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August 2013



**TOP 2011
BUSINESS**



The economy added 162,000 jobs in July while the unemployment rate dropped to 7.4 percent, the Labor Department [reported](#). Analysts had expected job growth of about 185,000, according to a [Bloomberg survey](#) of economists.

In a live [Q&A session](#) with real estate Web site Zillow on

Taxes Too High?

After dozens of hearings, the Senate Finance Committee and House Ways and Means Committee are embarking on the first major [overhaul of the entire tax code](#) since the 1980's. Committee sources expect a draft to be ready sometime in the fall. It's not too late to get your two cents in...If you are interested in contacting the tax committees with a plan for tax overhaul, please do not hesitate to call us. We will help ensure your idea is vetted. House Republicans are quite steadfast that this will be a comprehensive redraft, not a piecemeal approach.

Caren Z. Turner
(202) 466-2511

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Congress Takes a Break from Doing Nothing

By Carl Chancellor

While federal lawmakers officially left Washington on Monday to begin their five week recess, it could be argued that the 113th Congress has essentially been on vacation since being sworn in last January.



According to [CBS news](#), Congress has passed just 23 laws this year —“one to name a bridge and another to promote fishing in Tennessee’s Cumberland River.” If federal lawmakers keep up their current snail’s pace, the 113th Congress could end up being the all-time least productive Congress in history.

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Zeal to Repeal Health Care Law Misguided

By Carl Chancellor

Wednesday, President Obama said that student loans and immigration reform were tied to the housing recovery.

The Obama administration made public a previously classified order that directed a company identified by U.S. officials as Verizon Communications to turn over a vast number of Americans' phone records.

CIA drone strikes responsible for high civilian death count in Pakistan. Refuting claims by U.S. authorities to the contrary, a leaked document obtained by the Bureau of Investigative Journalism reveals the Pakistani government's finding that CIA drone strikes in the country have killed many more civilians than previously suggested.

With the Oct.1 deadline fast approaching for the launch of the state "insurance exchanges" – a key component of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) – House Republicans, before leaving for summer recess, voted yet again to repeal the law.

And just like the previous 39 times, the 40th attempt by the GOP to derail Obamacare will not be taken up by the Democratic-controlled Senate.



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This Week in Washington...

Top 5 Stories

- President Obama continued his cross-country speaking tour this week with a stop in Phoenix, where he endorsed bipartisan congressional efforts to wind down government-backed mortgage lenders Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, The New York Times reported. [Read more](#)
Look ahead: The president is set to elaborate further on his economic policy proposals; the White House indicates that he will address education, health care, retirement security and "ladders of opportunity." [Read more](#)
- The State Department this week shuttered [19 embassies and consulates](#) in the Middle East and North Africa until Saturday and issued a [travel alert](#) for Americans in the regions, The New York Times reported. [Read more](#)
Look ahead: If al-Qaida's objective was to sow fear and disrupt U.S. operations, then its threat is already a success, National Journal's Sara Sorcher writes. [Read more](#)
- The White House this week canceled a bilateral summit between President Obama and Russian President Vladimir Putin that had been scheduled to take place in Moscow in September, The New York Times reported. [Read more](#)
Look ahead: Secretary of State John Kerry and Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel are scheduled to meet Friday with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu. [Read more](#)
- The Justice Department has filed murder charges against Libyan militia leader Ahmed Abu Khattala in connection with the attack on a U.S. diplomatic mission in Benghazi last year, CNN reported. [Read more](#)
Look ahead: The department has filed sealed criminal charges against an unspecified number of individuals, The Wall Street Journal reported. [Read more](#)
- Egyptian acting President Adly Mansour's office released a statement this week declaring that foreign efforts to mitigate political turmoil in the country have failed, Reuters reported. [Read more](#)
Look ahead: Egyptian leaders said that crackdowns against two Cairo protest sites are inevitable.

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Turner Government and Public Affairs 1025 Connecticut Avenue NW Suite 1000 Washington, District of Columbia 20036
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