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Scotus Roundup: Hatch Rips Obama on Judges, More



By all accounts, President Obama is busy putting his final touches on the selection process for a replacement for John Paul Stevens. An announcement could come any day.

One of the final steps: meet with Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-UT), the influential lawmaker and Senate Judiciary Committee member. Obama and Hatch (pictured) sat down on Wednesday to talk over the pending nomination.

How'd it go? According to [this report from the Salt Lake Tribune](#), after the meeting "Hatch immediately drove downtown to the Cato Institute where he ripped the president's approach to nominating judges."

According to the Tribune: Hatch said Obama has clearly looked for qualifications that go beyond a strict adherence to the Constitution.

"Last summer, President Obama talked often about how judges should be guided by their empathy. This year, the buzz phrase seems to be core constitutional values," Hatch said. "This is the same old thing, just another cloaking device for judges who seek to control the Constitution."

In other Supreme Court news, the NYT on Thursday [ran a profile of Ninth Circuit Judge and Montana native Sidney Thomas](#), one of the four folks who's been given "[The Full Monty](#)" by the President in recent weeks.

According to the story, Thomas would bring something to the High Court that all of the other candidates lack: experience as a lawyer. "He would bring other kinds of diversity to the court as well," reports the NYT. He would be the only current justice whose law degree is not from Harvard, Yale or Columbia and would replace Stevens as the sole Protestant on the court.

Finally, in Columbus, Ohio, Solicitor General Elena Kagan said Wednesday that all eyes at the Justice Department were on the "honest services" fraud cases that have yet to come down. The cases involve high-profile white-collar convicts Conrad Black, Jeffrey Skilling, and former Alaska state legislator Bruce Weyrauch. Click [here](#) for Jess Bravin's WSJ story.

"In the solicitor general's office, we're interested in all of the cases" argued before the Supreme Court, said Katan on Wednesday. "In the rest of the Justice Department, this is a three-case term. And the cases are Black and Weyrauch and Skilling."

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