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Senate Kills Gubernatorial Appointments

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*By Annbeth Miller,
ShowMe Times Editor*

JEFFERSON CITY - Without taking single vote, the Missouri Senate on Thursday took the initiative in denying several gubernatorial appointments, forcing Gov. Jay Nixon's choice for director of the Department of Economic Development to resign.

The unprecedented action was actually a lack of action on the State Senate. By not voting on appointments, the governor was forced to retract nominations a number appointments to boards and commissions

Friday is the last day for action by state Senators to act on the nominations of the governor to boards, commissions and state departments over which the body has the powers of advise and consent. Since the state Senate adjourned for the week on Thursday, that was the last effective date it could take up and confirm the governor's appointments.

Traditionally, some gubernatorial appointments run into controversy and do not make it through the Senate's committee process. If the Senate fails to take action on a nomination, the governor can retract the nomination, or the nomination can die at the end of the allotted time for Senate action.

Thursday was the first time any one can remember the clock running out on three nominees, let alone another several nominees who's nominations were retracted by the governor.

"I think a lot of it stems from a lack of communication coming from the second floor," said Senate President Pro Tem Rob Mayer, R-Dexter. Mayer "second floor" comment referred to the governor's office, on the second floor of the state capitol. "A lot of the senators were trying to work with the governor's office, and somewhere along the line, some communication broke down."

Under the state constitution, if a nominee is rejected by the Senate or does not have his nomination rescinded by the governor and time runs out, that nominee is barred for life from being nominated for the position again.

The break in communications between the Senate and Nixon's office could not, however, be blamed for the withdrawal of the governor's pick for the Department of Economic Development.

Nixon pick, Jason Hall, 36, resigned on Thursday morning rather than have the Senate not act on his nomination.

“The gubernatorial appointments committee vetted his background and his experience very well,” said Mayer. “The committee...felt like this was not the time to place someone that lacking of experience in that important of a position.”

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