schools across the country. The American Jobs Act proposes a $25 billion investment in school infrastructure that will modernize at least 35,000 public schools — investments that will create jobs while improving classrooms and upgrading our schools to meet 21st century needs. ... At 1:30 PM, the Vice President will attend an event for the Democratic National Committee in Miami.”

**BUSINESS BURST – L.A. Times A1 tease, Meg “Whitman has a big job to do with HP: Some analysts question whether the former eBay chief is a good fit in her new role with the evolving computer giant” – David Sarno and P.J. Huffstutter:** “The California GOP gubernatorial candidate and one-woman powerhouse who transformed EBay Inc. into a Web giant has been tapped to lead the Silicon Valley titan back to health ... [F]or all of Whitman's experience and public prominence, some industry watchers say the 55-year-old executive isn't the right person for the job at this critical time. They point out that Whitman, though respected in technology circles, has no experience running a global hardware company, especially one in the midst of a major transformation.” http://lat.ms/ob9Nok

**A message from Altria:** Altria’s companies produce premium tobacco brands, including Marlboro, Copenhagen, Skoal and Black & Mild, and quality wines from Chateau Ste. Michelle and Columbia Crest. As attitudes toward tobacco have changed, we’ve made significant changes in the way we do business. Our tobacco companies communicate openly about the health risks of tobacco — and provide information to help tobacco users who want to quit. To help reduce underage tobacco use, we fund the widely-recognized We Card® age verification program. And we supported giving the FDA authority to regulate tobacco — the only major tobacco company to do so. At Altria, we also understand that our companies’ actions impact more than 335,000 U.S. retailers, their employees and thousands of farmers and suppliers. Recognizing our responsibilities. Helping find solutions. It’s our way of doing business at Altria today. Take a closer look at www.Altria.com. **
OBAMA SPEAKS IN ROSE GARDEN at 10:30 a.m. on “his vision for a balanced approach to reducing our deficit and living within our means,” plus his recommendations to the supercommittee -- Carrie Budoff Brown and Jennifer Epstein: The president’s plan would “cut the federal deficit by $3 trillion over the next decade, drawing half the savings from new tax revenue and sparing Medicare recipients from having to wait longer to collect benefits, senior administration officials said Sunday. ... Obama has crafted a plan that reads more like a blueprint for shoring up his restless Democratic base than a vehicle for reaching across the aisle ... His proposal forces Republicans to side with corporations and the wealthy, sidesteps the most controversial remedies for overhauling Medicare and Social Security, and offers up a populist-sounding ‘Buffett Rule’ ... Responding to pressure from progressives, the president will not seek an increase in the Medicare eligibility age from 65 to 67, stepping back from a controversial idea he endorsed during his talks with Boehner.


SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS DETAIL THE PLAN on a conference call for reporters last evening (was embargoed for 9 a.m. until, per the White House, WashPost’s Zachary A. Goldfarb broke the embargo by calling around to try to confirm what he had learned on the call -- #not how embargoes work -- White House then lifted embargo):

--THE BIG PICTURE: “It builds off the framework that he released in April. Because it's his vision and not a legislative compromise being crafted to garner some number of votes in the House and the Senate, it's inherently different from the grand bargain he was working on with the Speaker. So while you'll see the same elements that he was seeking in that deal with the Speaker, and he said in April, balance and shared responsibility, what you'll see here is different than that compromise.”

--THE VETO THREAT: “In his remarks, ... the President will make clear he's not going to support any plan that asks everything from some Americans and nothing of others. ... [H]e will say that he will veto any bill that takes one dime from the Medicare benefits seniors rely on without asking the wealthiest Americans and biggest corporations to pay their fair share.”

--THE RHETORIC: “His approach follows a simple principle: Everyone has to do their part so that no one else has to bear all the burden. And it says that everyone, including millionaires and billionaires, have to pay their fair share.”

--THE NUMBERS: “Overall, the President’s plan would produce net savings of more than $3 trillion over the next decade, on top of the $1 trillion in spending cuts that the President signed into law in the Budget Control Act in August, bringing the total savings to more than $4 trillion over the next decade. This would bring the country to a place where by the middle of this decade, current spending is no longer adding to our debt, the debt will be falling as a share of the economy and percentage of GDP, and deficits on a year-by-year basis will be at a sustainable level so that we maintain that.”

--HEALTH CARE DEETS: “Specifically, the President is proposing roughly $580 billion in cuts and reforms to a broad range of mandatory programs. In health care, the President is recommending a series of reforms that build on the historic savings that have already been enacted in the Affordable Care Act to strengthen Medicare and Medicaid so that these vital programs remain strong and healthy to serve Americans for years to come.
Overall, the proposal will save $248 billion in Medicare and $72 billion in Medicaid and other health programs over 10 years, and it will extend the life of the Medicare trust fund by three years.”

--DRAWDOWN DIVIDEND: “The plan reflects the administration's policy that we are withdrawing our troops from Iraq and we'll have a civilian mission there, and that we'll be drawing down our military presence in Afghanistan over the coming years. And this will produce savings of $1 trillion.”

--5 PRINCIPLES ON TAX REFORM: “Finally, the president calls on the [super]committee to undertake comprehensive tax reform. And it lays out five key principles that should guide that reform. One is that it should lower tax rates. Two is that it should cut wasteful loopholes and tax breaks. Three, it should reduce the deficit by $1.5 trillion. Four, it should boost job creation and growth. And five, it should be consistent with the Buffett rule that people making more than $1 million a year should not pay a smaller share of their income in taxes than middle-class families pay.

--THE TARGETS: “Now, to try and drive the debate forward, the President is offering a series of detailed specific tax proposals. These are loophole closers and base-broadening measures that, together with the expiration of the high-income tax cuts, would be sufficient to hit the $1.5 trillion target that we're setting. These measures include cutting tax preferences for high-income households, eliminating tax breaks for oil and gas companies, closing the carried interest loophole for investment fund managers, and eliminating benefits for those who own corporate jets. We have little doubt that some of these proposals will not be popular with many who benefit from them and enjoy these special tax breaks. But these are the kinds of tough choices that we have to make.”

--MEMO TO PRESS: “After the President speaks, we're going to do another briefing that will give much more details, and the set of information that you will get will be at a level of detail that you may end up regretting asking for previously.”

JOHN HARWOOD on N.Y. Times p. A17, “The Caucus: Campaign Redux as Obama Pushes For Taxes on Rich”: “Obama’s opportunity to draw a politically profitable contrast ... may be greater than four years ago. ... Polls show that most Americans side with Mr. Obama on higher taxes for the wealthy. But voters are dispirited about economic conditions and with Mr. Obama's leadership in general, and he has been ineffective in pressuring Congress to go along. Administration aides insist that two factors provide a new opening: rising anxiety about jobs and deficits, and lawmakers’ own rock-bottom ratings. Mr. Obama has begun trying to replicate his 2008 success by abandoning closed-door negotiations for feisty, campaign-style language. But so far his aspirations for big shifts in tax policy share something in common with the income gap that underlies them: evidence of a breakthrough remains elusive.” http://nyti.ms/mYdTug

TOP TWEETS, from Kevin Robillard (@PoliticoKevin):
@RyanLizza: This may be the first time in a major negotiation with Repubs where Obama didn’t give away everything in his opening bid.

@JohnCornyn: Will Mr. Buffett release his tax returns?

@PounderFile (Joe Pounder, RNC Research Director): Have a feeling that it's going to be a busy day for @RNCResearch [today]...something about a $1.5 trillion tax increase.

PUNDIT PREP: “Hamilton Place Strategies [Fratto, Taylor Griffin Matt McDonald, etc.] releases the first of a three-part report on the current economic challenges, policy options ... The first report walks through the de-leveraging process at the heart of the current slow growth: ‘During the boom, individual savings rates as a percentage of disposable income was below 3 percent. Then from 2008 to 2011, individuals almost doubled their savings rate. Increased savings were used to pay outstanding debts. While the abnormally low
savings rates of the bubble period were unsustainable, a collective sharp increase in savings provided an additional, sustained shock to the economy.”

**COMING ATTRACTIONS** – “**Former Secretary Condoleezza Rice To Join 2011 Women Working for Change Conference**: In one of her first political appearances of the 2012 election cycle, Former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice will attend 2011 Women Working for Change Conference in Washington. On Nov. 18, the conference will host a luncheon titled: ‘No Higher Honor: A Conversation with Condoleezza Rice.’ Conference participants will hear first hand from Secretary Rice on her experiences serving our nation, her advice to conservative women in the arena, her views on current affairs and personal reflections about her newest book, ‘No Higher Honor: A Memoir of My Years in Washington’ (to be published Nov. 1 by Crown).” Participants will receive a personally signed copy of Secretary Rice’s book.”

**TEAM RESEARCH BIRTHWEEK**: The DNC’s (and Iowa’s) Lauren Dillon was feted with donuts and candy bars at work, and bowling at 10 Pin with friends … Conor Reynolds was yesterday. (hat tip: Red Vines)

**BIRTHDAYS SUNDAY**: Portman prodigy Jeff Sadosky … Matt Stuart (Mr. Elizabeth Holmes).

**BIRTHDAYS**: Andrea Saul … Toby Chaudhuri … Roger Angell is 91 … former Defense Secretary Harold Brown is 84 … Joan Lunden is 61 … Soledad O’Brien is 45 … Jimmy Fallon is 37 … Janno Lieber … Donn Stanley … Mary Pat Day … Larry Fox … Christina Iskander … Mark Edwards … Ali Glisson … Sarah Bailey.

**STATE VISIT**: Pete Seunt.


**OUT TODAY:**

--Emergency Committee for Israel uses billboards and New York Times ad to outline “five steps Obama could take to become the pro-Israel President he promised to be.”

--Full-page NRDC open letter to President Obama, signed by Nobel Peace laureates, urging him to “stop the proposed Keystone XL tar sands pipeline.”

**PIC DU JOUR**: “REAGAN CENTENNIAL NATIONAL FOOTBALL COIN TOSS … [On Saturday,] USC became the first of nearly 5,000 NFL, college, and high school football teams across America to participate in the Reagan Centennial National Football Coin Toss, Co-Chaired by Lou Holtz, Doug Flutie, J.C. Watts, and Lynn Swann. This is part of a year-long tribute to the 100th birthday of America’s 40th president, sponsored by the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation. Seen here tossing the Reagan Centennial coin … in front of 65,000 fans … are Fred Ryan, Chairman of the Reagan Foundation Board of Trustees [and POLITICO President and CEO] and Lynn Swann, four-time Super Bowl champion and MVP – both USC Alumni.”

**HAPPENING TODAY**: “The White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities will bring together nearly all of the nation’s HBCU presidents with dozens of senior Administration officials and business leaders in Washington [today and tomorrow] to discuss President Obama’s goal of creating the best educated and most competitive and diverse workforce in the world by 2020. Senior Advisor to the President Valerie Jarrett [today], U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan [tomorrow], White House HBCU Initiative Director John Silvanus Wilson, Jr. [today] and Rep. James Clyburn [tomorrow], will deliver major remarks on how Historically Black Colleges and Universities can raise the bar and extend their reach to serve more students.”

**Press contact**: toby.chaudhuri@ed.gov
NOV. 2012: GOP BIGS CALCULATE HOW PERRY WOULD PLAY IN THE 'BURBS -- Jonathan Martin and Dan Hirschhorn: “With President Barack Obama’s poll numbers continuing to swoon, GOP officials and operatives have quickly moved from trying to game out a long-shot victory to grappling with a very different question: How do we not screw up a golden opportunity? ... Choice A: The Hippocratic oath strategy — first do no harm. The party would nominate the safe-but-not-sexy Mitt Romney to keep the election focused as much as possible on Obama and to have a better chance to appeal to swing voters and independents. Choice B: Go big. Given the nation’s economic troubles and the vast majority who believe the country is headed in the wrong direction, pastels just won’t cut it. Bold, bursting differences between Obama and the GOP standard-bearer are a must. ... By this scenario, Perry ... would be Ronald Reagan to Obama’s Jimmy Carter. ... ‘We don’t need to elect a nominee who’s going to blur lines between this administration and the Republican Party,’ Perry said last week in Richmond at a fundraiser for the state GOP. ‘We need a nominee who draws a distinct and a clear contrast. And I will tell you one thing, President Obama and I have a clear contrast.’ ...

“Last weekend, at a meeting of Pennsylvania Republicans in Harrisburg, there were unmistakable concerns that Perry atop the ticket could make life harder for candidates running down-ballot in ... Philadelphia and its vote-rich suburbs. ... ‘I think Perry is just too hot,’ said a longtime Ohio strategist, suggesting that Obama couldn’t scare swing voters about Romney the way he could with the Texan. ... ‘It would make Missouri more competitive than it should be,’ a veteran Missouri Republican added ... What could be decisive, should Perry be the nominee, is whether he’s able to keep ... the debate on the economy ... Perry’s prospects would differ considerably if he became defined as a repeal-the-20th-century Yosemite Sam instead of the man who’s going to get America working again.” http://bit.ly/00ksDa

SUPERCOMMITTEE SPLITS ON WHETHER TO CONTINUE FUNDRAISING -- Anna Palmer and Manu Raju, with John Bresnahan: “Over the past year, more than two dozen ... ‘bundlers’ ... have directed $1.6 million to several members of the supercommittee and the House and Senate campaign arms ... What makes these bundlers stand out above other lobbyists in Washington is the sheer size of their donations — bolstering their influence over the most critical issues before the supercommittee, including defense, health care and taxes. ... AT&T ... is pushing for the supercommittee to increase wireless spectrum, reform corporate tax and minimize government regulation. The company ... bundled $71,000 for the DSCC through the first six months of this year and $20,750 last year for Washington Sen. Patty Murray, who co-chairs the supercommittee and runs the campaign arm that is charged with maintaining a Senate majority next November. ... Murray received the most bundled contributions of any individual supercommittee lawmaker since last year, also taking in $100,400 in campaign checks from Microsoft and $25,650 through Tim Thompson of Thompson & Smitch Consulting.

“Democratic lobbyist Tony Podesta, founder of the Podesta Group, may be the best-connected lobbyist to the supercommittee — he bundled $96,500 for the DCCC, and his firm directed $257,250 for the DSCC in the first half of 2011. Podesta’s clients include defense contractors like BAE Systems and General Dynamics and major oil and gas companies like Duke Energy and BP America — which have millions at stake if the panel slashes defense programs and eliminates oil and gas subsidies. ... Panel member Fred Upton (R-Mich.) has sworn it off while serving on the committee, and Sen. Rob Portman (R-Ohio) says he’s scaling back. But others — including Murray and her co-chairman, Rep. Jeb Hensarling (R-Texas) — don’t see a problem with continuing to fill their coffers. Sen. Pat Toomey (R-Pa.) and Democratic Reps. Jim Clyburn of South Carolina and Chris Van Hollen of Maryland have fundraisers this week. ... ‘There are a lot of members of Congress, and we all have multitasks, including all having to run for election, and so we take our responsibilities seriously,’ Murray told POLITICO. ... Podesta [said he doubted] lobbyists’ history of fundraising would have a real effect, saying the members won’t have a ‘special window for bundlers.’ Podesta’s wife, Heather Podesta of Heather Podesta + Partners, bundled $80,000 for the DCCC during the first half of 2011. ‘I don’t think they’ll be tallying to see who did what for them,’ Tony Podesta added.” http://bit.ly/oStazT

OUT LATER TODAY: “Outline of AFL-CIO Positions on Congressional Super Committee Issue” 2-page PDF http://politi.co/n8yhFn
TECHWATCH -- Reuters, “Netflix to split DVD and streaming services,” by Sakthi Prasad: “Netflix Inc is separating its movie streaming business and its DVD by mail service, which will be called Qwikster, Chief Executive Reed Hastings said in a company blog post. ... Netflix's move follows the company's decision to increase the monthly subscription for a joint streaming and DVD rental service by as much as 60 percent that caused an uproar among customers and bloggers.” http://reut.rs/nxNoo0
DUDE, WHERE'S MY DRONE? “Pakistan troops battle Taliban for US drone debris” – AP: “Pakistani soldiers battled Taliban militants to seize precious debris from a suspected U.S. drone that crashed in a rugged tribal area near the Afghan border… [O]fficials … learned of the crash by intercepting Taliban radio communications … The debris was first seized by the Taliban. … [T]he Pakistani army sent soldiers in to wrest it out of militant hands.”

BREAKING -- Geneva/AFP: "UBS revises rogue trading loss upwards to $2.3 bn."

SEN. DICK DURBIN, the #2 Senate Dem., tells Candy Crowley on CNN's "State of the Union" that a "realistic" outlook is the Dem.-controlled Senate won't get to the president's jobs plan until "NEXT MONTH."

BILL CLINTON, to Bob Schieffer, on CBS's "Face the Nation,“ re former Vice President Cheney’s mischievous suggestion that Secretary Clinton could be a stronger Dem. candidate in '12 than President Obama: “Well, you know, I’m very proud of her, so I’m always gratified whenever anyone says anything nice about her. And I very much agree that she’s done a good job. But I also have a high regard for Vice President Cheney’s political skills, and I think one of those great skills is sowing discord among the opposition. So I think he’s right that she’s done a heck of a job. But she is a member of this administration, and committed to doing it. And I think he, by saying something nice about her in the way that he did, knew that it might cause a little trouble. I don’t want to help him succeed in his political strategy. But I admire that he’s still out there hitting the ball.” SO GOOD!

DAVID GREGORY, at the end of NBC's "Meet the Press": “Before we go, I wanted to mention a special anniversary this morning. Our executive producer, Betsy Fischer, recently marked her 20th year with ‘Meet the Press.’ … After she graduated from American University, Betsy came here, and made this program her professional home. The rest is history, and what history it has been. She came of age professionally working with Tim Russert, of course, becoming his executive producer nine years ago. And then skillfully managed a very delicate transition around here after Tim’s death, working with Tom Brokaw and now me.

“Betsy’s love of politics, her judgment and her journalistic excellence define her success. We couldn’t ask for a better leader. I speak for all my colleagues at NBC News when I say, ‘Congratulations, Bets!’ And we’ve been keeping that from her all morning long. That’s it for today. We’ll be back next week. If it’s Sunday, it’s ‘Meet the Press.’”

ERIC SCHMIDT, Google executive chairman, to Christiane Amanpour, on ABC’s “This Week”: “The real problem is not the business community. The real problem is: The Democrats and the Republicans fight one point or another in a political sphere, while the rest of us are waiting for the government to do something concrete and predictable. What business needs is predictable, long-term plans. We need to know: Where is government spending going to be, what are the government programs going to be? And off we go.

“Business can create enormous numbers of new jobs in America. All we need to see is more demand. What's happening right now is: Businesses are very well-run, they have a lot of cash. They're waiting for more demand. At the moment, business efficiency allows them to grow at 1 or 2 percent, which is what we're seeing today. They don't have to hire more people. And until we solve the problem, people are going to sit idle. And it's a real tragedy.”
TOP STORY – MILLIONAIRE TAX IS KEY PART OF OBAMA DEFICIT PLAN OUT TOMORROW
-- Carrie Budoff Brown: “President Obama will propose a new higher tax rate for millionaires, ... giving his
deficit-cutting proposal a populist sheen that will invigorate the Democratic base but draw swift opposition
from Republicans. He will call it the ‘Buffett Rule,’ a nod to billionaire investor Warren Buffett, who has
criticized a system that allows the rich to pay a smaller portion of their income in taxes than middle- and
working-class Americans because wages are taxed at a higher rate than investment income. ... 

“The proposal is expected to include hundreds of billions of dollars in cuts to Medicare, Medicaid and
defense programs, as well as a call on Congress to overhaul the Tax Code. ... The [Buffett] proposal is certain
to energize the progressive base, which has wanted Obama to draw sharper contrast with Republicans for
defending tax breaks for the wealthy.”

--@DLeonhardt calls it “a kind of AMT on people making $1 million+.”

--House Budget Committee Chairman Paul Ryan, on “Fox News Sunday”: “Class warfare might make for
good politics, but it makes for bad economics.” --Alex Isenstadt

--Deets of “the President’s vision for economic growth and deficit reduction,” and recommendation to the
superc committee, will be out at 9 a.m. tomorrow, with POTUS speaking in the Rose Garden at 10:30 a.m.

--Little birds tell us the plan includes more than $2 trillion in deficit reduction over 10 years (i.e., MORE
than the supercommittee targets, even after the POTUS jobs plan is paid for), with a three-legged stool of
spending cuts, entitlement reform (Medicare and Medicaid but NOT Social Security) and the aforementioned
tax hikes for the rich.

--FLASHBACK I – “Obama backs millionaire’s tax,” by Josh Gerstein, 7/22/09: Answering a question
at a prime-time presser, “Obama endorsed a House committee's plan to fund part of [health reform] by
imposing a surtax on families making over $1 million a year.”

--FLASHBACK II -- WSJ.com, 12/6/10: “Senate lawmakers ... defeated ... by a vote of 53-37 [an attempt to
raise the threshold for middle-class tax cuts to $1 million].”

--OBAMA WEEK AHEAD: After the Rose Garden remarks, “the President and the First Lady will travel to
New York City, returning to Washington on Wednesday ... While in New York City, the President will
participate in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). The President will attend additional bilateral and
multilateral meetings on the margins of UNGA, including a high-level multilateral meeting on Libya. The
President will also attend the Open Government Partnership Event and deliver remarks at the Clinton Global
Initiative. On Thursday, the President will travel to Cincinnati, Ohio, to deliver remarks at the Brent Spence
Bridge, urging Congress to pass the American Jobs Act now so that we can make much-needed investments in
infrastructure projects across the country and put more Americans back to work.”

-- A message from Google: Enjoy your Sunday morning with some coffee from Portland! Mark Hellweg, a
lifelong coffee lover, started Clive Coffee three years ago. While Mark’s storefront is in Oregon, he uses the
Internet to sell his coffee and coffee equipment to people around the U.S. Local businesses like Mark’s are
growing. And Google is helping. Order some original Clive Espresso on the Clive Coffee website:
http://goo.gl/nGpJk

NEW ON THE TWITTERS: @RonSuskind ... @WillKryder, his researcher (B.C. grad!)

TSUNAMI SUSKIND, out Tuesday:

RON SUSKIND, in “Confidence Men: Wall Street, Washington, and the Education of a President” (p. 441): “During so many days of crisis in his first two years, Obama often felt that performance pressure --
having to play the part of president, in charge and confident, each day, in front of his seasoned, combative,
prideful team, many of whom had, all together, recently served another president. As he confided to one of his closest advisers, after a private display of uncertainty, ‘I can’t let people see that, I don’t want the staff to see that. … But I get up every morning. It’s a heavy burden.’”


--ADAM MOSS, in a back-and-forth with Rich: “I kept flipping back and forth between fury at Obama and — I know I’m easy — sympathy. So much of the damage comes from the initial decision to hire these guys, a decision he had to make almost immediately after being elected. He WAS inexperienced, he needed help, they burned him, he let them — that’s the story in brief. The number of stupefyingly momentous decisions he had to make in those first few months put me in a vicarious panic.”

--EMAIL DU JOUR, from someone who was interviewed by Suskind: “He talks about 90 percent of the interview, so I don’t know how he gets his actual info.”

--WHY THE SUSKIND BOOK IS DAMAGING, even though it doesn’t contain big factual revelations or real shockers – A Playbooker emails: “[T]his sounds like the wacky misadventures of a 50-year-old man who just got his first real job.”

--WHY SUSKIND GOT A 50-MINUTE OVAL OFFICE INTERVIEW: “to clear up a lot of bad reporting and theories that Suskind had developed.”

--EXCLUSIVE – SUSKIND BROUGHT UP CARTER IN THE INTERVIEW:

SUSKIND: “When you mentioned Carter -- I saw Jimmy Carter and asked him about this.”

THE PRESIDENT: “I didn’t actually mention Jimmy.”

SUSKIND: “I was thinking of Reagan, sorry. (Laughter.) You’re talking about Reagan and I asked Carter about Reagan. You will love this. Carter was doing his -- signing his diary at Politics and Prose, right near my house. And someone said, ‘Why did you do this book?’ He says, ‘Well, a lot of these issues that I’ve dealt with are on this President’s desk -- President Obama. And I said, I got diary entries on this stuff.’ So he does the book and the key entry in the diary was fascinating.

“Right when he had the last debate with Reagan, Carter puts in an entry, ‘I think we did fine. We had policy points. We’re going to get our constituents out. I hit all the key numbers’ -- sort of like a debater in high school. ‘Reagan did his optimism thing, but I think we won.’ And then there’s an entry about a month later saying, ‘Disregard the whole last entry.’ (Laughter.) And I asked Carter, I said, ‘What’s that about?’ He says, ‘Confidence. I didn’t understand it. Reagan understood it.’ But he said, ‘I thought I -- see, I thought this guy, Obama, our President, I thought he understood and I still think he does understand the power of confidence.’ So in a way, he’s talking to you on this very point about this dilemma of Reagan as the actor, flipping a switch -- he could do it. But it’s harder. I said, ‘Well, President Carter, why is it so hard for the Democrats sometimes to do that?’ He says, ‘I think we got wrapped up in high school debate club sometimes.’

THE PRESIDENT: “I don’t know that I got wrapped up in high school debate club. What I do think is that myself, Clinton and Carter all have sort of the disease of being policy wonks. And I think that if you get too consumed with that you lose sight of the importance of the larger message.”

SUSKIND: “It’s going to be an exciting few years.”
THE PRESIDENT: "Good. Thank you very much."

BIRTHDAYS: Jackie Calmes, celebrating in NYC with Maureen Dowd ... Joan Walsh ... NJ's Nicole Duran ... Robert Bennett ... former senator Robert Bennett (R-Utah) is 78 ... James Gandolfini is 50 ... Lance Armstrong is 40 ... Gilbert Ocanes ... Sam Lindenfield ... Chuck Supple ... Lola Velazquez ... Cathy Jury ... Luis Navarro ... Cyndi Peterson ... Tina Stoll ... Karl Struble ... Beth Peyton ... Kristen Crowell ... Monica Mills (hat tips: Teresa Vilmair).

WEEKEND WEDDINGS:

--SPOTTED: in historic Cape Cod: Sarah Bontempo – renowned scholar of the Ways and The Means Committee, and veteran staffer of Rep. Richard Neal — and Matt Healey, tying the knot. The wedding party began Friday night with a stop at JMart favorite The Squire. Playbookers in attendance included: Congressman Neal, Jamie Loftus and Matt Rhoades, Jessica and Matt Sandlin, Snakes, Ann Jablon, Kristen and Jason York, Mr. Oats, Mat and Mary Sumpter Lapinski, and Caroline and Chris Krueger. (hat tip: Choppy Bear)

--JOSH GINSBERG and JOAHN FAUCHIER, under a chuppah on a beautiful, cloudless day on California's central coast, overlooking verdant vineyards and rolling foothills, at the Edna Valley Vineyard, in San Luis Obispo. Various guests liveBerried it: from combined dispatches: "Josh successfully breaks the glass, to cheers of, 'Mazel tov!' ... Purple and black are the colors. ... Papa Ginsberg kicks off toasts and hands off to Joanne at the post-wedding reception. Mrs. G pulls out a nursery school toy jeep to toast her 'gregarious, excited' son 'who found his match in Joahn.' She calls them true 'soul mates,' and brings down the house by asking everyone if they know what car Joahn drives. ... A jeep! ... "As 'Hava Nagila' played and the guests encircled the new couple, the bride and groom were lifted on chairs, bobbing up and down to the beat of the music. ... Papa and Mrs. G. were lifted immediately after... The mother and sister of the bride followed. ... Now the Ginsberg family is taking turns dancing in a large dance circle crowd of clapping, ecstatic friends and family ... Papa G. keeps the dance floor lively through 'Brown Sugar' and "Mustang Sally." ... The dancing is continuing in the courtyard of the winery, with the bride and groom dancing with mile-wide smiles. ... To cap off the night, a guy named Jon Berrier gives an unsolicited speech and sings an unsolicited song, 'Heaven,' by Bryan Adams.

SPOTTED: Ben and Joanne Ginsberg, Matthew Dowd, Jake Suski and Caroline Bolton, Matt David, Kelley Robertson, Dorinda Moss, Tucker and Alexia Bounds, Jim Bognet, Reed and Lindsay Galen, Aaron and Amelia McLear, Blake Gottesman, Jared Weinstein, Steve Merksamer and so many more.

2012 BACKSTORY – “Perry vs Bush: Bush, Perry rift roots in nixed in-law appointment,” by AP’s Will Weissert, in Austin: "Here's the still-beating heart of the rift between Texas Gov. Rick Perry and his predecessor, George W. Bush: When Bush was governor [in 1995,] he refused to appoint Perry's brother-in-law to the Texas appeals court bench. ... Perry was the state's agricultural commissioner and Bush was the newly sworn-in governor. Perry lobbied for the appointment of his wife's brother, Joseph E. Thigpen, to a vacancy on the 11th Court of Appeals in Eastland. Bush turned him down. ... Mark Miner, Perry's campaign spokesman, said the request 'has no bearing on the good relationship between President Bush and Governor Perry' 'This happened years ago,' Miner said, 'and people have moved on.'"

REMEMBERING SENATOR PERCY – Chicago Tribune, 1.5 col. lead, “CHARLES H. PERCY, 1919-2011: A moderate who clashed with Nixon -- Former 3-term Illinois senator seen as presidential contender,” by Rick Pearson: “Charles H. Percy, a brilliant businessman who represented Illinois for nearly 20 years in the U.S. Senate [and] once headed the chamber's powerful Foreign Relations Committee, ... died early Saturday. He was 91. ... Percy's daughter, Sharon Rockefeller, is president and CEO [of WETA]. Percy
... entered the Senate in 1966 after defeating one liberal icon, the late Paul Douglas. But he was ousted by the state’s voters when they elected ... the late Paul Simon, in 1984.”


REMEMBERING KARA KENNEDY – “Kara Kennedy, 51, dies at [Wisconsin Ave.] health club: Daughter of senator tried to avoid limelight ... In 2009, President Obama presented the Medal of Freedom to Kara Kennedy on behalf of her father, Edward” -- Boston Globe’s Matt Viser and Donovan Slack: “Kara Kennedy, 51, who died at a Washington health club on Friday night and was the daughter of the late Senator Edward M. Kennedy, was the family member who might best be known as a survivor. Diagnosed with lung cancer nine years ago and told she might have one year to live, she fought the disease, had part of her lung removed, underwent chemotherapy, and emerged strong. She had spent much of this year’s summer with her mother, Joan, on Cape Cod, swimming and running. ‘It was one of the most wonderful summers I’ve had, and Kara told me one of the best she’s had on the Cape,’ Joan Kennedy said in an interview ... Ms. Kennedy had just taken a swim in the club as part of her daily workout. She died of an apparent heart attack ... ‘We all know that she is now with my dad,’ her brother, Patrick Kennedy, the former congressman from Rhode Island, said outside her two-story home in northwest Washington. ... “She leaves a 14-year-old son, Max, and a daughter, Grace, who turns 17 tomorrow. Kara Kennedy was born ... when her father was campaigning in New Hampshire for his brother, John F. Kennedy. ... The Kennedys ... went through a familiar ritual upon hearing the news of her death. Phone calls were made, e-mails sent, and family members began making flight arrangements to be near one another. Kara’s two younger brothers, Patrick and Edward M. Kennedy Jr., and her stepmother, Victoria Reggie Kennedy, gathered yesterday at her home in Northwest Washington -- a quaint two-story brick and yellow stucco house a few blocks from the National Cathedral -- to plan funeral arrangements. ... The Washington police department said it received a call shortly after 6 p.m. Friday night. Kara Kennedy had been working out at the Tenley Sport & Health Club about a mile from her home in Northwest Washington. ... The Rev. Mark R. Hession, the Kennedy family’s priest on Cape Cod, said he got to know Kara Kennedy when her father was suffering from cancer, and she and her children would celebrate Mass with him at the Kennedy family home in Hyannis Port.” http://b.globe.com/qmClIk

REMEMBERING ELEANOR MONDALE – “Eleanor Mondale: A life of no regret or fear: -- The vivacious daughter of vice president Walter Mondale died of cancer,” by the (Minneapolis) Star Tribune's Neal Justin: “Eleanor Mondale, the feisty media personality and daughter of former Vice President Walter Mondale and his wife, Joan, died early Saturday of brain cancer, which she had battled for six years. ... Eleanor Jane Mondale, the middle child of three, was born in Minneapolis and was 4 when her father was appointed to the Senate seat that had been vacated by Hubert Humphrey when he became Lyndon Johnson’s vice president. As a teenager, she campaigned for her father, who lost to Ronald Reagan both as a vice presidential candidate in 1980 and as the top of the Democratic ticket in 1984.” http://bit.ly/pTFypR
TOP TALKER – RON SUSKIND’S “Confidence Men: Wall Street, Washington, and the Education of a President” hits Tuesday with a media tsunami of “Today” and “Morning Joe” (both live), “Fresh Air” (taped Monday) and Jon Stewart’s “The Daily Show,” all on Day 1. Ron, who lives in Washington, also does a bunch of other shows next week, including Wolf Blitzer’s “The Situation Room.” $17.09 on Amazon http://amzn.to/paoaKl

PRESIDENT OBAMA granted Suskind a 50-minute interview in the Oval Office. Suskind interviewed a bunch of other officials, including Treasury Secretary Geithner. Many of the interviews were taped.

THE WEST WING claims errors. One we spotted yesterday as we index-read on the way back to lunch at P.J. Clarke’s after being given our copy by a little bird at a table outside Market to Market, on L Street: Dan Pfeiffer has never been “deputy press secretary.”

EXCERPTS:

--“Enough was enough, [White House chief of staff] Rahm Emanuel decided ... He summoned the two competing super-egos, [economic adviser Larry] Summers and [budget director Peter] Orszag, and told them to make peace. After all, they were each responsible for huge swaths of the federal government. And they were fighting at every turn. After a bit of delicate negotiations, it was decided that they’d meet once a week for dinner and see how it worked. So, that night, Orszag settled into a white-clothed table at the Bombay Club, a posh Indian restaurant across Lafayette Park, a favorite of lobbyists and White House officials.

“Summers walked in, slightly late, but not impolitely so, and met Orszag at the table. And then it was the two of them. Orszag hoped that this time the White House would be less fraught with strife than the last go-round during the 1990s. Summers said it kind of came with the territory. This talk of their shared history seemed to thaw things out. They both grabbed for the plate of flatbreads ... and tore corners at the discus-sized breads. ‘You know, Peter, we’re really home alone.’ Over the past few months, Summers had said this, in a stage whisper, to Orszag and others as they left the morning economic briefings in the Oval Office. ... ‘I mean it,’ Summers stressed. ‘We’re home alone. There’s no adult in charge. Clinton would never have made these mistakes.’”

--“The Obama presidency didn’t end in the fall of 2009, but it came close. ‘The worst period of his presidency,’ was the conclusion of Anita Dunn, reflecting on it more than a year later. ‘That horrific period in November ... health care dragging on and on, economy is not looking good, horrible jobless recovery ... that was a TERRIBLE time. ... Everyone was in a terrible mood.’ ... Dunn, the outspoken White House communications director, had been brought in to the West Wing to help the president navigate the rocky first few months of his term. ‘It was a mess,’ she said. Dunn quickly instigated a better scheduling system and fought, with futility, to heal the growing gender divide. ...

“‘The president has a real woman problem’ was the assessment of another high-ranking female official. ‘The idea of the boys’ club being just Larry and Rahm isn’t fair. He [Obama] was just as responsible himself,’ ... ‘[L]ooking back,’ recalled Anita Dunn, when asked about it nearly two years later, ‘this place would be in court for a hostile workplace ... Because it actually fit all of the classic legal requirements for a genuinely hostile workplace to women.”
On February 14 [2011], the president meditated on the most important things he’d learned as president. ‘The area in my presidency where I think my management and understanding of the presidency evolved most, and where I think we made the most mistakes, was less on the policy front and more on the communications front. I think one of the criticisms that is absolutely legitimate about my first two years was that I was very comfortable with a technocratic approach to government … a series of problems to be solved. … Carter, Clinton and I all have sort of the disease of being policy wonks … I think that if you get too consumed with that you lose sight of the larger issue … The reorganization that’s taken place here is one that is much more geared to those [leadership] functions.’

“Almost reflexively, he snapped into a quick take-back, that his old team was ‘exactly the right team to get a lot of laws passed through Congress,’ and that he’s ‘incredibly proud’ that financial reform has ‘made the system more stable’ and health care reforms ‘have started what will be a long path toward a more sensible health care system.’ Then he just swept them … away with a one-liner: ‘But I have very much internalized the fact that my job is not legislator in chief.’ …

“Ronald Reagan’s ability to project optimism … was his particular genius … ‘He was very comfortable in playing the role of president. And I think part of that really was his actor’s background,’ Obama said, betraying, in his tone, a hint of envy. As he edged closer to Reagan, though, Obama seemed to squirm in his chair, trying to get comfortable. Looking back over his life, the president said, Reagan always took pride in ‘pushing against artifice’ and ‘not engaging in a lot of symbolic gestures, but rather, thinking practically … And I think that the evolution that happened in the campaign was me recognizing that if I was going to be a successful candidate, then the symbols and the gestures mattered as much as what my ideas were.’”

** A message from Google: There are still a few good weeks in 2011 to enjoy the sand and surf! Take it from Douglas Twiddy, who’s been renting beach homes in the Outer Banks of North Carolina for 33 years. Twiddy uses Google to advertise his rental homes to beachgoers around the world. Local businesses like Douglas are growing. And Google is helping. Visit Twiddy Rentals: http://goo.gl/BAIJO **

BIRTHDAYS: Courtney O’Donnell … DON BAER … Mackey Dykes of DOE and OFA fame, is 30 … Steve Scully … Richard Wolffe … VOA’s Doug Johnson (hat tips: Patrick Gavin) … Nate Berkus is 40 … Claire Magee … Sandra Abrevaya … Steve Kerrigan is 40, celebrating with friends in Vegas at the Barry Manilow show (hat tip: brother Sean and many others) … Christine Martin … Adam Abrams … Sen. Charles Grassley is 78 … retired Justice David Souter is 72 … retired Marine Gen. Anthony Zinni is 68 … Isabel Morin … Annie Lundahl … Darcy Haber … Frayda Lieber (h/ts Teresa Vilmain).

JOSH GINSBERG was Friday.

ANDREA SAUL is Monday.

SPEED READ:

--N.Y. Times p. 1 (cols. 2-4, at the fold), “In Poll, Support for Obama Slips Among Base,” by Jeff Zeleny and Megan Thee-Brennan: “President Obama’s support is eroding among elements of his base, and a yearlong effort to recapture the political center has failed to attract independent voters, according to the latest New York Times/CBS News poll, leaving him vulnerable at a moment when pessimism over the country’s direction is greater than at any other time since he took office. The president’s effort to seize the initiative on the economy was well received by the public, and clear majorities support crucial pieces of his new job-creation program. But despite Mr. Obama’s campaign to sell the plan to Congress and voters, more than half of those questioned said they feared the economy was already in or was headed for a double-dip recession, and nearly three-quarters of Americans think the country is on the wrong track. …

“The poll found a 12-point jump since late June, to 43 percent, in the number of Americans who say the economy is getting worse. And for the first time since taking office, his disapproval rating has reached 50
percent in the Times and CBS News polls. ... The poll found a 43 percent approval rating for Mr. Obama. It is significantly higher than Jimmy Carter, who had an approval rating of 31 percent at a similar time in his presidency ... The president's support has fallen to its lowest levels across parts of the diverse coalition of voters who elected him, from women to suburbanites to college graduates. And a persistent effort over the past year to reclaim his appeal to independent voters has shown few signs of bearing fruit, with 59 percent of this critical electoral group voicing their disapproval. ... Two-thirds of the public say Mr. Obama has not made progress in fixing the economy, even though a majority of people concede the condition of the national economy is not something a president can do a lot about.” [http://nyti.ms/orloTZ](http://nyti.ms/orloTZ)

--GOP 2012 -- “Rogue states threaten GOP calendar,” by Alexander Burns: “One state, Arizona, has already announced that it will violate RNC rules and hold its primary on February 28 -- a full week before joint RNC-Democratic National Committee rules permit states to do so. Michigan’s legislature is also moving toward scheduling its vote for the same date. Then there’s Florida, a repeat offender when it comes to calendar mischief, which has empaneled a committee to choose an election date that’s expected to fall before the RNC-sanctioned date of March 6. The RNC cutoff for states to schedule their elections is October 1—and some states may even blow that deadline.” [http://bit.ly/q6UmQR](http://bit.ly/q6UmQR)

--SNEAK PEEK – E.J. DIONNE, for Monday: “In a series of campaign-style rallies, Obama exuded new energy. The friendly crowds he gathered radiated with a spirit that has been largely absent since the 2008 campaign. Cries of ‘Pass this bill!’ seemed comfortingly similar to the old shouts of ‘Yes, we can!’ And the initial response from congressional Republicans -- they pointedly did NOT reject all of his ideas -- suggested that things just might be turning the president's way. ... But then the Democrats lost two special congressional elections and the administration proposed to pay for its $447 billion jobs plan with a combination of tax increases that it had proposed before and that Congress had rejected. ...

“The administration is ... suffering because of its failure from the beginning to pay enough attention to courting its own side. At a moment when Obama desperately needs Democratic solidarity, there is no reservoir of goodwill from which he can draw. ... Obama, who has been so happy to stay distant and above the concerns of his Democratic allies, cannot afford to lose them now. Democrats in Congress have a long list of reasons for being resentful. The special elections will aggravate their fears of embracing the president too closely. Yet if Obama's presidency is weakened further, the resulting damage will afflict Democrats as a whole. However justified their past grievances might be, they have a powerful collective interest in seeing the fighting Obama get his new act off the ground.”

--BEYOND THE BELTWAY – Chicago Tribune, p. 1 tease, “Buyer for the Wrigley Building”: “BDT Capital Partners, a Chicago-based investment and advisory firm headed by Byron Trott, intends to buy the Wrigley Building in a deal that could be announced next week, according to sources. Groupon co-founders Brad Keywell and Eric Lefkofsky and Zeller Realty Group are minority investors in the deal. The intended use of the building, which is two structures, and the sale price were not known.”

SPORTS BLINK – “Taking NASCAR Coverage to Next Level” – ESPN release: “ESPN’s telecasts of the 10 races in the Chase [for the NASCAR Sprint Cup] will have a new look with the introduction of NASCAR NonStop, a split-screen commercial format that will bring more racing action to viewers. The format will show the advertisement on the left side of the screen and a continuation of racing action on the right side. ESPN’s scoring ticker will continue to move across the top of the screen ... NASCAR NonStop will take effect at or near the halfway point of the race, with the first half of the race presented in the traditional commercial break format.”

THE SHOWS, from @MattMackowiak:
--NBC’s “Meet the Press”: Former President Bill Clinton; Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY); roundtable with former Gov. Jennifer Granholm (D-MI), Republican strategist Alex Castellanos, TIME’s Mark Halperin and the New York Times’ Helene Cooper

--ABC’s “This Week”: Former President Bill Clinton; former British Prime Minister and Middle East Envoy Tony Blair; Google Executive Chairman Eric Schmidt; roundtable with ABC’s George Will, ABC’s Cokie Roberts, ABC’s Jonathan Karl and presidential historian Michael Beschloss

--CBS’s “Face the Nation”: Former President Bill Clinton; former Vice President Dick Cheney

--“Fox News Sunday”: Rep. Paul Ryan (R-WI); 2012 Republican presidential candidate Herman Cain; roundtable with the Wall Street Journal’s Paul Gigot, former Sen. Evan Bayh (D-IN), the Weekly Standard’s Bill Kristol and Fox News’ Juan Williams

--CNN’s “State of the Union”: Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL); Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-SC); Israeli Ambassador to the U.S. Michael Oren; PLO Chief Representative to the U.S. Maen Areikat

--CNN’s “Fareed Zakaria GPS Live”: (SUN 10am ET / 1pm ET): GE Chairman and CEO Jeffrey Immelt; roundtable with the Council on Foreign Relations’ Elliott Abrams and author and Columbia University professor Dr. Rashid Khalidi (“Sowing Crisis: The Cold War and American Dominance in the Middle East”); roundtable with Foreign Affairs’ Gideon Rose and Wall Street Journal columnist Bret Stephens

--Univision’s “Al Punto” (SUN 11am ET): Nicaraguan (PLI) presidential candidate Fabio Gadea; 2012 Republican presidential candidate and former Gov. Jon Huntsman (R-UT); Colombian National Police Director General Oscar Naranjo; Director and Writer Juan Rendón (“Infiltrados”); roundtable with AFP’s Juan Catro and Semana News’ Jose Castillo

--NBC’s “The Chris Matthews Show”: National Journal’s Major Garrett; NBC News’ Kelly O’Donnell; TIME’s Michael Duffy and BBC’s Katty Kay

--PBS’s “To the Contrary”: Author Margaret Hoover (“American Individualism”); roundtable with Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC), former RNC spokeswoman Cherlyn Harley, Judge and former Federal Prosecutor Debra Carnahan and Independent Women’s Forum’s Sabrina Schaeffer

--TV One’s “Washington Watch with Roland Martin”: (Sun., 11 a.m.ET): Rebroadcast of episode honoring men and women serving in the U.S. military from Fort Riley, KS

--SiriusXM’s “Polioptics” with Adam Belmar and Josh King (Sat., noon ET / 6 p.m. ET): “The Producers,” Part I -- Steve Rabinowitz and Scott Sforza, the first directors of production for Presidents Clinton and Bush, join their successors, King and Belmar, for a debate on what works, and doesn't, in the pantheon of Presidential Stagecraft. Rabinowitz recalls blanketing the floor of the East Room with artificial turf to welcome the Super Bowl XXVII Champ Dallas Cowboys and Sforza breaks down ‘Mission Accomplished’ aboard the U.S.S. Abraham Lincoln. On SiriusXM's POTUS Ch. 124, also available for download on iTunes and at http://www.polioptics.com.
PTC DU JOUR, by Peter Souza: President Obama enjoys a beer with Dakota Meyer on the patio outside the Oval Office on Wednesday, a day before presenting him with the Medal of Honor. Sergeant Meyer, a former active duty Marine Corps Corporal from Kentucky, is the third living recipient, and the first Marine recipient, of the Medal of Honor for actions in Iraq or Afghanistan. At 23, he is one of the youngest recipients in decades. http://bit.ly/qTDbXa

"The story of what Dakota did next will be told for generations. He told Juan they were going in. Juan jumped into a Humvee and took the wheel; Dakota climbed into the turret and manned the gun. They were defying orders, but they were doing what they thought was right. So they drove straight into a killing zone, Dakota’s upper body and head exposed to a blizzard of fire from AK-47s and machine guns, from mortars and rocket-propelled grenades. Coming upon wounded Afghan soldiers, Dakota jumped out and loaded each of the wounded into the Humvee... They turned around and drove those wounded back to safety. ... For a second time, they went back -- back into the inferno; Juan at the wheel, swerving to avoid the explosions all around them; Dakota up in the turret -- when one gun jammed, grabbing another, going through gun after gun. Again they came across wounded Afghans. Again Dakota jumped out, loaded them up and brought them back to safety. For a third time, they went back -- insurgents running right up to the Humvee, Dakota fighting them off.

"Up ahead, a group of Americans, some wounded, were desperately trying to escape the bullets raining down. Juan wedged the Humvee right into the line of fire, using the vehicle as a shield. With Dakota on the guns, they helped those Americans back to safety as well. For a fourth time, they went back. Dakota was now wounded in the arm. Their vehicle was riddled with bullets and shrapnel. ... And then, for a fifth time, they went back -- into the fury of that village, under fire that seemed to come from every window, every doorway, every alley. And when they finally got to those trapped Americans, Dakota jumped out. And he ran toward them. Drawing all those enemy guns c~ himself. Bullets kicking up the dirt all around him. He kept going until he came upon those four Americans, laying where they fell, together as one team. Dakota and the others who had joined him knelt down, picked up their comrades and -- through all those bullets, all the smoke, all the chaos -- carried them out, one by one."

IF YOU’RE WONDERING how seriously to take Joe McGinniss’ “The Rogue: Searching for the Real Sarah Palin” (on sale from Crown next Tuesday), consider this passage from page 146, quoting “one former houseguest” of the Palins: “I get real dry in the winter,” the houseguest tells me, “so I keep a bottle of baby oil by the bed. I’ll come out of the shower, put it on, and go to bed. One day, when we’re staying at the
Wasilla Lake house, Todd says, 'I gotta talk to you guys. Sarah's pissed. She found that big bottle of baby oil in your bedroom and she knows you guys are rubbin' it on yourselves and havin' sex.' My husband was like, 'She uses it on her skin, dude.' But Todd says, 'Sarah wants you out. She's really upset thinkin' you're in there having sex with baby oil.' We left. We went to a motel.'

TOM RIDGE, former Pennsylvania governor, and first Secretary of Homeland Security, endorses Jon Huntsman in New Hampshire today.

STEVE SCHMIDT'S DAD ENDORSES ROMNEY -- OUT LATER TODAY: "Mitt Romney today announced the support of five New Hampshire State Representatives. ... State Rep. Steve Schmidt [R-Wolfeboro] said: ‘With over 25 years of experience in the private sector and a successful record as governor, Mitt Romney knows how to create jobs and turn around our struggling economy. Mitt is the most qualified Republican running for president and he is the strongest candidate to take on Barack Obama. I ... will do everything I can to help Mitt win the New Hampshire primary.’” The others are: State Reps. Will Infantine (R-Manchester), Bill Tobin (R-Sanbornton), Laura Gandia (R-Litchfield) and Bev Rodeschin (R-Newport).

“IN MY TIME,” by Dick Cheney with Liz Cheney, debuts Sunday at No. 1 on N.Y. Times hardcover nonfiction list, and keeps the top spot for a second week on the list out Sept. 25.

WHITE HOUSE DEPARTURE LOUNGE: “Allison Zelman left West Wing and her role in [the Domestic Policy Council yesterday], to wake up crack of dawn [today] to head to Pennsylvania to lead reelection efforts there. No break for her! She's loved in WW.”

MATT FROM MIDTOWN EMAILS: What's the best way for a sixth-grader to follow the election? Send thoughts to mallen@politico.com, and we'll share them with Playbookland.

SNEAK PEEK – NEW FROM OBAMA 2012: “TO: Sunday Show Producers ... FR: David Axelrod, Senior Strategist ... This is the first in a series of memos on the state of our campaign ... Members of the media have focused on the President's approval ratings as if they existed in a black box. Following the intransigence of the Republicans during the debt debate, the approval rating of the GOP brand dropped to a historic low. The approval rating of Congress dropped to a near historic low. Americans are still dealing with the impact of the financial crisis and recession and the long-term economic trends that have seen wages stagnate for many, and that is manifested in their anger towards Washington. There's no doubt that Americans are calling on leaders in Washington to take immediate action to address their economic challenges -- exactly what the President is advocating for. ...

"Despite what you hear in elite commentary, the President's support among base voters and in key demographic groups has stayed strong. According to the latest NBC-WSJ poll, Democrats approve of his performance by an 81%-14% margin. That's stronger than President Clinton's support among Democrats at this point in his term and, according to Gallup, stronger than any Democratic President dating back to Harry Truman through this point in their presidency. ... The base is mobilized behind the President. 12,000 individuals applied to join the campaign as volunteer summer fellows, more than in 2008. 1,100 students across the country are organizing their campuses in support of the campaign as fellows this fall. We had 552,462 individuals give to the campaign in the second quarter -- more than we had in all of 2007. Of our 552,462 total donors to the 2012 campaign so far, more than 260,000 of them are completely new to the Obama organization and have never given before.

“The Republicans have yet to choose a nominee, and therefore, most Americans have yet to learn much about their records or visions for the country. Their candidates are busy courting the Tea Party, signing off on any economic pledge it might demand – no revenue increases under any circumstances, ending Medicare as we know it, draconian cuts that will hamper job creation. ... Despite the Republican candidates just beginning to undergo the media scrutiny that occurs during a presidential campaign, from North Carolina to Nevada, the
President remains ahead or in a dead heat with the Republican candidates in the battleground states that will decide the election in 2012.”

** A message from Google: Fashion Week may be over, but Janay Andrews, of Kansas City, Missouri, is still busy sewing. Janay and her team make customized, organic wedding dresses. Her clients in Kansas City love her work -- but thanks to Janay's website, she's also able to reach and outfit brides from around the country. Local businesses like Janay's are using the Internet to grow. Watch her story on YouTube: http://goo.gl/LH0iU. **

APCO and the RiceHadley group are forming a strategic partnership. Steve Hadley will also be a senior counselor at APCO.

PLAYBOOK PLAYERS -- Obama's campaign’s regional press team:

-- Tom Reynolds will leave the Department of Energy, where he has been Deputy Director of Public Affairs since the beginning of the administration, and will join the campaign as Director of Regional Press. Reynolds served as spokesman for the Obama for America 2008 campaign in Ohio, after serving as New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson’s national press secretary during the primaries. Before that, Reynolds worked for Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) and then-Rep. Jane Harman.

-- Addie Whisenant will be leaving as Democratic press secretary for the House Financial Services Committee to serve as the Regional Press Secretary for the Southeast. Earlier, she was communications director for then-Rep. Artur Davis (D-Ala.).

-- Frank Benenati, formerly regional press secretary for the DNC and spokesman for Rep. Louise Slaughter (D-N.Y.) and now-Sen. Al Franken’s campaign, is Regional Press Secretary for the Mid-Atlantic and Ohio River Valley.

-- Ben Finkenbinder, an early member of the ’08 campaign and then a prodigy in the White House Press Office, is Regional Press Secretary for the Upper Midwest.

-- Ofelia Casillas, formerly of the L.A. Times, the Tribune, and the Miami Herald, is Regional Press Secretary for the West.

BREAKING -- Bloomberg, “Solyndra Lobbied White House for Solar Panels on U.S. Buildings,” by Jim Snyder: “Chris Fish, a lobbyist with McAllister & Quinn LLC in Washington, wrote the White House Energy and Climate Change office on July 12, 2010, to request a meeting between Solyndra executives and Browner, who was director of the office, according to e-mails the White House turned over to House investigators for the Energy and Commerce Committee. ... According to Fish’s e-mail, the company was seeking to supply Solyndra’s lightweight, thin-film solar panels to governmental agencies to install on the rooftops of government buildings and to extend ‘buy American’ procurement provisions that favor U.S.-based suppliers.”

http://bloomberg.com/k2Ym

FIRST LOOK – THE MAP: GOP LEADERS MAKING NEW RUN AT HISPANICS IN FL, CO, NM: Resurgent Republic – the research group headed by Ed Gillespie, Whit Ayres and Leslie Sanchez – says polling turns up Republican opportunities with Hispanics in swing states of Florida, Colorado, and New Mexico. But the group admits that “significant challenges remain for Republicans in courting Hispanic voters.” Working with the Hispanic Leadership Network, RR polled 1,200 voters in those states from Sept. 6-10. From a polling memo out later today:

“George W. Bush won 44 percent of Hispanics nationally in 2004, while John McCain slipped to 31 percent in 2008 (including 42 percent in Florida, 38 percent in Colorado, and 30 percent in New Mexico). ... Compared, to 2008 President Obama is underperforming among Hispanic voters, particularly in Florida and New Mexico. In 2008, President Obama beat John McCain in Florida by 57 to 42 percent among Hispanics, but...
currently Obama is below 50 percent on two key presidential measures in the Sunshine State: He leads a generic Republican candidate by only 46 to 36 percent, and [48%] of Florida Hispanic voters think Obama deserves reelection ... In New Mexico, Obama won Hispanic voters by 69 to 30 percent in 2008, but now leads by 58 to 28 percent, with 56 percent saying he deserves reelection. In Colorado, Obama won by 61 to 38 percent among Hispanics in 2008, and now leads 59 to 27 percent, with 58 percent saying he deserves reelection.

"Hispanic voters in each of the three states say that President Obama has not delivered on the promises he made to Hispanic voters during the 2008 campaign ... Majorities of Hispanics, including wide margins among Independents, say that Obama has turned out to be a weaker leader than they thought he would be ... Hispanic voters are divided on whether President Obama’s policies have made things better or worse for most Hispanic Americans: ... Hispanics in these states are more likely to trust Democrats than Republicans on most policy issues. In Colorado and New Mexico, Hispanic voters trust Democrats more than Republicans on the economy, education, government spending, health care, immigration, national security, and taxes, typically by margins of 20 to 30 points. The margins in favor of Democrats tend to be somewhat slimmer in Florida, although Democrats still have advantages on every issue except government spending and national security."

BIRTHDAYS: Allison Silver! ... Jackie Rooney is 2-5 (hat tip: J-E-T-S) ... Katie Schulz and Ella Raineri are 10. Their proud moms are Pam Stevens and Betsy Fischer ... WaPo's Sara Go ... Richard Engel (h/t's Patrick Gavin) ... David Lavan ... Scott Spector ... Ed Conlow ... Michael Childers ... Liesl Newton ... Dawn Smalls ... Elliot Vice (h/t Teresa Vilmain) ... Rev. Robert Schuller is 85 ... Nick Jonas is 19.

SUNDAY SO FAR:

--CBS's “Face the Nation”: Bill Clinton.

--NBC’s “Meet the Press”: Bill Clinton ... Mitch McConnell.

--ABC’s “This Week: Bill Clinton ... Tony Blair ... Eric Schmidt, Executive Chairman, Google ... George Will ... Cokie Roberts ... Jonathan Karl ... Michael Beschloss

BEHIND THE CURTAIN: BEING BILL DALEY -- Glenn Thrush, John Bresnahan and Amie Parnes:

“The 63-year-old scion of Chicago political royalty was brought in as President Obama’s chief of staff to provide fresh blood, corporate-world experience and adult supervision to a young, free-wheeling White House staff. But critics inside and outside the West Wing are questioning whether he is the tough, competent manager needed to shake up the operation ... As a banker and former secretary of commerce, Daley’s ability to soothe relations with Republicans was a major justification for bringing him from Chicago ... But Daley’s failure to achieve any negotiating successes has only intensified the chorus of criticism from Democrats that Obama is too willing to compromise. Interviews with two dozen current and former White House staffers and congressional aides paint the picture of Daley as a steady, seasoned political operative struggling to find his footing in one of the most hostile environments anyone in his job has ever had to face. ... [A] person close to Obama said, ‘You do what you have to do to streamline the organization, cutting meetings from 20 people to five. But a lot of people are pissed’ ... 

“[T]he grumbling about Daley has intensified in the wake of a seemingly insignificant political sideshow - his mistaken assumption that Boehner had given him tacit approval of Obama’s request for a Sept. 7 jobs speech to a joint session of Congress. ... There’s also a primal scream aspect to the criticism, rooted in deep concerns among many Democrats about 2012, and, perhaps, the desire to find someone other than the man at the top of the ticket to blame. ... Daley ... takes his role of gatekeeper seriously, and has restricted the torrent of paper and people into the Oval Office. ... Daley, who refused to comment for this story, is reportedly unrepentant about his tenure, telling associates he’s not bothered by any griping down the chain of command or from the Hill, which he considers as much a part of job as turning on the lights in the morning. A few months ago, he also predicted that the first wave of negative stories about him would start popping sometime after the [bad] summer, according to an administration official.
"David Plouffe ... said the president has ‘full confidence’ in his chief of staff and blames the grumbling on factors beyond Daley’s control, [including] a disorganized and hostile Republican House majority. ‘I think he’s done a very good job. Obviously, we’re going through challenging times,’ Plouffe told POLITICO. ‘It’s been a tough year ... and it’s only natural there’s turbulence when the waters aren’t entirely placid. But he’s a very savvy guy, and he’s a very good guy, a solid guy.’ ... Daley’s ... corporate style has soured some White House staffers who think he’s pinching Obama’s access to his own people ... Daley [decided] to eliminate the big 8:30 a.m. daily meeting [his predecessor Rahm] Emanuel convened after the 7:30 a.m. senior staff meeting. ... To Plouffe and Obama, the decision was a no-brainer - the 8:30 meetings seemed like formless gabfests that delayed top aides from issuing marching orders to their own teams. To the middle ranks, ... it was a vital chance to run ideas by their bosses and get face time with top-level staffers outside of their direct chain of command.”

DAVID ROGERS, “GOP may bundle year-end omnibus”: “Reversing their past rhetoric, House Republicans are actively considering plans to bundle the 12 annual appropriations bills into a single omnibus package that meets spending targets set in the August budget accord and can be enacted before the December showdown over further deficit reduction. Speaker John Boehner was described as still nervous about the strategy, given the resistance he risks from conservatives and his own past criticism of such big budget packages. But House Appropriations Committee Chairman Hal Rogers told POLITICO, ‘I don’t think we have any choice,’ and expects to meet with his Senate counterparts next week ... ‘It’s really the implementation of the Budget Control Act,’ Rogers said, referencing the August debt deal.”

RICK PERRY SECRECY: EMAIL, SCHEDULES, GUESTS -- Kenneth P. Vogel and Ben Smith: “Perry has fought for years to keep even mundane details of his schedule, spending and decision-making away from reporters ... He faces pending lawsuits over his office’s refusal to release travel records and a clemency review ... He’s under pressure from open government advocates to release his full schedule. And in response to a once-lonely quest by a Wisconsin blogger, Perry’s office has temporarily stopped its practice of deleting emails after a week. ... With voters outside of Texas eager to learn more about the presidential contender, Perry’s secretive streak is frustrating efforts to examine his home-state record ... ‘Gov. Perry has always been a strong supporter of government transparency, a priority that he will carry with him to the White House if elected,’” [campaign spokeswoman Catherine] Frazier told POLITICO.

“[George W.] Bush not only released lists of overnight guests at the governor’s mansion during his governorship, including big donors, but during his 2000 presidential campaign, he released 3,125 pages of records detailing almost his entire schedule. It included everything from meetings with lobbyists and donors, to time spent reviewing death penalty cases, to his workout breaks. Unlike Bush, Perry does not release daily schedules in advance as governor except for public meetings ... [G]overnor’s office spokeswoman Allison Castle told POLITICO ‘we do not maintain a record of mansion guests.”'

MEDIAWATCH – ABC News President Ben Sherwood emails the division: “After eight successful and eventful years at the helm of ‘World News,’ Jon Banner is taking on a new and vital role. Jon will serve as Senior Executive Producer responsible for division wide initiatives, reporting to me and bringing his great intelligence and intensity to some of our most important special projects. Given Jon’s deep relationships across the company, his formidable knowledge of the news business and his can-do spirit, he will be a bulldozer in our drive to unite this organization with a common voice and mission. Jon will also continue as a leader for our 2012 political coverage and special events. ... Jon has been one of the rocks of ABC News, helping to hold the division together during the twin traumas of Peter’s death and Bob’s wounding in Iraq. ...”

“I’m also delighted to report that Michael Corn – one of the highest impact players at ABC News – will succeed Jon as Executive Producer of World News. As Senior Producer of the broadcast, Michael has helped lead our coverage of breaking news events around the world ... I came to know Michael well during my tenure at ‘Good Morning America’ – we worked closely at all hours of the day and night ... Jon has been a
warrior for ABC News. He hands over the program at an exciting moment of growth, opportunity, editorial excellence and momentum.”
VIDEO: President Obama says “Pass this bill” 90 times in one week, including 18 times in his speech to Congress, 18 times in Richmond, 12 times in the Rose Garden, 18 times in Ohio and 24 times in North Carolina. http://politico.co/qI6Xfm

TIME cover is “THE RISE OF RICK PERRY,” who says in an interview with Richard Stengel and Mark Halperin: “There may be someone who is an established Republican who circulates in the cocktail circuit that would find some of my rhetoric to be inflammatory or what have you, but I’m really talking to the American citizen out there. I think American citizens are just tired of this political correctness and politicians who are tiptoeing around important issues. They want a decisive leader. I’m comfortable that the rhetoric I have used was both descriptive and spot on. Calling Social Security a Ponzi scheme has been used for years. I don’t think people should be surprised that terminology would be used. No one gets confused about the point I was making, that we have a system that is now broken.

“We need to make sure that those on Social Security today — and those approaching it — know without a doubt it will be in place. … We’ll have a transitional period for those in mid-career as they’re planning for their retirement. And our young people should be given some options. … I don’t get particularly concerned that I need to back off from my factual statement that Social Security, as it is structured today, is broken. If you want to call it a Ponzi scheme, if you want to say it’s a criminal enterprise, if you just want to say it’s broken—they all get to the same point. We need, as a country, to have an adult conversation. Don’t try to scare the senior citizens and those who are on Social Security that it’s somehow going to go away with the mean, old heartless Republican.” http://ti.me/pdXy89

--See the cover. http://politico.co/qMezaW

--RICHARD STENGEL, TIME managing editor: “The great portrait photographer Platon often disarms his subjects with this question: What’s your favorite Beatles song? When he asked Governor Rick Perry that question recently in Miami, Perry thought about it for a moment and said, ‘Here Comes the Sun.’ … Perry told us he graduated from high school in 1968, at the height of the Beatles’ popularity. Most people, he said, like ‘Yesterday’ best. ‘That’s a nice enough song,’ Perry said, but his pick is ‘a great way to start every day, figuratively and Beatlemania-wise.’

--JON MEACHAM, TIME contributing editor, “Viewpoint -- In God We Trust: Few in number, dominionists believe the Bible should govern society”: “Rick Perry has never said anything to embrace dominionism. A canny politician, he may be able to repeat the successes of Ronald Reagan, who managed to win Evangelical votes without many tangible concessions. Perry seems more interested in waging war against Mitt Romney than against [dominionist C. Peter] Wagner’s satanic spheres of influence. God, Perry said in Houston [at his August prayer rally], ‘is a wise, wise God, and he’s wise enough to not be affiliated with any political party, or for that matter, he’s wise enough to not be affiliated with any man-made institutions.’ That’s a text Perry should keep close to heart.”

HUNTSMAN CAMPAIGN NAMES BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC ADVISERS: “John Mack will serve as chairman of the campaign’s Business Advisory Council. Other members include Gary Loveman, Phil Knight and Tom Bell. … John Mack serves as executive chairman of the board of Morgan Stanley. … Gary Loveman
is chairman, chief executive officer and president of Caesars Entertainment Corporation. He is the past chairman of the American Gaming Association ... Phil Knight is the co-founder and chairman of Nike, Inc. ... Tom Bell is the former chairman of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.”

FIRST LOOK – N.Y. Times Magazine, “How Dick Cheney Reined in Presidential Power,” by Jack Goldsmith, a Harvard Law professor (and W&L undergraduate) who was Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legal Counsel, from 2003-04, and Special Counsel to the Department of Defense from 2002-03:

“The imperative not to weaken the presidency was invoked whenever we debated counterterrorism policies in the Bush White House. ... Unilateralism in secret is sometimes necessary at the height of a crisis, and Cheneyism was effective in the short run. But it is disastrous over the medium and long term. The president cannot accomplish much over time without the assistance of his bureaucracy and the other institutions of government. And he cannot garner that assistance through mere commands. He must instead convince these institutions that his policies are good and lawful ones that they should support. Cheney’s book expresses contempt for such soft power.” http://nyti.ms/qXTpZb

DR. JILL BIDEN will make her first appearance on “Letterman” on Monday. She’ll talk with Dave about the humanitarian crisis in Somalia and her trip to the region last month, plus her ongoing work on military families, education and as a teacher.

HAPPENING TODAY: NRG Energy and the Washington Redskins will announce that the NRG Solar Bowl will take place at FedExField on Sunday. Designed to engage fans, educate the public and highlight the use of renewable energy, the NRG Solar Bowl will be held just before the “Skins raise Arizona. Fans are invited to participate in a trivia contest (www.nrgsolarbowl.com) with the chance to be chosen for the “Quarterback Challenge,” where winners will be coached by legendary professional players in a series of football skills events at FedExField. The event highlights the recent sponsorship agreement between NRG and the Redskins to install the largest solar power system at an NFL stadium. Twitter: @nrgenergy

** A message from Google: Toothpaste, playing cards, and beef jerky may seem like an ordinary shopping list. But to a deployed soldier, a care package with these basics is a big deal. That’s why Meredith Leyva’s nonprofit, eCarePackage.org, lets people thank servicemen by creating custom care packages online. eCarePackage.org is based in Schertz, Texas, but connects to gift-givers around the U.S. using Google AdWords. Americans like Meredith support our troops. And Google is helping. **

MARTY and SUZ KADY celebrate 10 years today.

BIRTHDAYS: Elizabeth Meyer is 27 ... RNC press secretary Kirsten Kukowski is 28 (hat tips: Scan, Sara) ... Sara Taylor Fagen ... “Young” Adam Aigner-Treworgy ... Chandler Smith ... Tiffany McGuffee ... Allyson Alvare is 26 ... Chris Lehmann ... CNN's Adam Aigner-Treworgy ... NYT’s Ashley Parker ... Accuracy In Media’s Don Irvine ... NPR’s David Folkenflik (h/ts Patrick Gavin)... Betsy Shelton ... Michael Butera (h/ts Teresa Vilmian) ... Oliver Stone is 65 ... Dan Marino is 50 ... Prince Harry is 27.

BIRTHDAY TOMORROW: Allison Silver ... BIRTHDAY NEXT MONDAY: Andrea Saul.


--RNC Communications Director Sean M. Spicer: “The RNC raised $8.2 million in August as large and smaller donors from around the country joined our effort to change direction and make Barack Obama a one-term president. It was the best off year August in the history of the RNC.”

POLL DU JOUR -- "Obama disapproval soars to 54 percent in Va.,” by AP’s Bob Lewis, in Richmond: "President Obama’s disapproval rating has soared to 54 percent in Virginia ... The Quinnipiac University Poll, based on telephone interviews with 1,368 registered voters from Sept. 7-12, found that only 40 percent approved of the president's performance, down from 48 percent in the same survey in June. Six percent were undecided. The survey's margin of sampling error was plus or minus 2.7 percentage points. ... 51 percent - said
they did not think Obama deserves to be re-elected, compared to 41 percent who would re-elect him. ... Sixty-three percent of [independent] voters disapproved of the way Obama is handling his duties while only 29 percent approved.

TOP TALKER -- N.Y. Times “The Arts” p. 1 (at the fold), “She Could See This Guy From Her House” -- Janet Maslin review of “The Rogue: Searching for the Real Sarah Palin,” by Joe McGinniss: “Although most of ‘The Rogue’ is dated, petty and easily available to anyone with Internet access, Mr. McGinniss used his time in Alaska to chase caustic, unsubstantiated gossip about the Palins, often from unnamed sources like ‘one resident’ and ‘a friend.’ ... ‘The Rogue’ suggests that Todd Palin and the young Sarah Heath took drugs. ... Mr. McGinniss did in 2011 make a phone call to the former N.B.A. basketball player Glen Rice, who is black, and prompted him to acknowledge having fond memories of Sarah Heath. ... Mr. McGinniss eggs him on with the kind of flagrantly leading question he seems to have habitually asked ... ‘So you never had the feeling she felt bad about having sex with a black guy?’” [link]

--Statement from Todd Palin responding to reports about the Joe McGinniss book: “This is a man who has been relentlessly stalking my family to the point of moving in right next door to us to harass us and spy on us to satisfy his creepy obsession with my wife. His book is full of disgusting lies, innuendo, and smears. Even The New York Times called this book ‘dated, petty,’ and that it ‘chases caustic, unsubstantiated gossip.’”

PUNDIT PREP – N.Y. Times A22, “Some Democrats Are Balking at Obama’s Jobs Bill,” by Jennifer Steinhauer: “Democrats, as is their wont, are divided over their objections, which stem from Mr. Obama’s sinking popularity in polls, parochial concerns and the party’s chronic inability to unite around a legislative initiative, even in the face of Republican opposition. Some are unhappy about the specific types of companies, particularly the oil industry, that would lose tax benefits. ‘I have said for months that I am not supporting a repeal of tax cuts for the oil industry unless there are other industries that contribute,’ said Senator Mary L. Landrieu of Louisiana. ... There are also Democrats, some of them senators up for election in 2012, who oppose the bill simply for its mental connection to the stimulus bill.” [link]

--A White House official emails: “The Times story ignores the fact that the American Jobs Act is not only supported broadly by the Democratic caucus but also includes the kinds of proposals that both parties have supported in the past. Outside of Washington, the American Jobs Act has been welcomed by mayors, governors, small business owners, cops, teachers and firefighters, along with families across the country fighting to make ends meet who would benefit from this bill. With outside economists like Moody's predicting that it would create nearly two million jobs, increasing growth and lowering the unemployment rate, the President will continue to take his case to the American people to urge Congress to pass the bill right away.”

SPEAKER BOEHNER JOBS SPEECH to the Economic Club of Washington, “Liberating America’s Economy,” streams live on his Facebook page at 1 p.m.: He “will say that while the House will consider President Obama’s proposals, which some offer opportunities for common ground, they are no substitute for the pro-growth policies needed to remove barriers to job creation in America. ... He will outline a path he believes the [supercommittee] should follow to reduce the deficit. He will say the panel should lay the foundation for fundamental tax reform to support private investment and job creation and address the structural problems in our entitlement programs that have put our country in danger of more job-destroying downgrades. He will note that tax reform should include closing loopholes -- but tax increases, which will destroy jobs, are not a viable option.” [link]

SUPERCOMMITTEE CENTRAL – USA Today’s Richard Wolf, to the co-chairs – DCCC Chair Patty Murray (Wash.) and House Republican Conference Chair Jeb Hensarling (Tex.) -- in a side-by-side interview in Hensarling’s Capitol office yesterday: “Would it be your goal to try to get a unanimous decision, rather than seven to five?"

HENSARLING: “You know, whether you beat the other team 42 to zero or 24-23, it's still a victory.”
MURRAY: “I was wondering when sports would come into this.”

--“The customarily partisan politicians called each other ‘Jeb’ and ‘Patty.’” http://usat.ly/pV9uon

OBAMA’S BLUE-STATE BLUES -- Polls sink in N.Y., Calif., Vt., reflecting withering among base blocs -- Edward-Isaac Dovere: “[P]ollsters point to the canary-in-the-coalmine factor: if Obama can’t hold these voters, they say, it’s a sign that his wider support among the reliably Democratic electorate of liberals, labor, young people, Jews, African-Americans and other key blocs is withering. They won’t be there in large numbers to put him over the top again in borderline states, and they won’t be there to feed his campaign money and provide volunteer support at the levels they did in 2008. … [I]n California, … Obama’s approval rating, at 61 percent a year ago, is down to 50 percent, according to a Sept. 7 University of Southern California/L.A. Times poll. And California’s Field Poll reported Wednesday that, for the first time since Obama took office, [46%] of state voters approved of his overall performance. In March 2009, 65 percent approved of his job was doing as president … Voters [in Vermont]—a place which delivered 67 percent of its vote to Obama in 2008—gave the president an approval rating of only 53 percent in a mid-August Public Policy Polling survey.” http://bit.ly/pgctuu

--WHITE HOUSE MINIMIZES N.Y. LOSS AS HILL DEMS FRET -- Glenn Thrush and Jake Sherman: “The district, an ungainly Brooklyn-Queens amalgamation that resembles a disfigured Dachshund, is likely to be eliminated when the state’s electoral map is redrawn to reflect New York state’s likely loss of two congressional seats. ‘This was a low priority for us. This wasn’t a race that ever held a lot of interest for us,’ said a Democratic operative close to Obama who urged panicked Democrats to chill out. … [But] Obama’s team … reacted with alarm to the theme that Obama is losing ground with Jewish voters … [It]’s hard to minimize losing a House district that hasn’t gone Republican since the election of Warren Harding — and it led to some open fretting by congressional Democrats … about Obama’s possible drag on their hopes for … 2012. … Rep. Lynn Woolsey, a liberal California Democrat, said this put a ‘stop … to say the least’ on Democrats’ recent momentum and success in portraying the GOP as hostile to Medicare, Social Security and job-creation efforts. … ‘You can’t say this was a referendum on the president when the Democratic candidate was basically running against the president,’ said a Democrat close to Obama, referring to Weprin’s open criticism of Obama’s Middleast and economic policies.” http://bit.ly/oTDPrq

FIRST LADY MICHELLE OBAMA IS GOING TO AN OLIVE GARDEN in Hyattsville, Md. (Prince George’s County), at 11:45 a.m. as she continues to make “Let’s Move!” announcements with corporations taking steps toward healthier offerings (Walmart, etc.). Today’s press event is with the CEO of Darden Restaurants – parent of Red Lobster, Olive Garden, LongHorn Steakhouse and Bahama Breeze – as it announces steps “to reduce its calorie and sodium footprints and to provide greater choice and variety on its children’s menus.”

--Darden’s goals include reducing sodium by 10% over the next five years and 20% over the next 10 years. On children’s menus, “fruits or vegetables will become the default side dish” and an “8 oz. serving of 1-percent milk is now the default beverage with free refills.”

--The first lady’s office calls healthier restaurants options “a critical piece of ending the epidemic of childhood obesity in a generation. One of every two dollars spent on food is spent in restaurants, and over one-third of calories consumed in America are eaten at restaurants. The Childhood Obesity Task Force Report [she unveiled in May] calls on restaurants to, ‘consider their portion sizes, improve children’s menus, and make healthy options the default choice.’

POPPING ONLINE -- HuffPo banner: “FEDERAL BUREAU OF IDIOCY,” links to Wired story by Spencer Ackerman, “FBI Teaches Agents: ‘Mainstream’ Muslims Are ‘Violent, Radical’”: “At the Bureau’s training ground in Quantico, Virginia, agents are shown a chart contending that the more ‘devout’ a Muslim, the more likely he is to be ‘violent.’ … These are excerpts from dozens of pages of recent FBI training