

## Congress burdened by bills

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON - So little time, so many bills. And so many, many disputes.

With just 19 working days left until Congress' scheduled Oct. 6 adjournment, lawmakers must complete 11 spending bills for the coming fiscal year before they can go home for the elections.

Roughly \$20 billion separates Republicans from President Clinton. But in this era of federal surpluses, fierce policy disputes over hiring teachers, standards for

drunken driving and other issues probably will prove to be the toughest hurdles.

Republicans find themselves in a hauntingly familiar box, yearning to cut quick deals on the bills with Clinton but with precious little leverage. Republican bargaining power is shackled by Clinton's ability to veto bills, the GOP's inability to override the vetoes and lawmakers' craving for an early dash home for the elections.

Hoping to get this year's final round of bargaining off to a harmonious start, GOP leaders will meet with Clinton Tuesday at the White House, along with top congressional Democrats. The session seems likely to produce little if any substantive

progress, leaving the two sides even less time to resolve differences.

"We think that there's a lot of work that needs to be done, partly because so little has happened in this Congress," the White House chief of staff, John Podesta, said on "Fox News Sunday."

On CNN's "Late Edition," Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, R-Miss., cited "all kinds of efforts to stop us passing appropriation bills."

The 13 spending bills for fiscal 2001, which begins Oct. 1, directly control about one-third of the \$1.8 trillion budget, or more than \$600 billion. Clinton has already signed the two covering most defense programs at a cost of about \$300 billion.

The 11 other bills cover 13 Cabinet-level departments and dozens of smaller agencies, plus foreign aid and the District of Columbia's budget, with a total price tag of about \$300 billion. Clinton wants about \$20 billion more - leaving the two sides battling over about 1 percent of the budget.

Eight of the 11 face veto threats. Democrats are not the only ones clamoring for higher spending. Facing election-year demands from their members, GOP-written spending bills so far have surpassed by at least \$7 billion the \$600 billion limit their own budget clamped on.

Even so, the most contentious disputes are partisan. And among the most furious is a battle over education, one of the top issues in this year's campaign.

After initially falling about \$7 billion short, Republicans have written a bill that equals the amount Clinton wants for education, health and welfare programs.

## Firestone recall deters purchases

■ Ford Motor Co. and other independent dealers say customers have become leery of the tire brand.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DETROIT - The auto industry has a small graveyard of mistakes bearing names such as Pinto, Corvair and Edsel. Is Firestone next?

The recall of 6.5 million tires linked to 88 deaths and the resulting attention has strained Bridgestone/Firestone Inc.'s relations with car owners and its largest buyer, Ford Motor Co.

Auto dealers say customers are leery of Firestones, even on vehicles not affected by the recall. Independent tire dealers also report slower Firestone sales.

Firestone spokesman Dan Adomitis said that the company had not had a chance to assess how the recall is affecting the rest of its business and understood that customers might have some concerns

because of the recall.

"But the basic perspective is that Firestone has been a staple brand for 100 years and we expect it to continue," Adomitis said.

The Firestone name dates back to the early days of the American auto industry and twines around the roots of Ford. The Model T rode on Firestones, and Henry Ford's great-grandson, who is chairman of his company today, is also Harvey Firestone's great-grandson.

But Ford President and CEO Jacques Nasser has said the recall threatens the company's business with Firestone. Ford said last week that it was in talks with Goodyear to supply tires for the 2002 Ford Explorer and Mercury Mountaineer sport utility vehicles, which until now have worn only Firestones.

Nasser said the relationship with Firestone would be taken "a day at a time," and that if Ford customers weren't happy with Firestone tires, Ford would do what it takes to make them happy.

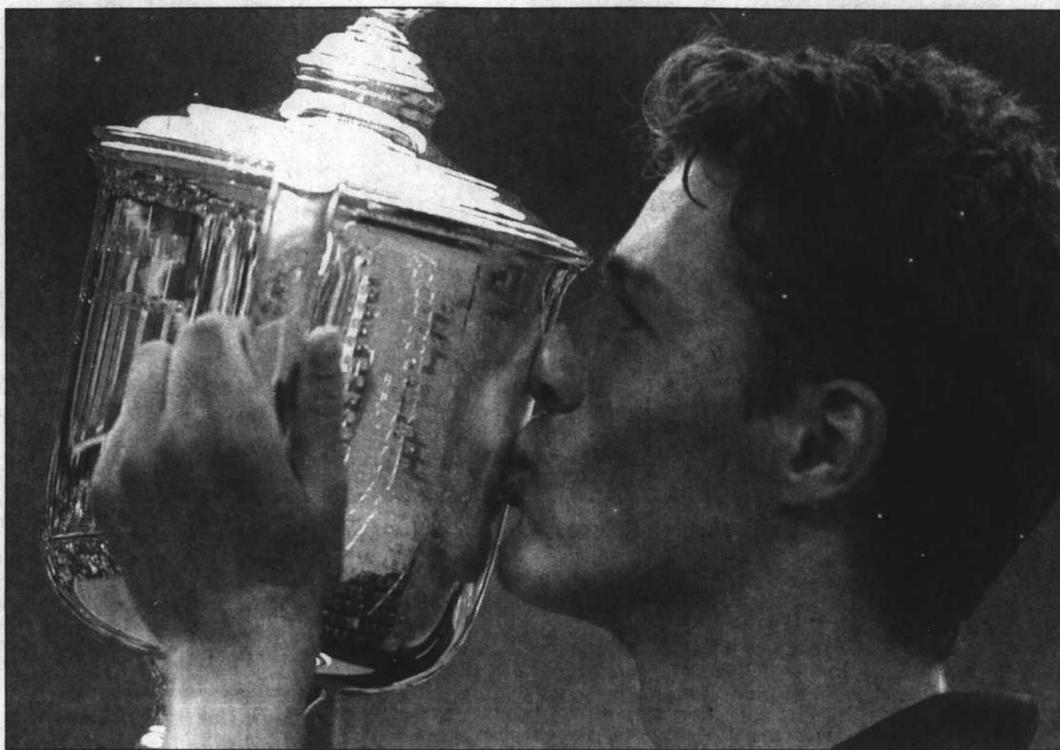
"The short-term impact is devastating, particularly for Firestone," Nasser said a week ago. "How they recover and what their long-term outlook is, is something that Firestone will need to evaluate very, very carefully."

Ford dealers say some customers are rejecting Firestone tires on new vehicles. Ford said about 10 percent of Explorer sales in August involved tire swaps.

Mike Miles, general manager of Banner Ford in Decatur, Ga., says the dealership tries to reassure buyers that Firestone tires on new vehicles are safe.

"But if a customer says to me 'I'll buy, but not with those tires,' if I don't change them the next dealer will," he said. "I don't want to lose the sale."

General Motors Corp. has given its dealers a letter assuring buyers that GM vehicles with Firestone Wilderness tires have different engineering standards than the tires used on Ford SUVs, different recommended pressures and are not affected by the recall.



The taste of victory: Russia's Marat Safin kisses his trophy on Sunday after defeating United States' Pete Sampras 6-4, 6-3, 6-3 in the men's singles final at the U.S. Open tennis tournament in New York. Please see stories on page 13.

## Common activities observed by cameras

Britain uses 'Big Brother' type surveillance to catch criminals, monitor city

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LONDON - One of Britain's favorite summer TV shows has been "Big Brother," featuring people living under the constant gaze of surveillance cameras.

That's not so far from reality in modern-day Britain, whose 60 million people are tracked by an estimated 1.5 million closed-circuit TV cameras.

Going to the bank or the supermarket, walking down the street, using a payphone, waiting for a train, slipping out for a pint at the pub, you're likely to be on camera.

"It's a mania," says Simon Davies of the civil liberties group Privacy International, which came up with the figure of 1.5 million. "The cameras are out of control."

The latest innovation is a roving surveillance "super-van" unveiled this week by Westminster City Council, which oversees London's entertainment - and crime -

hot spots of Soho and the West End. The \$185,000 vehicle sports a retractable mast and nine CCTV cameras, and this month will start prowling the streets looking for trouble.

"If we have reports of an outbreak of anti-social behavior, we can deploy the van," said Westminster Council spokeswoman Suzanna White. "We may also want to use it in a covert manner, for example to collect evidence for legal proceedings."

The British government has poured millions of pounds into helping police forces and local authorities get the video technology.

Proponents of the cameras say they deter criminals and aid investigations. Their images, police say, were crucial in catching David Copeland, the bomber who targeted black, Asian and gay Londoners last year.

Surveillance is getting smarter and its reach greater.

The throngs of shoppers on Oxford Street in London are tracked by 16 cameras linked to nearby Marylebone police station.

Sally Humphreys, director of the Oxford Street Association, says the system has helped curb street crime and theft.

According to Inspector Allan Thompson of Marylebone police, the system's record is mixed. In its first six months after being introduced in 1998, pickpocketing fell by 44 percent, street crime by 20 percent and burglary by 11 percent.

But pickpocketing is back to its pre-1998 level, while street crime stands slightly above the 1997 figure.

Thompson attributes the change to criminals being unaware of the cameras, and to having fewer police on the beat.

Davies traces Britain's embrace of CCTV to the 1980s, when cameras were installed at soccer stadiums

to combat hooliganism. From there, they spread to surrounding areas and city centers.

Davies argues that cameras don't reduce crime, but merely displace it, and do little to deter professional or drug-fueled criminals.

Opponents of the technology also argue the cameras are anything but neutral, all-seeing eyes.

A study published in 1997 by researchers at Hull University's Center for Criminology and Criminal Justice found that camera operators often selected their targets based on racial prejudice and voyeurism.

Local governments in the United States have been slower to adopt camera surveillance, says Robert Ellis Smith of the Rhode Island-based newsletter Privacy Journal.

He estimates that fewer than 50 U.S. municipalities have set up video surveillance in downtown areas.

## World/Nation

The Associated Press

### ■ New Mexico Scientist to plead guilty on nuclear charges

ALBUQUERQUE - Los Alamos scientist Wen Ho Lee, who was fired and jailed on charges of mishandling nuclear weapons secrets, has reached a plea bargain in which he will plead guilty to one charge and cooperate with federal investigators, Justice Department sources said.

Lee will plead guilty to one felony count of unlawfully retaining nuclear weapon secrets, be sentenced to time already served and be immediately freed following a hearing, according to two senior officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The officials said Lee, who has been jailed for nine months, has agreed to provide information on seven missing computer tapes with data on nuclear weapons design and testing. Three other tapes with information Lee allegedly downloaded have been recovered.

### ■ Sierra Leone British hostages freed after repeated threats

FREETOWN - Launching a dawn strike on a swampy base belonging to a maverick army gang, British troops ended a two-week hostage drama Sunday and freed all six British officers and a Sierra Leonean soldier held captive. One British paratrooper was killed.

The rescue mission, authorized by British Prime Minister Tony Blair and Sierra Leone President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah, was carried out after the captors "threatened repeatedly to kill the hostages" in this war-ravaged West African country, British Defense Secretary Geoff Hoon said.

Helicopter-borne British paratroopers exchanged heavy fire with the Sierra Leone renegades, the West Side Boys, at their creekside base surrounded by mangrove swamps and jungle, British Chief of the Defense Staff General Sir Charles Guthrie said.

### ■ Gaza Strip Declaration of statehood stalled by peace talks

GAZA CITY - The top Palestinian policy-making body on Sunday put off a declaration of statehood for at least two months, in a bid to give faltering peace talks a chance, and called for concrete measures to start preparing for statehood.

The Palestinian Central Council's decision came after two days of long-awaited debate, although it was clear that the current deadline of Sept. 13 would be put off.

Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat had been under intense international pressure not to take a unilateral move that could provoke violent conflict with Israel.

Council chairman Salim Zannoun said the body now expects a progress report on statehood by Nov. 15, the 12th anniversary of a symbolic declaration of statehood-in-exile.

### ■ Florida

#### Spacewalk to take place after Atlantis return

CAPE CANAVERAL - Space shuttle Atlantis cruised to a smooth docking with the international space station on Sunday, setting the stage for the next big event: a long-distance spacewalk.

An American astronaut and Russian cosmonaut were paired up for the grueling climb up the 140-foot space station today to lay cable and install a boom for a navigation unit.

Edward Lu and Yuri Malenchenko planned to venture 110 feet from Atlantis' cargo bay.

That's more than twice as far as the top of the Hubble Space Telescope, where other spacewalking astronauts have worked.

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## Blockade removal allows refills

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PARIS - Blockades at France's oil refineries and depots were lifted Sunday and tankers began refilling service stations after six days of protests against high taxes paralyzed fuel distribution and stalled planes, trains and motorists.

The Interior Ministry said that truckers and farmers in western France had removed their seven holdout blockades by early Sunday afternoon.

"Fuel tankers can begin making deliveries," said Pierre Navaro, a ministry spokesman. "We can begin restocking immedi-

ately."  
The removal of blockades and the onset of fuel distribution, however, was not expected to immediately ease the plight of motorists.

LCI television reported that in the southern city of Marseille, 60 percent of service stations remained dry Sunday.

The news came as OPEC members meeting in Vienna, Austria, agreed Sunday to boost the group's official oil output by 800,000 barrels a day. The decision came amid mounting international pressure on OPEC to pump more oil to stem surging fuel prices.

But as protests wound down in France, unrest in neighboring European countries appeared to gain momentum.

In Brussels, thousands of truckers, taxi drivers and tour bus operators took to the streets to push the government to reconsider a lowering of fuel taxes or a tax exemption for the transportation industry.

British truckers blocked several refineries and gas stations, causing nationwide shortages. About 100 Shell stations ran out of fuel because of the protest at a huge Shell refinery in northeast England.