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December 2012



Representative
Jesse L.
Jackson Jr.,
who won re-
election this
month despite
an extended
illness, a long
absence from
Congress and
reports of
looming
investigations,
[will leave
office.](#)

In Washington, the Spirit is Lacking

Apparently the holiday spirit and the spirit of compromise are two vastly different emotions. With a New Year's deadline -- the so-called "fiscal cliff" -- looming over this holiday season, President Obama and House Speaker John Boehner are locked in a high stakes staring contest over budget policy and neither seems inclined to blink. Obama wants to end tax breaks for the rich, Boehner and the Republicans say no way. It's a familiar and tiresome refrain.

Also this week, Obama warned Republicans on the debt ceiling; Syria has loaded chemical weapons; and Sen. Jim DeMint will leave Congress to head the Heritage Foundation. [Click here](#) to view a full summary of what has happened [this week in Washington](#).

Happy Holidays!

Renu Persaud

Happy New Year: Are we Really Heading Over the Cliff?

By Scott Orr

If the U.S. Treasury could get a dollar for every time someone in Washington uses the term "fiscal cliff," the budget deficit could be erased in no time.

But sadly, all the talk about the fiscal cliff is worthless and, in the latest round of Washington high stakes brinksmanship, America is left to watch the political theatre and pray for common sense to prevail. This, of course, never happens.



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Click here to read: [This Week in Washington...](#)

Click here to view the Bureau of Labor Statistics' [jobs report](#) for November, released Friday, Dec. 7.

Click here to follow the debt talks: New York Times infographic showing what both sides have offered in the negotiations over the nation's fiscal path. All savings are over 10 years.²

What's Happening With Grover Norquist and his Tax Pledge?

By Scott Orr

Grover Norquist, president of Americans for Tax Reform, is the author of the [Taxpayer's Protection Pledge](#) which many conservative politicians sign vowing not to raise taxes and not to close loopholes without cutting government spending at the same time.



The vast majority of Republicans in Congress have signed the pledge, making it difficult to sculpt a compromise on taxes. Still, there have been rumblings that some Republicans are willing to go back on their no-new-taxes promise.

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113th Congress to Have Record Number of Women

By Carl Chancellor

Count them--20 female senators and 78 female House members. When the 113th Congress convenes in January it will have the largest number of women in U.S. history and just as significantly, white men will no longer be a majority in the [House Democratic caucus](#).



Despite this new looking Congress, one picture unfortunately remains stubbornly unchanged. Count them--0 (zero). That is the number of women and minorities who will chair the major House committees in the next Congress.

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