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Chief Judge Picked

February
11

Jonathan Lippman was confirmed today to serve as the state's next chief judge of the Court of Appeals and vowed to reform the criticized process of picking judges to the court.



Lippman was confirmed on the Senate floor this afternoon after lawmakers knocked the selection process in which a panel last year failed to include a diverse list of candidates for the court's top job.

But Lippman, 63, pledged to work with lawmakers and Gov. David Paterson to change the selection system.

"It's 30 years since that process was instituted in the mid-70s. It's time that we take a fresh look at it," Lippman told reporters after a two-hour confirmation hearing. "It's a question of keeping it with the time."

Lippman, 63, who has a home in Rye Brook, Westchester County, has been the presiding justice for the First Department of the Appellate Division and served as chief administrative judge of the New York Unified Court System from 1996 to 2007.

He was nominated for the post by Paterson last month, yet his confirmation was delayed as state senators held hearings on revamping the selection process.

Some lawmakers said Lippman's confirmation shouldn't be held up because of the flawed process, yet others said they would abstain from voting because of it. Lippman was approved on the Senate floor in a voice vote.

"Wouldn't it have been better to have Judge Lippman here without this cloud?" said Sen. Ruben Diaz, D-Bronx.

Lippman said he will assume the role as head of the seven-member Court of Appeals tomorrow. During his confirmation, he was praised by Court of Appeals Judges Carmen Beauchamp Ciparic, the acting chief judge, and Theodore Jones, who were both passed over for the job.

"I would be dishonest if I didn't say to you that I would have loved to have been the subject of today's proceedings, but that was not meant to be," Ciparic said. "I would have made a good chief judge, but Jonathan Lippman will be a great chief judge."

Lippman has been praised for being an extraordinary administrative judge, for reforming the court system and for adding diversity to the bench.

Lippman has come under fire for being picked for the job because of his close relationship with Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, D-Manhattan. The two grew up together on the lower east side of Manhattan.

But Lippman dismissed any favoritism.

"I don't think it's had any impact whatsoever," he said. "If you look at all the positions I've had in the court system, I hope and believe I have them based on my merits and my record of accomplishment."

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2 Responses To "Chief Judge Picked"

1. **Republican Skeptic** February 11th, 2009 at 5:04 pm

This was the coziest, most corrupt cross-nomination of a judge in New York history, when Lippmann was elected in 2005. Republicans in the 9th Judicial District, including then-State Senator Nick Spano, were weak human beings, of low human character, and didn't ask Lippmann for anything. The Republicans got nothing in return.Nothing.

It was the sort of cross-nomination that made you go "yucch!."

God Bless our New York. It will probably fail.

2. **ed1** February 12th, 2009 at 8:48 pm

"I don't think it had any impact whatsoever," he says. Whopper Lie Number One, and he hasn't even started yet.

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