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Consumer spending down after tax cut

United Press International
WASHINGTON — Consumers bought less again in August, defying forecasts of a spending surge from President Reagan's tax cut and raising new questions about projections of recovery this year.

Most economists had expected the July tax cut to support increased spending, instead of the 0.9 percent drop in retail sales from previous month levels announced by the Commerce Department Monday.

The figures were not adjusted for price increases during the month, suggesting the drop in volume was even larger.

Consumer spending for July increased 1.2 percent in revised figures.

Compared with year-ago levels, total sales in August rose just 0.4 percent to \$88.3 billion,

the Commerce Department reported.

Auto sales plummeted 5.5 percent in August. But even without the downturn in autos, overall sales figures would have only stayed about even with July, with a 0.09 percent increase.

Durable goods sales, including autos, machinery and heavy appliances, were down 3.5 percent.

The weak sales figures raised new doubts a recovery was gaining steam.

"I just heard about it and I'm still in shock," economist Sandra Shaber, of Chase Econometrics, a leading analysis firm, said.

"Apparently consumers were not nearly as optimistic as Wall Street and saved their extra income. That is just very, very bad news.

"Until spending picks up its

hard to see what basis there is for any economic recovery."

Another forecaster, economist Michael Evans of McMahan, Brafman, Morgan and Co., said, "We're in trouble. The economy is going to be way down in the third quarter. It's going to put that fourth quarter upturn in jeopardy."

Commerce Secretary Malcolm Baldrige, in a statement issued by his office, attempted to remain upbeat about the figures, saying, "In the past, sharp gains in disposable income were generally followed by rising consumer outlays but often with a lag of several months."

So, Baldrige concluded, "This year seems to be following the normal pattern with the July tax cut not yet evident in individual's spending."

Anti-abortion delay goes on

United Press International
WASHINGTON — Unless supporters of an anti-abortion measure can switch the views of about a dozen senators, President Reagan is in for another defeat on Capitol Hill.

For the second time in five days the Senate refused to stop a two-month-old filibuster Monday that has blocked action on the legislation backed by Reagan. The vote for cloture was 45-35 — 15 short of the necessary 60 votes.

Senate Republican leader Howard Baker filed a petition for a third cloture vote today. The legislation is attached to the debt limit bill that Baker wants passed by the end of the week.

Last week, Congress handed Reagan his biggest setback to date on Capitol Hill when they overrode his veto of a \$14.2 billion supplemental appropriations bill.

Now Senate attention is focused on the abortion measure, which would ban federal funding and insurance for abortions. It also seeks a review of the 1973 Supreme Court decision that legalized the operation.

Sen. Jesse Helms, R-N.C., sponsor of the measure, said he was "not certain" he would have enough votes today.

Sen. Lowell P. Weicker Jr., R-Conn., one of the leaders of the filibuster, told reporters he did not believe Helms could summon the 60 votes.

"I will take hold of every opportunity to hold back the resolution of this issue by having votes," Weicker said. "Ten million people out of work and we're debating each other's values."

But Curtis Young, of the

evangelical Christian Action Council, said, "we're pleased; I think we'll be very, very close on the vote today."

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The anti-abortionists picked up four votes since last Thursday when their first attempt at cloture was defeated 41-47. Actually the anti-abortion forces picked up seven senators but the final tally did not reflect it because several senators who voted last Thursday were absent Monday.

In a comparison of the two votes, 48 senators have voted for cloture. Two or three senators who have been absent both times can be expected to vote for cloture. That leaves about 10 senators now supporting the filibuster that Helms must persuade to switch.

On Monday, Sen. John Warner, R-Va., changed his vote to support cloture. Republican Sens. Robert Dole and Nancy Landon Kassebaum, Kan.; Orrin G. Hatch, Utah; Mark O. Hatfield, Ore.; Paul Laxalt, Nev.; and James McClure, Idaho, all absent Thursday, voted for cloture in the second attempt.

Baker had said he would seek to bring up a proposed "federalism" constitutional amendment Tuesday by Hatch, which would allow Congress and the states to restrict or ban abortion.

But Baker acknowledged he did not believe he could get the unanimous consent required for him to do so. Weicker also hinted that he would raise an objection.

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