

NM NEWS & VIEWS FOR THURSDAY, AUGUST 12, 2010
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Gay Marriage to Resume Next Week in California:

A federal judge who overturned Proposition 8 in California has ruled that same-sex marriages in the state can resume Aug. 18.

Earlier this month, U.S. District Judge Vaughn Walker struck down the voter-approved Proposition 8 that barred gays from marriage, saying it "unconstitutionally burdens the exercise of the fundamental right to marry."

But he suspended gay weddings from resuming until Prop. 8 lawyers had the chance to defend putting a halt to same-sex marriages as the case works its way through the appeals courts.

Thursday's ruling overturned that stay, clearing the way for the marriages to become legal again in California next Wednesday.

Even before Walker handed down his latest decision, opponents were preparing their challenge to his initial ruling that overturned the voter-approved amendment barring gay marriage.

"Marriage is a state jurisdiction," Prop 8 supporter Randy Thomasson said. "The voters have said twice now keep marriage for only a man and a woman."

Hours before the final call, same-sex couples were lined up to say "I do" at San Francisco's city hall. Yet in Washington, conservative lawmakers were making the case for a resolution introduced this week that blasts Judge Walker for misconduct.

"I think this is yet one more example of a judge substituting his moral pronouncement under the guise of constitutional law and that's what people are upset about," Rep. Michele Bachmann, R-Minn., said.

Sponsors of the resolution say it affirms that voters from any state have the right to determine and define marriage as the union between one man and one women.

"If this nation doesn't rise up, then we've capitulated to the judges and then it's the tyranny of the courts," Rep. Steve Kind, R-Iowa, said. "It's the American people that need to make this decision."

Gay marriage has been put on the ballot in 31 states and was rejected each time

by voters. In addition to California, courts have legalized gay marriage in five other states.

NYC Mosque Imam Stirs Waters with Mideast Trip:

The imam behind the controversial plans to build a mosque near the site of New York City's Ground Zero is headed to the Middle East for a religious outreach trip sponsored by the U.S. State Department.

State Department spokesman P.J. Crowley said the department is sending imam Feisal Abdul Rauf to Qatar, Bahrain, and the United Arab Emirates, where he will discuss Muslim life in America and promote religious tolerance.

"We have a long-term relationship with him," Crowley told reporters. "His work on tolerance and religious diversity is well-known and he brings a moderate perspective to foreign audiences on what it's like to be a practicing Muslim in the United States."

Click play for more reaction to Feisal Abdul Rauf's trip to the Middle East with CBN News Terrorism Analyst Erick Stakelbeck, following Wendy Griffith's report.

Rauf is leading the controversial Cordoba mosque project two blocks from Ground Zero.

"By being in this location we get the attention and are able to leverage the voice of the vast majority of Muslims who condemn terrorism," Rauf once told CBN News about the plan.

The imam has taken similar trips before. However, some Republicans in Congress feel the upcoming trip is "unacceptable."

"This radical is a terrible choice to be one of the faces of our country overseas." Reps. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen of Florida and Peter King of New York said in a statement. "The United States should be using public diplomacy programs to combat extremism, not to endorse it."

The Obama administration said the trip was scheduled before the Ground Zero mosque controversy.

Funding for \$150 million mosque project has been one of the biggest concerns for opponents.

"It's coming from all people who believe in peace and want to see a peaceful relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims," Rauf said about the funding.

"We are very careful about (not being linked to terrorist groups) and very concerned about that," he added.

Rauf's critics also point to comments he made shortly after 9/11 suggesting the U.S. was to blame for the terrorist attacks.

"The imam of this mosque, Faisal Abdul, is someone with a very dubious record. He's an Islamist. He's someone who has sympathy with our enemies more than with us," conservative commentator Daniel Pipes said.

"In other words, he wants to apply Islamic law." Pipes said. "Granted he's not doing it via terrorism, but he's using his own methods of education, propagation in order to achieve the same goals."

Rauf admitted mosques have often been used as places to preach jihad and hate against Americans, but said he's trying to change that.

"This is an attempt to be part of the solution. We recognize that we're over a billion people worldwide and there's a susceptibility for some of our young people to be drawn into these terrorist actions," Rauf explained. "We need to work together."

Outsiders Gain Upper Hand in Key Primaries:

Tuesday's key primaries proved yet again that political outsiders may indeed have the upper hand in this fall's midterm elections.

A battle is shaping up between the White House and the Tea Party in Colorado. And this is due to Tea Party candidate Ken Buck, who beat Republican-backed establishment candidate Jane Norton.

"Republicans have been sending their elected officials back to Washington D.C. to change Congress and instead those Republicans have been changed by Congress," Buck said. "It Is time Republicans start acting like Republicans."

CBN News Sr. Editor John Waage gave his insight on the Tuesday primary results and what can be expected come November. Click play for his latest comments, following David Brody's report. Also, watch Waage's previous comments on the CBN News Morning show [here](#).

Buck will now face off against Sen. Michael Bennett, D-Colo., who is backed by President Barack Obama. While Bennett is the current U.S. senator, this is the first time he has actually ran for election.

He was hand picked over a year ago to replace outgoing Sen. Ken Salazar. Most political experts were beginning to write Bennett off thinking his liberal opponent Andrew Romanoff would win.

"To the pundits and the talking heads, I have a simple message -- welcome to Colorado," Bennett said.

In a couple other notable races, Connecticut Republican nominee Linda McMahon, the former executive of the controversial World Wrestling Entertainment empire, is another first time politician.

"I am honored to be the nominee from CT," McMahon said.

In Georgia, there is a very close race between the two Republicans vying for the governor's nomination.

Both candidates were backed by some possible 2012 presidential contenders. Nathan Deal was backed by former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee and former U.S. House Speaker Newt Gingrich while Karen Handel had the support of Sarah Palin and former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney. But the story of that race was overshadowed by Tuesday evening's victories.

PNM: Regulations could lead to bill hikes:

ALBUQUERQUE— New Mexico's largest electric utility is asking state regulators for more time to respond to a proposal by the state Environment Department that would require more emissions controls at one of its coal-fired power plants.

Public Service Company of New Mexico says in its filing with the Environmental Improvement Board that the state's plan would result in significant costs for its 500,000 customers.

PNM estimates the controls would cost the average residential customer about \$90 per year for an estimated 20 years. Costs for businesses would be higher.

PNM wants an Oct. 4 public hearing on the plan delayed until next year.

The state's plan calls for installing certain equipment to meet federal regulations to address haze and improve visibility in wilderness areas and national parks.

Three percent cuts for most state programs:

Government agencies and programs in New Mexico will face 3 percent cuts starting next month under a plan approved Thursday to close a shortfall in the state's \$5.3 billion budget.

Public schools will largely escape the reductions because of a new influx of federal economic stimulus money. However, education officials warn that large cutbacks loom next year unless lawmakers and the next governor find a way to replace the federal money when it's no longer available.

"There is just a huge cliff and when all this stimulus money stops, we're going to have to jump and it's going to be a big jump," said Winston Brooks, superintendent of Albuquerque Public Schools.

His comments came after the state Board of Finance approved a plan by Gov. Bill Richardson's administration to trim 3.2 percent, or \$151 million, to balance this year's budget.

However, New Mexico is getting about \$65 million in federal stimulus money and that will mostly offset \$77 million in cuts that otherwise would have been made to public schools.

Because of the federal money, state aid for school operations, including transportation costs, will be trimmed only about one-half of 1 percent.

The Albuquerque district will have to cut \$4 million from its \$600 million budget, according to Brooks. However, he said no layoffs will be necessary and the district should be able to cover its budget gap by not filling vacant jobs.

New Mexico faces a financial squeeze because revenues are projected to fall about \$200 million below what had been anticipated when the current budget was adopted by the Legislature. The 2011 fiscal year started in July.

Cash reserves will help cover part of the shortfall but the Legislature empowered the governor to trim spending across-the-board to balance the budget.

Exempted from the cuts are Medicaid, which provides health care for the poor and disabled, along with services to the developmentally disabled and some legislative expenses.

It's up to the administration to decide how executive branch agencies will absorb the cutbacks but the governor has said he hopes to avoid employee furloughs or layoffs.

New Mexico's network of colleges and universities will be cut nearly \$26 million. Each institution will determine how to carry out the reductions. The judiciary — courts and district attorneys — will be trimmed about \$6.5 million.

The Legislature required the Board of Finance, which is made up mostly of gubernatorial appointees, to approve the budget-cutting plan developed by the governor.

Attorney General Gary King's office asked the board to shield its Medicaid fraud operations from the cuts, arguing that should be covered by the exemption lawmakers provided for Medicaid. The administration and the board disagreed, however.

Lt. Gov. Diane Denish voted against the budget-cutting plan, saying she opposed reductions for public schools. Denish also said it was a "fundamentally flawed process" to require equal cuts across all of government rather than making targeted reductions that could vary from program to program.

Denish is the Democratic gubernatorial nominee and is running against Republican Susana Martinez, the Dona Ana County district attorney.

Lake Mead at 54-year low, stirring rationing fear:

Drought-stricken Lake Mead has dropped an additional 10 feet since last summer, and now, Arizona and other Colorado River users are scrambling to keep the reservoir full enough to avoid water rationing.

Before year's end, the lake will likely sink to within 9 feet of the level that would trigger the first round of restrictions - and the first such restrictions ever on the river. They begin with a reduction in water deliveries to Nevada and Arizona, where farmers would be affected first.

To slow the lake's years-long decline, river users have built a reservoir west of Yuma to catch unused runoff, paid farmers to leave fields unplanted and are negotiating with Mexico to leave some of its allocation in Lake Mead while its farmers recover from an earthquake.

None of the steps will yield significant amounts of water, but together, they could keep Lake Mead from sinking below the drought triggers, buying time until a wet winter can replenish some of the water lost to drought.

"It's time that we need," said David Modeer, general manager of the Central Arizona Project, which moves water from the Colorado River to Phoenix and

Tucson. "The reservoirs have shown they're resilient. After a 12-year drought, they're still half-full. What we do now will be worth it to stay out of a shortage."

Lake Mead water levels determine drought status on the river under a set of guidelines adopted in 2007 by the seven Colorado River states: Arizona, California, Nevada, Utah, Wyoming, Colorado and New Mexico.

If the lake reaches the first drought trigger, measured at an elevation of 1,075 feet above sea level, water deliveries below Lake Mead are reduced by a little more than 10 percent. Additional cutbacks would occur if the lake continued to drop.

The reservoir is now at an elevation of 1,087 feet above sea level - its lowest level since 1956 - and is projected to drop an additional 3 feet this year, which is why water users are trying almost everything short of hauling water in buckets.

For Arizona, the stakes are high. Arizona absorbs 96 percent of any water rationing on the river under a decades-old agreement that ensured construction of the 336-mile CAP Canal. Nevada absorbs the other 4 percent under a separate deal with Arizona.

Although rationing would affect some users on the river in western Arizona, most of the cuts would come from the canal, whose annual flow of 1.5 million acre-feet would be reduced in stages. (An acre-foot is 325,851 gallons, enough to serve two average families for one year.)

Farmers and users of excess water, such as underground-storage programs, would be affected first. It's unlikely cities and business in Phoenix and Tucson would lose any water in the earliest stages.

Nevada faces similar pressures. It would absorb 4 percent of any cutbacks but, more critically, if the reservoir fell below elevation 1,050 feet, one of the tunnels Nevada uses to draw water from the lake would sit above the waterline and would be useless. Nevada is working on a new, deeper tunnel, but it is not expected to be completed before 2012.

"Right now, we're trying to keep the lake above 1,075 as much as we can," said Herb Guenther, director of the Arizona Department of Water Resources. "We're trying to build incentives with other users, with Mexico, to put as much unused water in Lake Mead as we can."

The goal is to take less water out of Lake Mead. Every 100,000 acre-feet of water kept in the reservoir buys 1 foot of elevation. Conservation is the fastest and, in most cases, the cheapest alternative, so that's where the states have

begun.

The biggest project so far is the Drop 2 reservoir at the end of the river west of Yuma. It will collect water requested but not used by farmers.

That water, as much as 23 billion gallons a year, now flows into Mexico. It is not subtracted from that country's annual allocation, but it results in lower water levels at Lake Mead.

When Drop 2 opens later this year, unused water will be diverted into the reservoir until someone needs it, allowing more water to remain in Lake Mead.

Finding new sources of water is more expensive and time-consuming. State and federal officials have been talking with Mexico about building an ocean-water desalination plant to augment the river's supply.

In the meantime, the two countries are working on another agreement that would give Lake Mead a shorter-term boost.

Farmers in the Mexicali area just south of the U.S. border suffered devastating losses during an April earthquake and, as a result, Mexico can't use its full Colorado River allocation.

Officials are working on an agreement to let Mexico store that unused water in Lake Mead until farmers have recovered. Although the water would still belong to Mexico, it would help keep the reservoir above drought triggers.

The fact that river users are talking about leaving water in storage rather than hoarding it has encouraged water managers, even if the change in attitude was caused by a fear of shortage. The states, which fought over the Colorado River from the day it was first apportioned in 1922, have worked together on broader water issues, such as severe water shortfalls in California caused by drought and a court case involving an endangered fish.

"We have rules now, and everyone knows what they are," said Lorri Gray-Lee, director of the Lower Colorado region of the Bureau of Reclamation, the federal government's water agency. "Any time you have Arizona willing to work with California and help them through the tough issues they're dealing with, you know something has changed."

There are still tensions. One provision of the 2007 agreement allows the bureau to release extra water from Lake Powell if winter runoff is plentiful, raising Lake Mead levels faster. The four upper-river states are uneasy about letting extra water flow downstream, but the rules are clear, Gray-Lee said.

No extra water was released from Lake Powell this year because precipitation runoff into the upper Colorado through July was 73 percent of average. But the winter was not without its benefits for Arizona: Runoff from state tributaries added enough water to the lower river to account for about 1 foot of elevation at Lake Mead.

And every little bit helps.

"Every normal year rolls back the drought a year or so," said Tom McCann, an assistant general manager of the CAP. "These two reservoirs are doing exactly what they were intended to do. They've helped us to weather the drought. And if you can manage to get through another year of drought, maybe the next year is a wet year."

Benny Hinn Says Neglecting Family Led to Divorce:

Television evangelist Benny Hinn has admitted that his marriage probably broke down because he did not spend enough time with the family.

On the August 5 edition of his show "This is your Day," Hinn said he was oftentimes "caught up with the ministry," so much so that he forgot about his family.

"I've made mistakes because I wasn't the perfect husband and the perfect dad because I was always gone traveling the world," he said. "That's probably what broke the whole thing up."

Hinn told his viewers "not to neglect your family," saying that the call of God should first touch the family.

"If you have no family, you can't go on anyways," he said.

Hinn's wife, Suzanne, filed divorce papers in California earlier this year, citing "irreconcilable differences." The couple had been married since 1979 and have four children together.

On his recent show, watched by millions around the world, Hinn said it was often painful to talk about their separation.

"We've had to be very quiet to protect the ministry, the work of the Lord," he said. "But sadly when you are a public person, everything you do becomes

public."

Hinn continued: "I don't care if the anointing of God is on you. Nobody wants to be alone. I don't care who you are. I am a human being just like you."

The press recently linked Hinn to fellow televangelist Paula White, suggesting they were romantically involved.

Hinn rejected the claims and denied any wrongdoing, stating that the article published by the National Enquirer on July 23 was a "pure lie."

Following the story, Hinn and White announced their decision to "have no further social relationship" until his divorce is finalized and "only if we feel direction from the Lord to do so."

Israeli citizen, suspect in stabbings, charged in Michigan:

Atlanta, Georgia -- A 33-year-old Israeli citizen was charged with assault with intent to murder in Michigan on Thursday in connection with 18 stabbings that left five people dead across three states, according to a Michigan prosecutor.

Elias Abuelazam was arrested Wednesday night at Hartsfield Jackson International Airport in Atlanta, Georgia. Abuelazam was trying to board a flight to Israel when he was taken into custody, police said Thursday.

The stabbings occurred in Michigan, Virginia and Ohio. Genesee County, Michigan, Prosecutor David Leyton said the one charge filed against Abuelazam is related to a stabbing in Flint, Michigan, on July 27.

With a manhunt on in connection to the stabbing spree, Michigan police received a tip that sent them Wednesday to a market where the suspect worked, Leyton said. After talking with employees, police watched surveillance video to determine if he matched the physical description of the attacker.

After tracking him to Louisville, Kentucky, authorities learned he had bought a \$3,000 ticket from Atlanta to Tel Aviv, Israel, paid for by his uncle. Leyton said Abuelazam had flown from Detroit, Michigan, to Louisville and then on to Atlanta. It was not clear whether he was already en route to Atlanta when authorities identified him as a suspect in the killings.

A federal law enforcement official involved in the investigation said the man was traveling on an expired Israeli passport but was in the United States legally.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection officials said they arrested Abuelazam at 10

p.m. ET as he attempted to board Delta Flight 152 bound for Tel Aviv. A Homeland Security official said the National Targeting Center had looked at the passenger list and had seen his name on the manifest.

Upon confirmation of his identity, the man was placed in the custody of the FBI and the Atlanta Police Department.

WDIV-TV in Detroit: Serial stabber apprehended, prosecutor says

WEYI-TV in Flint, Michigan: Serial stabber suspect in custody

WXIA-TV in Atlanta: Suspect in serial stabbings arrested

WNW-TV in Toledo, Ohio: Suspect nabbed on way to Israel

Over the past week, investigators from a Michigan task force; police departments in Leesburg, Virginia, and Toledo, Ohio; the FBI and numerous other law enforcement agencies have investigated leads and tips from the public.

Authorities have said the same person is responsible for three recent attacks in Leesburg, Virginia, the stabbing deaths of five people and injuries to nine others in the Flint, Michigan, area and a stabbing Saturday that injured one man in Toledo, Ohio.

Fourteen of the 16 victims in Michigan were African-American, police said. Flint is a majority African-American community. In majority-white Leesburg, Virginia, two victims were black and one was Hispanic.

Leesburg Police Chief Joseph Price said he believed the suspect was targeting African-Americans.

"For our community ... when you look at our demographics and you look at the victims here, my belief is he selected the victims in Leesburg based on the color of their skin," Price said.

The Michigan attacks began May 24, with the most recent taking place August 2. The three attacks in Virginia occurred on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday of last week.

Michigan stabbing suspect linked to Virginia, Ohio attacks

The Michigan victims' ages ranged from 17 to 60, according to authorities. All of the victims were men, and in two cases they were people with special needs.

The suspect is said to have approached victims who were on foot during the early morning, asking for directions or other assistance to lure them closer to his car, police said. Sgt. Bill Wauford of the Toledo Police Department said the method of attack in the Ohio case matched the Michigan incidents.

The five Michigan victims who died were identified as David Motley, Emmanuel Dent, Darwin Marshall, Frank Kellybrew and Arnold Miner.

Stabbings, deaths raise fears in Flint, Michigan

Leyton said Abuelazam worked in Flint until August 2 and then told fellow workers he was going to Virginia. He said the suspect had lived in the Flint area since May at a home owned by his uncle. The suspect also had a previous address in Florida.

Arlington, Virginia, police arrested the suspect on August 5 for failure to obey a highway sign. At the time, police learned he had an outstanding warrant for a prior assault and he was arrested and his 1996 Chevy Blazer was impounded. Police found a knife and hammer inside the car.

He was subsequently released the same day, but the circumstances of his release were not clear.

On that same day, a victim was stabbed in the area, but he told police the assailant was driving a different vehicle. The Blazer was returned to the suspect that night.

Abuelazam has been in all three states at the time of the stabbings in those states, according to authorities. After police identified his vehicle, they tracked him near an airport in Louisville, Kentucky

Leyton said the suspect was in Toledo at the time of the stabbing there.

Investigators continue to investigate and Leyton said more charges are expected.

Members of the Michigan task force were in Atlanta on Thursday, and Leyton's office was preparing papers for extradition.

"We ought to remember the victims in all of this," Leyton said. "You have real people who have died and real families who have been torn apart. Our heart goes out to them."

New Hampshire Democrat Says He's Sorry for Palin Death Wish:

A New Hampshire Democratic candidate has apologized for a Facebook post in which he wished Sarah Palin and the father of her grandchild, Levi Johnston, had been on the plane that crashed Tuesday, killing former Alaska Sen. Ted Stevens.

Keith Halloran posted an apology Thursday on his Facebook page saying he wishes the best for Palin, Johnston, and their families.

The apology came after leaders in both political parties denounced the posting and on the same day that another New Hampshire Democratic lawmaker reportedly resigned for making a similar anti-Palin remark on his Facebook page.

State Rep. Timothy Horrigan stepped down after writing that "a dead Palin wd [sic] be even more dangerous than a live one...she is all about her myth & if she was dead, she cldn't [sic] commit any more gaffes," the Union Leader reported.

The New Hampshire Republican State Committee denounced the comment and called on Gov. John Lynch and other state Democratic leaders to denounce the comment too.

"The widespread fixation among New Hampshire Democrats with Governor Palin's death proves that there is a full blown epidemic of hatred and derangement festering in Governor Lynch's party," Ryan Williams, a spokesman for the committee, said in a written statement.

Halloran, who is running for the state House of Representatives, made his comment in response to a state Republican lawmaker's post expressing disappointment that some news accounts of Stevens' death focused on negative aspects of his career.

"Just wish Sarah and Levy [sic] were on board," Halloran wrote in reference to Palin and Johnston, her daughter Bristol's ex-boyfriend.

Mike Brunnelle, director of the New Hampshire Democratic Party, told FoxNews.com that Halloran should have apologized.

"We don't condone this type of rhetoric," he said. "We condemn it. It's wholly inappropriate.

"They have no place in the political dialogue in New Hampshire or anywhere in the country," he added.

Brunnelle was initially unaware of Halloran's apology when asked for reaction. He said he wasn't sure whether Halloran apologized because of the immediate backlash his comments caused.

Before he apologized, Halloran had sent a snarky message to The Associated Press through Facebook saying, "It's just a tempest in their Tea Pot."

Republican state Rep. D.J. Bettencourt, who wrote the original post that Halloran commented on, said he "was just absolutely shocked and disgusted by that post."

Bettencourt's post was expressing sadness that some of the commentary about Stevens' death focused on negative aspects of his career.

"I was just lamenting the fact that people just couldn't seem to find something nice to say about him or not say anything at all," Bettencourt said. "Shortly thereafter, after some initial positive comments were made in reaction to my post, appears a post from Keith Halloran."

Ryan Williams, spokesman for the state Republican Party, called Halloran's remarks "a new low."

"His publicly stated death wish for Governor Palin and her family is abhorrent, and has no place in our public discourse," he said.

A spokeswoman for Gov. John Lynch, a Democrat, said the governor's thoughts are with the families of those killed in the crash.

"He finds the comments appalling and believes they have no place in the public discourse," Pamela Walsh said.

TARP BILLIONS SHIPPED OVERSEAS CAN'T HALT GLOBAL SHOWDOWN:

Economists and conservatives reacted sharply Thursday to reports that tens of billions in TARP bailout money flowed out of the United States and into the coffers of big banks in France, Germany, and other nations during the government rescue of the U.S. financial system.

That news came as the U.S. economic picture continued to worsen Thursday, with rising unemployment claims and a surge in U.S. homes lost to foreclosure.

CATO Institute Budget Analyst Tad DeHaven tells Newsmax: "The economy has become increasingly global, so it's not shocking that TARP bailout money ended up at foreign financial institutions. Nonetheless, bailing out U.S. financial firms was bad enough — that foreign institutions also benefitted from the largesse just adds insult to injury."

J.D. Foster, senior economics fellow at The Heritage Foundation, added: "The overwhelming force slowing the economy down now is a lack of confidence among American businesses and consumers. The primary reason for that lack of confidence is the policies out of Washington seem completely out of touch with that reality."

That reaction follows Thursday's report from the Congressional Oversight Panel report that when the United States injected hundreds of billions of TARP money to stabilize the U.S. financial system in September 2008, it also bailed out over 40 major institutions based overseas that had invested in collateralized debt obligations and mortgage-backed securities.

"There were no data about where this money was going," Elizabeth Warren, head of the panel investigating the bank bailout, explained in a conference call with reporters on Wednesday. "The American people have a right to know where the money went."

The TARP money flowed to overseas banks largely due to their investment in AIG, which received some \$182 billion in federal bailout funds. The Oversight Panel reports that roughly half of the 87 banks and investment firms who would have lost billions without the AIG bailout were headquartered overseas.

Among the major foreign beneficiaries, according to The Associated Press: the French bank Societe Generale (\$11.9 billion in AIG money), the French bank BNP Paribas (\$4.9 billion in AIG funds), and Germany's Deutsche Bank (\$11.8 billion). Banks in Canada, Switzerland, and Britain cashed in on the AIG rescue as well.

Many economists credit TARP with staving off a worse financial crisis. But TARP, and the subsequent \$862 billion stimulus, also failed to lift the economy out of chronic, massive joblessness and spiraling federal debt.

"TARP was a waste of money and should never have been implemented," Diana Furchtgott-Roth, director of the Center for Employment Policy for the Hudson Institute, tells Newsmax. "Rather, the funds should have been spent on tax cuts to stimulate the economy."

The news that foreign as well as U.S. firms were bailed out by TARP, a program already unpopular with voters, is expected to add intensity to the recent Republican mantra of House Minority Leader Rep. John Boehner and RNC chairman Michael Steele, who continue to demand, "Where are the jobs?"

The Oversight Panel offered the veiled criticism that U.S. leaders should have asked the countries whose banks received the most benefit from TARP to share in its cost.

One criticism of the global bailout is that the United States contributed more, via its action to salvage AIG and other institutions, than foreign governments spent on their entire bailout plans. France spent \$35 billion on its financial rescue plan, for example. Germany spent \$133 billion. The Oversight Report states the TARP bailout probably helped overseas banks more than their own nation's financial rescue packages did.

Reports on the economy issued Thursday, meanwhile, indicate the nation's economic problems continue to worsen.

The RealtyTrac organization reported that July marked the 17th consecutive month when foreclosure activity exceeded 300,000 homes. The company reported "near-record levels of bank repossessions," which have increased for eight months in a row.

On a brighter note, total foreclosure filings dropped down 9.7 percent compared to July 2009. That marks the second straight month of year-to-year declines.

Adding to the overall sense of economic malaise, the Labor Department released weekly jobless numbers that show an uptick in first-time claims for unemployment benefits, which reached 484,000 last week. That's a seasonally adjusted increase of 2,000 from the week before. Those claims have increased three of the past four weeks. The Dow Jones Industrial average reacted to the economic news by dropping over 70 points before rebounding.

Thursday's economic news also indicates the global economy now appears to be softening, making it unlikely that economic growth in China or India can stimulate business in America.

Heritage Foundation international economic analyst Derek Scissors tells Newsmax that the notion that strong economic growth overseas, in China for example, could be relied upon to give a boost to the U.S. economy was always suspect and based on "misinformation."

"China's economy is slowing," Scissors confirms. "We continue to be an engine for the world economy, and China continues to benefit from that. It doesn't work the other way, and it's not going to work the other way this year, or next year, or for the foreseeable future."

Adds Scissors: "All of this is very easy to anticipate. You have this massive government stimulus, and it automatically works for a while because they're injecting money into the country, then it doesn't work as well. That happened in the U.S. and it happened in China and it happened everywhere where

government stimulus was relied upon as the savior. When you spend a lot of money the first year it has an effect, then the next year it doesn't have that much of an effect. And that's what we're seeing now."

Border security bill unanimously passed by Senate
\$600 million authorized for drones, enforcement agents:
By Elise Foley

Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) said he hopes the border security bill will convince Republicans to support comprehensive immigration reform. (Pete Marovich/ZUMApres.com)

The Senate on Thursday passed a \$600 million bill for border security, providing funds for 1,500 new enforcement agents and additional unmanned drones along the border.

The bill has a convoluted history. It originally passed the Senate last Thursday, but was restarted in the House on Tuesday due to a jurisdictional problem with its funding. (The bill is funded through increases to visa fees for companies that provide temporary skilled worker visas for large numbers of workers.) Only two senators, Ben Cardin (D-Md.) and Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.), were present today for a brief session to conduct the vote.

"This bill is enormously important because it will clear the path for the bipartisan discussions we need to have about our immigration system," Schumer said at the vote today.

But immigrants' rights advocates aren't happy with the Democrats for pushing more harsh enforcement over comprehensive reform — and proponents of tougher immigration policies said the bill won't convince them Obama and the Democrats are serious about securing the border.

"You can make the argument that it can reinforce the Obama administration efforts to disentangle the border issues from the immigration issues," Mary Giovagnoli, director of the pro-reform Immigration Policy Center, told The Independent. "But that's probably not how it's going to play out."

The bill will have tangible effects on border enforcement. Department of Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano said last week the bill will provide "important, permanent resources" to improving border security. Of the \$600 million, \$175.9 million will go to hiring additional border patrol agents along the U.S.-Mexico border. Another \$32 million will go to purchasing and deploying unmanned drones along the border. The bill also includes funds specifically

directed at maintaining safety, with \$30 million for law enforcement activities targeted at reducing the threat of violence in border states.

Still, for those who would like to see tougher immigration enforcement by the Obama administration, the border security bill doesn't do enough. Ira Mehlman, a spokesman for Federation for American Immigration Reform, said the bill is an attempt to distract from the fact that the DHS has "basically gutted interior enforcement."

"They're trying to do something that makes for a good photo-op at the border, but it doesn't fully address the problem," Mehlman told The Independent.

Republicans who once supported immigration reform, such as Lindsey Graham (S.C.) and John McCain (Ariz.), have moved further right. Graham is now calling for a reconsideration of the 14th Amendment, which gives automatic citizenship to babies born in the United States to foreign parents, while McCain has said border security must be improved before he will consider supporting any other immigration reform.

Spokesmen for Graham, McCain and Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (Ky.) did not respond to requests for comment.

The bill is unlikely to "have any effect" on Republicans support for the DREAM Act or other paths to citizenship for illegal immigrants already living in the United States, said Mark Krikorian, executive director of the pro-enforcement Center for Immigration Studies.

"If that's what [Democrat leaders] had in mind, they're going to be disappointed," he told The Independent. "The border hasn't been secured, they just passed a piece of legislation. Until border control measures have been not only legislated but fully litigated, you can't even start a discussion on legalization."

As Republicans move to the right on immigration, advocates for comprehensive reform argue the border security bill indicates Democrats are being dragged with them.

"Republicans have falsely and in bad faith used border security to whip up their base in the run up to the fall elections," Deepak Bhargava, executive director of the Center for Community Change, said Tuesday. "They've blocked real reform and are demanding an endless and fruitless focus on pure enforcement. Unfortunately, Democrats have taken the bait and fallen into the trap."

Some argued the border does not need amped up security because residents

already feel safe there, according to a poll released Tuesday. The four-question poll commissioned by the Border Network for Human Rights surveyed residents of 10 communities along U.S.-Mexican border about their feelings of safety. About 70 percent said they believe they are as safe as they are elsewhere in the country.

Sheriff Richard Wiles of El Paso County, Tex., said on a conference call about the poll that previous efforts to amp up border security were sufficient.

"I do think that resources are misdirected at the border," he said. "We have had a significant increase and I think they've done a great job, but now is the time to look at the real issues and put the resources toward the issues that are really affecting our communities."

WND Exclusive FAITH UNDER FIRE

Tell the terminally ill to 'trust God,' get yourself fired

Tribunal affirms town decision to dismiss counselor over remark:

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The dismissal of a town employee who had an unblemished record of counseling housing clients for 18 years has been affirmed by a job tribunal because he mentioned God to a terminally ill woman.

The startling decision is being reported by the Christian Legal Centre, which argued the case on behalf of Duke Amachree against the decision by the Wandsworth town council.

"We are stunned that the tribunal failed to recognize the draconian way in which Mr. Amachree was treated," said Andrea Minichiello Williams, director of the organization that advocates on behalf of religious rights across the United Kingdom.

The simple way to tell about God, in "Making God Known: How to Bring Others to Faith."

"We are dismayed that they found that Mr. Amachree had not been discriminated against on the grounds of his faith. This decision will send yet more shock waves through the Christian community when they realize that a couple of comments encouraging faith in God can lead to a person being dismissed for gross misconduct," Williams said.

Officials said an appeal will be filed in the case, in which Amachree was fired for

"gross misconduct for suggesting to a client with an incurable illness not to give up hope and to try putting her faith in God."

Wandsworth fired Amachree, and an employment tribunal now has determined that action was reasonable.

"The tribunal also found that the council had not discriminated against Mr. Amachree on the basis of his religion. In addition, the tribunal took the view that Duke had breached confidentiality by publicizing his case," the report said.

Duke, a committed Christian and father of two, lost the job he'd held for 18 years for the incident. His comments came in one brief visit to a client, and resulted in six months of investigations and three interviews by town officials.

His defense counsel even was told by the city that saying "God bless" would require an investigation if word was brought to officials.

The Christian Legal Centre reported gross misconduct more often covers behavior including violence or theft.

The town had accepted that the motivation for the speech was one of compassion and evidence indicated Amachree never had been told small talk in a housing interview was prohibited.

"I am devastated by the outcome," Amachree said in a statement released by the center. "This is a sad day for Christians who simply want to live out their faith in the workplace without fear."

NEWS MAKER OF THE DAY:

Richard Ulrich from the BIG MO, 'the 'Show-Me-State,' joined us this afternoon to talk about his Bible College experiences and what he wants do to next to xhange the world we live in. Like Billy Graham, Richard says what he really learned from his \$80,000.00 education, was what he doesn't know, so I guess he'll have to trust God, which is a Great Thing! He worked with House Church folks up in CO, which I do here in NM, he has done missions and seems to be heading in that direction again. His biggest fear for the American Christian is complacency, so he encouraged us all to give it our best shot, cause you only go around once in life and it does matter.

Many Blessings,
Rev. Mark F. Tross
Rio Rancho North Foursquare/Gladstone Church/Ekklesia Outreach

<http://eklesiaoutreach.com>

<http://powersforgood.weebly.com>

<http://www.whatissimplechurch.com>

<http://simplechurchfellowship.weebly.com>