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**(Neb.)-Senate Moves Forward With Hagel Nomination**

By: Chris Fankhauser Posted at: 02/26/2013 11:28 AM

WASHINGTON (AP) - The Senate has voted to move forward on the nomination of Chuck Hagel for defense secretary, clearing the way for confirmation of President Barack Obama's choice.

The vote was 71-27 on Tuesday to end the GOP filibuster.

The Senate could vote later Tuesday to confirm Hagel, who has the necessary votes for approval. Hagel would succeed Defense Secretary Leon Panetta, who is stepping down after four years as CIA director and Pentagon chief.

Republicans had opposed Hagel, a former Republican senator from Nebraska and Vietnam combat veteran. They cast him as out of the mainstream, questioned his support for Israel and suggested he was too willing to compromise with Iran.

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