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(Neb.)-Senate To Move Forward With Hagel Vote

By: Chris Fankhauser Posted at: 02/26/2013 08:19 AM

WASHINGTON (AP) - A deeply divided Senate is moving toward a vote on President Barack Obama's contentious choice of Chuck Hagel to head the Defense Department.

The former Republican senator is on track to win confirmation after a protracted political fight.

Twelve days after Republicans stalled the nomination, the Senate was slated to vote Tuesday on proceeding with the Hagel selection. GOP lawmakers signaled late Monday they would end their delaying tactics.

If Hagel gets the necessary votes, it would just be a matter of time for a simple up-or-down vote, although Republicans could insist on the maximum 30 hours of debate before a final vote.

If confirmed, Hagel would succeed Defense Secretary Leon Panetta and join Obama's retooled national security team just days before automatic, across-the-board budget cuts hit the Pentagon.

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