

Three-year Myers confirmation fight draws to a close

The White House will not resubmit the nomination of former Interior Solicitor William Myers to the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, bringing to an end a confirmation fight that has lasted more than three years.

The White House recently contacted Senate Judiciary Chairman Pat Leahy (D-Vt.) about likely judicial nominees the president will submit to the Senate and Myers was not among the candidates, a Leahy spokesman said today.

"President Bush has made the right decision in not resubmitting these controversial and problematic nominees who failed to win confirmation from a Republican-controlled Senate," Leahy said in a statement. "It is unfortunate that we have lost many months of valuable time on these earlier false starts, time the Senate could have spent making progress on filling vacancies with qualified consensus nominees."

President Bush had once again sent Myers along with three other names to the Senate just after the November election. But leading Senate Democrats have made clear in recent weeks that they would not accept those nominees -- or others with a similar conservative ideology -- and urged the White House to send forward a new slate of candidates.

"This new Congress presents an opportunity for a fresh start on judicial nominations, one that emphasizes qualifications and bipartisan consensus over political game-playing," Leahy said.

Myers was nominated in 2003 for a seat on the appeals court, but his nomination has been repeatedly blocked by Democrats and was one of the nominees who sparked a fight over the "nuclear option" in early 2005.

Myers had been described by several Senate Democrats as the most "anti-environmental" judicial nominee sent to the Senate in recent decades and numerous environmental groups had lobbied against his nomination.

Environmental groups and other liberal organizations today touted the withdrawal of Myers and the other nominees as a major victory for their cause and likewise urged the president to put forward more moderate judicial candidates.

"Myers's withdrawal is long overdue, and a victory for the environment," said Earthjustice attorney Glenn Sugameli.

Reprinted with permission from E&E Publishing. www.eedaily.com 202.628.6500.

Copyright 2007. All rights reserved.