

# Vermont senator calls for confirmation of new Fresno federal judge

By John Ellis  
jellis@fresnobee.com

The crushing workload isn't getting any lighter, and still there's no sign that Dale A. Drozd is close to winning U.S. Senate confirmation as a federal judge in Fresno.

Locally, officials are nervously watching the days go by.

It is almost October, and there's a growing feeling of dread because it is unlikely any judges will be confirmed next year because it is a presidential election year.

On Tuesday, U.S. Sen. Patrick Leahy, a Vermont Democrat and ranking member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, made [a lengthy statement on the stalemate](#) in judicial nominations.

Leahy says confirmations have been "blocked by the Republican leadership's virtual shutdown of the judicial confirmation process since they took over the majority in January."

To date, she said, there have been just six votes for judges.

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U.S. Sen. Patrick Leahy, a Vermont Democrat

"At this rate, the Senate this year will confirm the fewest number of judges in more than a half century," Leahy said.

Leahy's comments were prompted by Senate passage of a Hispanic Heritage Month resolution and also celebrating Hispanic Americans. He notes that there are three qualified Hispanic judicial nominees awaiting confirmation. Referencing a local case brought by Latino migrant farmworkers for wage theft, he also talks of Drozd, who currently is a U.S. magistrate judge in Sacramento.

"The workers have waited more than three years to learn whether they can proceed with their claim," Leahy said. "As years go by, the workers' attorney worries that her clients will have moved and be impossible to reach if and when she is able to recover their stolen wages. This is another heartbreaking example that justice delayed is effectively justice denied."

Leahy says the Senate can "alleviate the considerable backlog of cases in the Eastern District of California by confirming (Drozd)," whom he called a "non-controversial pending nominee."

Drozd would replace U.S. District Judge Anthony W. Ishii, who retired and moved to senior status in October 2012.

It has been a process for Drozd.

Almost a year ago, President Barack Obama nominated Drozd to replace Ishii. But Congress adjourned in December without taking action on his nomination. In January, Obama renominated him. In June, the Senate Judiciary Committee approved the nomination.

Nothing has happened since then.

John Ellis: [559-441-6320](tel:559-441-6320), [@johnellis24](https://www.instagram.com/johnellis24)