

ND, Minn. U.S. attorney nominees stuck in Senate impasse

BY TASHA CARVELL
The Forum

WASHINGTON — Some Republican senators reacted furiously to a hold put on President Donald Trump’s nominees for U.S. attorney in several districts around the country, including North Dakota and Minnesota, this week by Sen. Dick Durbin, D-Illinois, who responded that his action was simply following the precedent set by Republicans during former President Joe Biden’s term.

Among the U.S. attorney nominees caught up in the blockade placed on their confirmation by instant voice vote, or unanimous consent, rather than by a recorded, roll call floor vote, which takes more time, are Nicholas Chase for the District of North Dakota and Daniel Rosen for the District of Minnesota.

Both nominees received bipartisan support when they were named earlier this year and in committee, including Rosen getting an official “blue slip,” or signal of support, from Minnesota’s Democratic Sens. Amy Klobuchar and Tina Smith.

Sen. Kevin Cramer, R-N.D., said Senate Democrats were engaging in

“unprecedented, unacceptable, historical” levels of obstruction with the move.

“There’s no justification and it’s a spiteful attempt to retaliate against people who voted for a president that Democrats don’t like. It’s childish, they’re petulant children, and it’s time for us to change the rules in the Senate, and make sure that President Trump has the government he needs and deserves as president of the United States,” Cramer said.

In response to inquiries from The Forum regarding Durbin’s blockade, a spokesperson for Klobuchar noted both Minnesota senators’ support for Rosen’s confirmation but did not comment further. Smith’s office declined comment for this story.

Durbin, who is also the ranking member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, said during a hearing Tuesday that Republicans claiming his blockade is “unprecedented” are deliberately ignoring the previous four years.

“For decades, the Senate confirmed U.S. attorneys by voice vote or unanimous consent. All 85 of President Trump’s U.S. attorney nominees during his first



Anna Paige / The Forum

Cass County Judge Nicholas Chase listens to an audio recording Oct. 17, 2024, in Cass County district court. Chase has been nominated to be the U.S. attorney for North Dakota.

administration were approved by voice vote — all of them. But early in the Biden administration, things changed and Senate Republicans began a campaign of obstruction,” Durbin said.

Durbin said Republicans complaining now were simply “twisting in the wind,” and recounted that in April 2021, Sen. Tom Cotton, R-Ark., announced he would block nominees from any state represented by a Democrat on the Judiciary Committee, an impasse which lasted several

months. In June 2023, Durbin added, then-Sen. JD Vance announced he would place a blanket hold on all Justice Department nominees under Biden, including U.S. attorneys.

Durbin quoted Vance from that time as having said his hold was an attempt to “grind the Justice Department to a halt.”

As a result, Biden was only able to fill 68 of the 93 U.S. attorney positions with Senate-confirmed nominees during his administration, Durbin

said.

Durbin said the current blockade was also a response to what he called the Trump administration’s “illegal and unprecedented approach to filling U.S. attorney vacancies with extreme candidates while making no attempt, no attempt, to consult with Democratic senators,” in some cases.

“The path forward cannot result in Republican senators having their preferred U.S. attorney nominees confirmed, while Democratic senators have outrageous picks installed in their states in legally dubious ways,” Durbin said. “I look forward to working ... on a fair and bipartisan solution to this problem. It’s been created by both parties. We’re facing it now. Let’s do something about it in a civil way, in a fair way, and I think we can achieve that.”

Sen. John Hoeven, R-N.D., gave a measured response to the confirmation blockade, saying, “We continue working to advance Nicholas Chase’s nomination as U.S. Attorney for North Dakota, along with the many other nominations being held up by Senate Democrats, and we believe we can get Nick confirmed before the end of the month.”

“Since Senate Democrats are unwilling to reach a compromise, we are looking at different proposals to change the rules for how these nominations are confirmed by the Senate,” Hoeven said.

Chase was recommended to be North Dakota’s U.S. attorney in January and the Trump administration officially nominated him for the role in May. His nomination advanced to the full Senate for consideration after clearing the Senate Judiciary Committee in July.

An East Central District judge since 2022, Chase previously served as an assistant in the U.S. Attorney’s Office for 20 years, leading the office’s appellate, white-collar fraud, criminal immigration and asset recovery units during that time. A North Dakota native, Chase also previously worked in private practice and as a federal judicial law clerk.

Rosen was nominated for the Minnesota position in May. A graduate of the University of Minnesota Law School, he has more than 30 years of experience as a litigator at the federal and state levels, according to the university.

Readers can reach Forum reporter Tasha Carvell at tcarvell@forumcomm.com.

CALENDAR

The Community Calendar publishes events, meetings and fundraisers in The Jamestown Sun at no charge. To submit an activity, email it to news@jamestownsun.com.

Monday, Sept. 8
Jamestown Kiwanis, noon, Baymont by Wyndham, 507 25th St SW.

James River Alcoholics Anonymous, 4:30 (open) and 8 p.m. (closed), 518

10th Ave. SE, (topic).

Celebrate Recovery, 6 p.m. dinner, 7 p.m. meeting, Church of the Nazarene, 1306 6th Ave. SE.

Narcotics Anonymous, noon, Clubhouse. 518 10th Ave. SE.

North Dakota State Hospital Governing Body, 9-11 a.m., lower-level conference room, Jamestown Area Chamber of Commerce, 120 2nd St.

SE.

Buffalo Bridges Human Service Zone, 11 a.m., 116 1st St. E, Jamestown.

Jamestown/Stutsman Development Corp. Board of Directors, 11:45 a.m., lower-level conference room, Jamestown Area Chamber of Commerce, 120 2nd St. SE.

Jamestown Parks and Recreation budget hearing, 5 p.m., Two

Rivers Activity Center multipurpose room, followed by Jamestown Parks and Recreation Commission.

Tuesday, Sept. 9
Storytime for preschoolers, toddlers, 10 a.m., Alfred Dickey Library, 105 3rd St. SE.

Rotary, 12:10 p.m., Club 1883, 519 1st Ave. S.

Gamblers Anonymous, 5:30 p.m., AA Clubhouse, 518 10th Ave. SE.

James River Alcoholics Anonymous, noon (closed, topic) and 8 p.m. (open, Big Book), 518 10th Ave. SE.

James River Alanon Family, 7 p.m., AA Clubhouse, 518 10th Ave. SE.

Jamestown Overcomers Narcotics Anonymous, 7:30 p.m., Seventh-day Adventist Church, 1201 4th St. NE.

Stutsman County Park

Portfolio, 8:15 a.m., Commission Room, Stutsman County Courthouse, 511 2nd Ave. SE, Jamestown

JRMC Auxiliary hosts 22nd Annual Tea for All Seasons, 2-4 p.m., at Trinity Lutheran Church, 523 4th Ave. SE. Tickets: \$12, available at the door; attendees encouraged to wear hats, dresses, tea time attire. Style show included.

BRIEF

Accident spills diesel, chemicals into western North Dakota river

NEW ENGLAND, N.D. — An agricultural implement accident Wednesday, Sept. 3, spilled diesel fuel and chemicals into the Cannonball River near New England.

According to a release from the North Dakota Department of Environmental Quality, an undetermined amount of diesel fuel and roughly 200 gallons of chemicals spilled into the river. The driver of the involved vehicle was uninjured, the release said.

Hettinger County Emergency Management used a boom to contain the spill and Environmental Quality personnel collected water samples for analysis. Members of the public are

asked to avoid recreation within a one-mile radius upstream and downstream of the spill. Consuming fish from the area is also discouraged until further notice, the release said.

The department is working with the responsible party to clean the site, the release said, and will continue to monitor remediation efforts.

Authorities will update the public once the area is confirmed to be safe, according to the release.

New England is in western North Dakota, roughly 25 miles south of Dickinson. The Cannonball River begins north of Amidon and flows to the Missouri River, according to an Environmental Quality fact sheet.

Forum News Service

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