

SMC-Judge on TRO/Injunction

Judge Kent Dawson

He was a Henderson Justice of the Peace before being confirmed for a lifetime position on Nevada's federal bench in 2000. He's a longtime friend of Harry Reid, nominated by Reid.

A Democratic party activist praised the judicial choices, but other observers lamented the political nature of the selection process and criticized Reid for slighting more qualified candidates.

One Nevada lawyer, who asked not to be identified, called Riegle a "much more qualified" nominee than Dawson, who has served as a justice of the peace in Henderson since 1996.

"It just seems very curious how an individual coming from being a JP gets nominated and is moved so quickly through the process," said the lawyer, who described the lifetime judgeship as "one of the most powerful positions in the state."

The source noted that Reid, Dawson, Hunt and Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, all belong to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

"Clearly, at least Judge Hunt is somebody who has been sitting as a federal magistrate for a long time," said the lawyer who requested anonymity. "He has proven himself, etcetera. But Judge Dawson, who is he really?"

The way Reid handled the selection process, Peck said, "unfortunately leaves the impression that the choices are determined more by politics and personal relationships than by a careful assessment of who is best qualified to serve on the federal bench."

Assistant U.S. Attorney Ray Rukstele described Hunt as a good choice for the lifetime judgeship but said he knows nothing about Dawson.

The lifetime judgeship pays an annual salary of \$141,600.

NV Judge list -

<http://www.nvd.uscourts.gov/JudgeList.aspx>

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US District Court - Las Vegas

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