

# The Washington Post

## Chuck Hagel nomination a waste of political capital? Lines in the debt ceiling sand and more

By: Allen McDuffee - January 9, 2013

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Chuck Hagel a petty pick: “It’s official. President Obama has named former senator Chuck Hagel (R., Neb.) as his nominee for secretary of defense. Hence, we may be in store for the worst defense-secretary-nomination fight since George H. W. Bush’s failed appointment of Senator John Tower (R., Texas) more than 20 years ago. The interesting question is, why? Why waste the political capital? Why pass over more qualified candidates who would sail through confirmation, including Michele Flournoy — who’d be the first female defense secretary?” asks AEI’s Jonah Goldberg. ([National Review](#))

Lessons learned, Obama takes fights to Congress: “Barack Obama is looking for a few good fights. Obama, the same president who campaigned twice on breaking the cycle of conflict in Washington, sees the utility — even the necessity — of rattling Republican cages as he plunges into a succession of upcoming battles over the nomination of Chuck Hagel as secretary of defense, the debt ceiling, \$1 trillion in automatic budget cuts, immigration reform and gun control.” ([Politico](#))

The fiscal facts of life: Having completed yet another deficit-reduction agreement that somehow managed to increase the deficit, Congress and the Obama administration are now laying the groundwork for upcoming fights over the debt ceiling, the sequester, and the continuing resolution that will fund the government given continued refusal by Senate Democrats to pass a budget. ([National Review](#))

Smart health care strategy hidden in ‘fiscal cliff’ deal: “One little-noted provision I was encouraged to see tucked in last week’s fiscal-cliff legislation is Section 601(b): an incentive for doctors to expand their use of something called clinical data registries. These registries collect information on patient characteristics, patterns of care and outcomes that can be crucial to evaluating what medical techniques and strategies work and which ones don’t. Unfortunately, registries are not as widespread as they should be — and the ones that exist often are limited to particular types of care,” writes CFR’s Peter Orszag. ([Bloomberg](#))

Boehner’s bogus debt ceiling line in the sand: “Speaker Boehner says that the House will not pass another increase in the debt ceiling unless the White House and congressional Democrats agree to cut spending by an equal or greater amount. That’s the same line in the sand that Boehner drew during the previous debt ceiling showdown in 2011,” writes Tad DeHaven. ([Cato](#))

Manhattan Institute’s Diana Furchtgott-Roth: “The new tax law teaches that personal contacts trump legislative process. People working together can change history. Despite years spent by Congress on tax reform bills and hearings, multiple conferences at

distinguished think tanks and numerous columns and op-eds (including my own), our newest tax law was not decided in a systematic manner by Congress. Rather, it was negotiated on Dec. 30 and 31 by Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., and Vice President Biden, who had spent decades together in the Senate on opposite sides of the aisle.” (Washington Examiner)

Florida Governor inflates cost of Medicaid expansion by 2,500% to avoid implementing Obamacare. (ThinkProgress)

Room for Debate asks: Parents often turn to their church, mosque or synagogue to teach their children about morals and values, and to build self-esteem. And yet religions can be paternalistic and insular — indeed, some religious groups have even been accused of child labor and possible human rights abuses. When does a religious upbringing cross the line from nurturing to oppressive? (New York Times)