes low-income defendants who can't afford private attorneys and who are often jailed for not promptly paying those fines.

Obama To Seek Arms, Training For Syrian Opposition

BY JULIE PACE
AP White House Correspondent

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama will ask Congress to quickly authorize the arming and training of Syrian opposition forces but will press forward without formal sign-off from lawmakers on a broader military and political effort to combat militants in Syria and Iraq, administration officials said Tuesday.

Obama was to outline his plans Wednesday in a rare prime-time address to the nation, a format that underscores the seriousness of the threat posed by the Islamic State militants. The president's broader strategy could include more wide-ranging airstrikes against targets in Iraq and possibly in Syria, and hinges on military and political commitments from allies in Europe, the Middle East and elsewhere.

Ahead of his address, the president huddled with congressional leaders at the White House. Following the hour-long discussion, the White House said Obama told lawmakers that he "has the authority he needs to take action" against the Islamic State militants but would still welcome action from Con-



Obama

gress that would "aid the overall effort and demonstrate to the world that the United States is united in defeating the threat."

Even before Obama's meeting with Senate and House leaders Tuesday, some lawmakers suggested a

congressional vote on the president's plans was unlikely before the midterm elections in November.

"As a practical matter, I don't really see the time that it would take to really get this out and have a full debate and discuss all the issues," said Rep. Howard "Buck" McKeon, R-Calif., chairman of the House Armed Services Committee.

For Obama, a sustained U.S. intervention in the Middle East is at odds with the vision he had for the region when he ran for president on a pledge to end the war in Iraq, where the role of American fighting forces drew to a close nearly three years ago. The timing of his announcement Wednesday night was all the more striking, with Obama's address to the nation scheduled just hours before anniversary commemora-

tions of the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

Among the president's most urgent priorities will be seeking authorization from Congress to arm more moderate elements of the opposition fighting Syrian President Bashar Assad. The president asked lawmakers earlier this year for a \$500 million train-and-equip program, but the plan stalled on Capitol Hill.

With Obama ruling out sending U.S. ground troops into combat in Iraq or Syria, bolstering the capacity of the Iraqi security forces and Syrian opposition will be crucial to efforts to root out the militant group that has moved freely across the blurred border between the two countries. U.S. airstrikes could help give the forces in both countries the space to make gains against the Islamic State.

Administration officials said Obama sees a congressional authorization for a Syrian train-and-equip message as sending a strong signal to allies who are considering similar efforts. Secretary of State John Kerry was traveling to the region for discussions in Saudi Arabia and Jordan. On Capitol Hill, there was little consensus on the scope of Obama's authorities.

With Surge In Liberia, Ebola Case Toll Above 4,200

BY SARAH DILORENZO AND MARIA CHENG
Associated Press

DAKAR, Senegal — A surge in Ebola infections in Liberia is driving a spiraling outbreak in West Africa that is increasingly putting health workers at risk as they struggle to treat an overwhelming number of patients.

A higher proportion of health workers has been infected in this outbreak than in any previous one. The latest infection was of a doctor with the World Health Organization treating patients in Sierra Leone. The organization gave no details, but an American who became infected while working in West Africa landed in the U.S. Tuesday to get treatment at Emory University Hospital.

This is the second WHO staffer to be infected in Sierra Leone, and the U.N. health agency said Tuesday that after an investigation of the first case, staffers battling Ebola there now have better working conditions — including larger, more private quarters.

The outbreak sweeping West Africa is thought to have killed more than 2,200 people, and public health experts agree that it is out of control. More than 4,200 people have believed to have been sickened in Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria and Senegal.

The disease is spreading particularly quickly in Liberia, where WHO figures published Tuesday showed that more than 500 new cases were recorded in a week. The organization warned Monday that it expects thousands of new cases in the country in the coming weeks.

Sierra Leone said it is also expecting to uncover potentially hundreds of new cases during a three-day nationwide lockdown later this month. While people are confined to their homes, thousands of volunteers will go house to house to search for those infected, Sidie Yahya Tunis, a Health Ministry spokesman said Tuesday.

Health workers in Liberia have also paid a heavy toll; 160 have been sickened in that country, and 80 have died, according to Karin Landgren, the U.N. envoy to the country. Health workers are at particular risk because of their close contact with the sick since Ebola is only spread by contact with bodily fluids of those who have symptoms.

A shortage of doctors and nurses to care for these patients is being exacerbated by the sheer number of health workers becoming infected.



KARL MONDON/BAY AREA NEWS GROUP/MCT
Apple CEO Tim Cook introduces the iPhone 6 and the Apple smartwatch at the Flint Center on Tuesday in Cupertino, Calif.

Apple Unveils Mobile Payment System

CUPERTINO, Calif. (AP) — Apple unveiled its long-anticipated smartwatch Tuesday, introducing a device that transplants the features of an iPhone onto a smaller screen that's never more than an arm's length away.

Dubbed the Apple Watch, the gadget marks the technology trendsetter's attempt to usher in an era of wearable computing and lift its sales with another revolutionary product.

The watch's debut also heralds a turning point in Tim Cook's three-year reign as Apple CEO. Although the company has thrived under Cook's leadership, it had only released upgrades to the iPhone,

iPad and other products hatched before his predecessor, Steve Jobs, died in October 2011. The lack of totally new devices raised questions about whether Apple had run out of ideas without the visionary Jobs.

Now Apple is betting on a gadget that seems like something James Bond might wear. The Apple Watch's top-of-the-line edition comes in a casing made of 18-karat gold, with an array of elegant bands available for most models. The watch can serve as a walkie-talkie, a drawing pad, pulse monitor, calorie counter and activity tracker.

"It is amazing what you can do from your wrist," Cook said.

Nebraska

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and would issue a decision Wednesday.

State law imposes a Sept. 1 deadline for Ricketts to name a running mate. But his campaign's attorneys argue that deadline is trumped by Nebraska's Constitution, which gives candidates the right to decide their running mate.

Vince Powers, chairman of the Nebraska Democratic Party, said placing Foley on the ballot would expose Ricketts to a legal challenge from any Nebraska voter if he wins. Powers said that the state has no legal way to remove Heidemann from the ballot.

Heidemann's sister, Lois Bohling, was granted a protection order Monday after she said in a sworn statement that her brother grabbed her wrists and pushed her out of their mother's bedroom during an August dispute over farmland and their 84-year-old mother's care.

She said Heidemann shouted at her and nearly came over a table at her "like a wild man," after their mother

gathered the family in December 2013 to talk about how to disburse their deceased father's property. Thereafter she said she tried to avoid her brother because she was afraid he would hurt her.

Heidemann has not been charged with a crime, though he could face charges if he violates the protection order, which prohibits him from contacting his sister and requires him to stay away from his mother's home in Tecumseh, in southeast Nebraska, when the sister is present.

Ricketts tapped Heidemann to join the GOP ticket in June. Ricketts is running against Democratic hopeful

Chuck Hassebrook and his running mate, Jane Raybould.

"I receive this news with a heavy heart," Ricketts said after Heidemann resigned and withdrew. "My prayers continue to be with the Heidemann family at this very difficult time."

Heidemann served eight years as a state senator and was elected to the University of Nebraska Board of Regents shortly before he was chosen for his current post.

In a statement, Hassebrook said voters should consider this incident when deciding whom to support in November.

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