

Judge nominee list doesn't appeal to Gov. Paterson

BY KENNETH LOVETT
DAILY NEWS ALBANY BUREAU CHIEF

Monday, December 1st 2008, 8:57 PM

ALBANY - Gov. Paterson got a list of potential nominees to head the state's top court Monday - and he's not happy with it.

Paterson acknowledged he had not gone over the list in detail "other than a couple of preliminary comments to me from people who have seen the list that disturb me."

Paterson spokesman Errol Cockfield later said the list of seven names "doesn't reflect the kind of diversity he would like to see" on the Court of Appeals.

Of the seven, all were male. There were no Hispanics and just one black nominee, Court of Appeals Associate Judge Theodore Jones.

"While we believe the governor is statutorily compelled to pull from the list, we are looking at what options we have, if any," Cockfield said.

Paterson must replace Chief Judge Judith Kaye, who is stepping down after reaching the mandatory retirement age of 70.

The state Commission on Judicial Nomination forwards a list of seven recommendations from which the governor is required to select his choice by Jan. 15, subject to Senate confirmation.

In addition to Jones, 64, the nominees are Court of Appeals Judge Eugene Pigott, 62; Appellate Division judges Jonathan Lippman, 63, and Steven Fisher, 62, and lawyers Evan Davis, 64, and Peter Zimroth, 65, of New York City, and George Carpinello, 58, of Albany.

Vincent Bonventre, an Albany Law School professor considered an expert on the Court of Appeals, posted a blog entry calling the list of nominees "exceptional."

klovett@nydailynews.com