

Health care



'HISTORY': President Obama signs the health care reform bill Tuesday at the White House, with several Democratic members of Congress and others looking on. Republicans, who were unanimously opposed to the bill, were conspicuously absent. Political Theater, A11.

Obama signs health bill with gleeful Democrats

Historic overhaul still faces skeptical voters

By KARA ROWLAND
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Before an elated White House gathering, President Obama on Tuesday signed into law a historic overhaul of the nation's health care system, celebrating with fellow Democrats a political victory designed to give nearly every American health insurance and embarking on the sales job for a plan still disliked by many voters.

Flanked by the longest-serving member of the House and a fifth-grader whose mother died without health insurance, Mr. Obama said he was delivering on a promise that Democrats have made for decades and that he made a centerpiece of his presidential campaign. He then capped months of often bitter, hand-to-hand legislative trench warfare with the stroke of a pen.

"Today, after almost a century of trying; today, after over a year of debate; today, after all the votes have been tallied, health insurance becomes law in the United States of America," Mr. Obama said to raucous applause.

The high spirits prompted some unscripted remarks. Press microphones picked up Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. employing an unprintable adjective when describing the scope of the achievement in an aside to the president.

Even as Mr. Obama and his party celebrated, another skirmish in the health care battle formally began as the Senate took up a package of amendments to the just-signed bill. Republicans hope to slow down or block the supplemental measure from passing.

Still, it was an ebullient morning as Democrats gathered in the East Room of the White House to congratulate one another for doing what their predecessors dating back to the Truman administration had failed to pull off. Many of the ecstatic lawmakers came armed with their

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• GOP targets health bill "flip-flopplers," "sellouts." A4

Healthy tax increases, not only on wealthy

Half-trillion dollars over 10 years to pay for bill

By DAVID M. DICKSON
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

When it comes to the taxes associated with the new health care bill, Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr.'s assessment stands: It's a big — very big — deal.

The historic overhaul of the nation's health care system that President Obama signed Tuesday, when combined with the fixes making their way through Congress, will raise taxes over the next 10 years by more than a half-trillion dollars.

The tax increases range from hundreds of billions of dollars in

new Medicare levies, including one that taxes investment income such as capital gains and dividends for the first time, to a 10 percent excise tax on indoor tanning services that will raise less than \$3 billion over the next decade.

Imposing a Medicare tax on investment income "would reduce demand for investment, which is the last thing that the economy needs right now. It would slow [economic] recovery, reduce employment op-

portunities and hinder wage growth," said Karen Campbell of the conservative Heritage Foundation. "Less investment, lower investment values and lower wages hinder the ability of households to build wealth."

Under a procedure that doesn't require a 60-vote majority for approval, the Senate is considering a package of changes to the new health care law to placate House members' concerns about the Sen-

ate bill, which the lower chamber approved Sunday with no Republican support. Among other things, the Senate must approve the numerous tax-law changes that the House passed in a second bill Sunday to fix the upper chamber's December proposal.

By far the biggest tax increase —

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• Bill requires menu calorie listing. A5

Immigration

Immigration plan would create 'mother of all backlogs'

Agency not ready to process millions

By STEPHEN DINAN
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

The federal government is not equipped to process the flood of applications from a proposed immigration legalization bill, and the agency that would oversee that program won't be ready for "a few years," the office of the Homeland Security Department's inspector general told Congress on Tuesday.

The warning, from Assistant Inspector General Frank Deffer, could severely complicate President Obama's new push to pass an immigration bill this year.

Mr. Deffer said U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), an agency of the Department of Homeland Security, is in the midst of trying to move from being a paper-based system to having electronic records. He warned that adding millions of new applications, as the bill would do, would be a bad idea.

"Adding 12 million more people to the system would be the mother of all backlogs. Clearly to us the systems could not handle it now," Mr. Deffer told the House Judiciary Committee's immigration subcommittee. "It's going to take a few years, so it's something for Congress to consider that, when they implement this, they don't have a date too soon."

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Middle East



TAKING A LONELY STAND: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told the American-Israeli Public Affairs Committee that Israel shouldn't be expected to freeze construction in areas in East Jerusalem. That puts him at odds with the White House.

Domestic matters burn much hotter for voters than flare-up with Israel

By NICHOLAS KRALEV
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

The Obama administration's open spat with Israel over Jewish settlement activity in East Jerusalem is unlikely to hurt Democrats politically in any major way, primarily because of voters' preoccupation with domestic issues, such as health care and the economy, analysts say.

The administration's actions,

they say, also indicate that it is not very worried about domestic political consequences. Not only has it refused to back off its demands, but this week it again clashed publicly with visiting Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu about what is in Israel's interests.

"They are not letting Netanyahu off the hook," said Michele Dunne, senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. "They

clearly see some utility in airing their disagreements with him in public."

The new coolness in bilateral relations was on display as Mr. Netanyahu and President Obama met privately in the Oval Office for 90 minutes Tuesday evening. In a break with past practice, the press was not invited in to observe the opening of the meeting, and the two

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China

Cyber-attack on U.S. firms, Google traced to Chinese

Company networks may be compromised

By BILL GERTZ
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

The cyber-attack on Google and other U.S. companies was part of a suspected Chinese government operation launched last year that used human intelligence techniques and high-technology to steal corporate secrets, according to U.S. government and private-sector cybersecurity specialists.

More worrying, however, is the likelihood that the cyber-attacks that led Google this week to end its cooperation with Beijing-controlled censorship and move its search engine service to Hong Kong included planting undetectable software on American company networks that could allow further clandestine access or even total control of computers in the future.

An Obama administration official said the U.S. government was able, with some confidence, to link the attack, first discovered last summer, to Chinese government organs. However, the official declined to provide details to avoid making future Chinese cyber-attack identification more difficult.

"The attack was very targeted. It targeted engineers and quality assurance developers, peo-

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• China hits back at Google after withdrawal. A10

WEATHER ON B18

Mostly sunny
▲ 68° ▼ 44°

8 a.m. : 45° Partly sunny
Noon : 60° Sunny
4 p.m. : 68° Partly sunny

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- John McCaslin talks with Sen. Saxby Chambliss, Georgia Republican, and Virginia Attorney General Kenneth T. Cuccinelli II on "America's Morning News."
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- Sgt. Shaft: Obama urged to honor families of fallen.
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