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The Slow Pace of Nominations.

This is actually a fair criticism of the president:

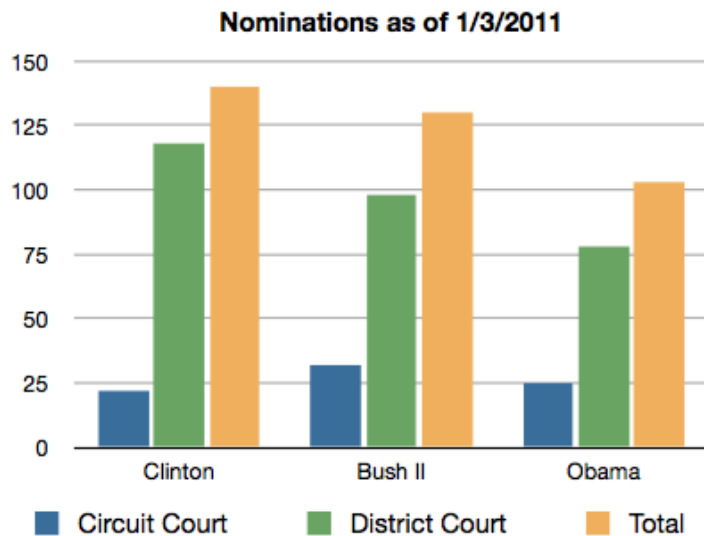
Republicans, after two years of criticism from the White House for blocking government appointments, have started to complain that the Obama administration is failing to fill senior financial and economic jobs.

The White House is expected to announce soon a replacement for Larry Summers, the top economic adviser to the president, who left the administration last week after delaying his departure to avoid leaving an empty chair for an extended period. But replacing Mr Summers, who said in September he was leaving his role as director of the National Economic Council, is only one of a number of personnel moves yet to be completed by the administration. [...]

Mark Calabria, a director at the libertarian Cato Institute, said: "You really can't blame people for holding up your nominations if you don't send them to begin with."

The White House has been incredibly slow at nominating people to fill executive branch and judicial vacancies. With judicial nominations especially, **Obama** lags well behind **Bush** and **Clinton**. Here is the most recent Alliance for Justice [snapshot](#) of judicial nominations:





So far, **Obama** has made 25 nominations for the circuit courts and 78 for the district courts for a total of 103 nominations. By contrast, at this point in their presidencies, **Bush** and **Clinton** had made 130 and 140 nominations, respectively. The filibuster is a problem, definitely, but Obama needs to vet more candidates and send more nominations to the Senate.

That said, Republican obstruction has left Obama with a dismal confirmation percentage: 58 percent compared with 90 percent for Clinton and 77 percent for Bush. Republicans are right to criticize Obama for the slow pace of nominations, but they still carry a lot of blame for the huge number of executive-branch and judicial vacancies.

-- *Jamelle Bouie*

Posted by Jamelle Bouie on January 5, 2011 12:55 PM | [Permalink](#) |

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I am by no means a staunch defender of Obama on this issue, and think he should raise a lot more hell about the lack of movement on his nominees than he has. However, your analysis leaves out many important factors. Obama can't nominate anyone until there's a vacancy, and we don't know how many openings there are, or how many there were under Clinton/Dubya. It seems like if you're going to measure Republican obstruction with a percentage, you ought to measure Obama's nominations as a percentage of current vacancies.

Also, with the works sufficiently gummed up, it's not like Obama serving up more nominees that will just sit there in the queue is an effective use of his time. The White House has to look into the backgrounds of their candidate pool, do some basic vetting of their backgrounds, etc. before nominations are made. Why do that if you know the nominee is going to sit in limbo?

I think there are valid criticisms of the White House's strategy on nominees, but I think



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