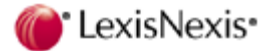


Newspaper Headlines

Compiled by the AO, Office of Public Affairs

[Back to Document List](#)



[◀ Previous](#) [Next ▶](#)

Copyright 2012 The Hartford Courant Company
All Rights Reserved

Hartford Courant (Connecticut)

December 6, 2012 Thursday
FINAL - 5 EDITION

CTNOW; Pg. B1

594 words

SENATE CONFIRMS SHEA FOR JUDGESHIP; WASHINGTON, D.C.

EDMUND H. MAHONY, emahony@courant.com

The U.S. Senate on Wednesday confirmed Hartford attorney Michael Shea for a seat on the U.S. District Court in Connecticut.

Shea will fill one of two vacancies among active judges on the eight-judge court, replacing Christopher Droney, whom President Obama elevated to the U.S. 2nd Circuit Court of Appeals in 2011. Shea also was nominated to his position on the District Court by Obama.

Shea's confirmation, as is the case with about 20 other federal court nominees, had been held up by partisan rancor in the Senate. When sworn in, he will join a District Court in Connecticut whose ranks have become so thin that judges from elsewhere in the country are being imported to help carry the case load.

Shea was praised prior to the Senate vote by Connecticut's two U.S. senators, Joseph Lieberman and Richard Blumenthal. The two senators recommended Shea's appointment to Obama. Lieberman called him "highly qualified" and Blumenthal said Shea brings "extraordinary credentials" to the court.

The Senate confirmed Shea by a vote of 72-23. All 23 no votes were cast by Republicans.

In addition to Droney's departure, the federal bench in Connecticut was weakened by the death of District Judge Mark R. Kravitz in October from Lou Gehrig's disease. The half dozen or so semi-retired senior judges in Connecticut, two of whom are 88, handle a substantial workload but have been slowed in some cases by health problems.

Senate inaction on judicial nominees has had greater effect elsewhere in the country. The Administrative Office of the United States Courts has classified more than 30 district or circuit courts as "emergencies" because vacancies have caused caseloads to rise to what officials consider unacceptable levels.

There has been hope among federal court watchers that, in its short post-election lame-duck session, the Senate would provide relief to the courts by confirming a batch of Obama nominees. So far, the Senate's political leadership has agreed to confirmation votes only on Shea and Paul W. Grimm, nominated to a district judgeship in Maryland.

Until recently, the confirmation process was usually quick and unremarkable, particularly in cases of nominees for District Court seats such as Shea, 45, a trial lawyer who is supported by the state bar and whose confirmation was recommended in April by Democrats and Republicans on the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Shea is an honors graduate of Amherst College and was senior editor of the Yale Law Journal in law school. His father is a former justice of the state Supreme Court. He currently chairs the appellate practice group at the law firm Day Pitney. Obama nominated him in February.

The ranking members of the Senate Judiciary Committee opened the vote by acknowledging the difficulty the backlog of judicial nominees is causing, but shifted the blame.

"Senate Republicans are establishing another harmful precedent by refusing to proceed on judicial nominees with bipartisan support before the end of this session," Chairman Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., said. "They have found a new way to employ their old trick of a pocket filibuster. They stall nominees into the next year and force the Senate to continue work on nominees from the past year for the first several months of the new year."

Sen. Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, said Leahy's complaint was unfounded and claimed that Obama's judicial nominees are being confirmed at the same rate as were those of former President George W. Bush.

"For those who would argue that Republicans have delayed this nomination just to obstruct, that's not the case," Grassley said.

December 6, 2012

[◀ Previous](#) [Next ▶](#)

[Back to Document List](#)

Copyright © 2012 LexisNexis, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All Rights Reserved.

[Terms and Conditions](#) [Privacy Policy](#)