

Gingrich doubts debt limit to be reached by Halloween

■ **CONGRESS:** Proof demanded before borrowing authority is extended to government

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Speaker Newt Gingrich backed away Wednesday from an offer to temporarily extend the government's borrowing authority, saying Clinton administration warnings of a crisis by Halloween could not be trusted.

In the latest exchange in a war of nerves, the Georgia Republican said Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin's projections that the federal debt limit would be reached Oct. 31 could be "a Halloween trick to try to scare people." Before agreeing to raise the debt ceiling for even a short time, Republicans would insist that Rubin provide details on the government's borrowing needs, Gingrich said.

White House spokesman Mike McCurry, expressing administration chagrin, said

the standoff over federal borrowing "is now apparently going to be a crisis because Congress won't act to extend the debt ceiling."

Both sides know that neither would benefit if a failure by President Clinton and Congress to break the impasse leads to an unprecedented default. The likely results would include higher interest rates, tumult in the financial markets and possibly greater interest in a third-party presidential candidate.

Nonetheless, Republicans plan to tie the debt-limit increase to their seven-year package for balancing the budget and cutting spending and taxes. It is a strategy lawmakers have long used to force presidents to handle issues they would rather avoid.

The administration, on the other hand, wants to see the debt limit extension separated from the budget issue, which would make it easier for Clinton to veto

the GOP package. White House officials said that ideally, they would like to see the debt limit extended until after the 1996 elections, or at least until this Christmas, when the year's budget work may be completed.

Gingrich and Rubin spoke by telephone Wednesday and agreed to continue discussing their differences, said Treasury spokesman Howard Schloss.

But, he added, "there's no agreement" on extending federal borrowing authority.

By law, the government's total debt cannot exceed \$4.9 trillion. The Treasury Department had said that limit would be reached Oct. 31, though the limited borrowing plans it announced Tuesday pushed that back a few days.

Treasury can resort to other strategies that could avert default, some of which could keep the government paying its debts for months. But some of these, such

as shifting large amounts of money from trust funds for Social Security and other programs, would be politically risky.

On Tuesday, Treasury said it would sharply scale back its short-term borrowing plans to help stay within limits. It blamed the disruption on disobedient Republicans.

Shortly afterward, Gingrich said lawmakers would agree to raise the limit until mid-November — that is when Republicans hope to have their balanced-budget package ready for Clinton, who has pledged to greet it with a veto.

But after meeting with House GOP lawmakers Wednesday, Gingrich said he and Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole, R-Kan., would consult before deciding whether to support extending the limit until Nov. 14.

"We have no belief the Treasury has accurate figures," Gingrich told reporters. "We have no belief that Rubin's advice is anything other than politics."



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Confession unsure in Selena trial

■ **COURT:** Accused murderer said killing of star was 'accidental,' despite her confession.

HOUSTON (AP) — The police who took down Yolanda Saldivar's signed confession to killing Selena left out her claim that it was an accident, a Texas Ranger testified Wednesday.

"She hesitated to sign the statement because it didn't have the word 'accident' or 'accidental,'" Robert Garza said at Ms. Saldivar's murder trial. "It didn't reflect what she had stated, according to her."

Judge Mike Westergren ruled the confession admissible despite defense claims that police renege on a promise, made during a 9 1/2-hour standoff with a suicidal Ms. Saldivar, to let her immediately talk to a lawyer.

The defense says a hysterical Ms. Saldivar shot the 23-year-old Grammy-winning singer accidentally at a motel March 31.

Prosecutors say the woman who rose from president of Selena's fan club to manager of her

clothing boutiques deliberately killed Selena when they met to discuss the singer's accusation that Ms. Saldivar had embezzled \$30,000.

Ms. Saldivar, 35, could get life in prison. The trial was moved to Houston because of heavy publicity.

The signed confession says: "I took the gun from my purse and Selena started walking towards the door, which was opened. I pulled the hammer back and I shot at her as she was walking towards the door, which was open."

It makes no mention of accident.

Garza, who watched the interrogation by Corpus Christi police through one-way glass, said what he heard Ms. Saldivar say was that she "pulled a gun out of her purse, held it to her own head. She said she had the hammer back. She said that in a gesture to Selena, she told her to close the door and the gun went off."

He said he filed a supplemental report because it looked to him as if Ms. Saldivar wavered before signing.

Ms. Saldivar held police at bay and threatened suicide in the motel parking lot as a bleeding Selena lay dying in the lobby.

At a hearing Tuesday, the defense argued that officers should have made good on their promise to let her immediately see a lawyer if she surrendered.

But District Attorney Carlos Valdez said the promise was not binding.

"You can promise the moon 'if you come out,'" Valdez said. "And if they come out, they're going to pull down the moon? They're going to promise anything that's necessary to save a life."

The judge sided with the prosecution and let the jury hear the confession.

Sgt. Paul Rivera, the homicide detective on the case, agreed that Ms. Saldivar initially questioned the document.

"Before she signed the statement, she went back up and said: 'Right here, where it says I shot at her,' she said, 'it went off. The gun went off,'" Rivera testified.

O.J.: Questions of justice continue to be explored

Continued from Page 1

Media coverage also contributed to skewed perceptions about why the jury found Simpson to be innocent, Luvert said. He pointed out that the jury has been accused of racial bias in reaching a not-guilty verdict. Some claim the jury found Simpson innocent because eight of the jurors are African-American.

But Luvert claims the jury found Simpson innocent because of unbiased information it heard in court, while the rest of the country judged Simpson on slanted information dished out in the media.

"The media perceived O.J. as guilty," Luvert said. "We get fed this subjective opinion under the guise that it's objective."

Luvert also commented on the different reactions of blacks and whites concerning the outcome of the trial, pointing out that while whites were angered by the outcome, most blacks approved. Many blacks feel the legal system works against them, and the

media failed to notice this when reporting reactions to the outcome of the trial, he said.

"We were just happy that justice was done the way it was supposed to be done," Luvert said of the reaction of the African-American community.

Evidence was simply not strong enough to convict Simpson, said Margie Paris, a law school professor. It was circumstantial, and circumstantial evidence is hard to prove, she said.

"A circumstantial case is kind of like a house of cards," Paris said. "If one of those cards falls, the whole house falls down."

Other speakers at the symposium were Marvin Révoal of the Eugene Public Safety Department, who spoke about racism in police departments; Wayne Westling, a law professor who spoke about the perception on the international community; and Caroline Forell, a law professor who spoke about the impact of the trial on domestic violence.

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