

Alito on his way to confirmation to be a Supreme Court justice

WASHINGTON (AP) — Samuel Anthony Alito Jr., the son of an Italian immigrant and a longtime lawyer, prosecutor and judge, is poised to take his place as the 110th Supreme Court justice behind what is expected to be the most partisan victory for a high court nominee in modern history.

Alito planned to watch his confirmation from a television in the White House's Roosevelt Room, as at least 58 senators in the GOP-controlled Senate have stated their intention to back him for retiring Justice Sandra Day O'Connor's seat on the bench.

The 55-year-old U.S. appeals court judge was then to be quickly sworn in at the Supreme Court before his expected appearance at Bush's annual State of the Union speech Tuesday evening with the White House's other new Supreme Court judge, Chief Justice John Roberts. Alito will be ceremonially sworn in a second time at a White House East Room appearance on Wednesday.

Alito and Roberts are expected to lead the nine-member Supreme Court into a new conservative era following the retirement of O'Connor, the court's first female justice and a key moderate swing vote on issues like assisted suicide, campaign finance law, the death penalty, affirmative action and abortion.

Democrats were using Alito's confirmation vote to focus on, in this election year, Bush's decision to replace O'Connor with a former Reagan administration lawyer who worked to get the Supreme Court's landmark abortion rights decision Roe v. Wade overturned.

At most, six or seven Democrats were likely to vote for Alito's confirmation, the lowest number of senators not in the president's party to support a Supreme Court nominee in modern history. By comparison, Justice Clarence Thomas was confirmed in 1991 with a 52-48 vote behind the support of 11 Democrats who broke party ranks and voted for President George H.W. Bush's nominee.

Liberal Democrats even tried to rally support to filibuster Alito on Monday. "It is the only way we can stop a confirmation that we feel certain will cause irreversible damage to our country," said Massachusetts Sen. John Kerry, the Democrats' 2004 presidential nominee.

A bipartisan majority in the Senate blocked the effort. Thirteen Democrats who planned to vote against Alito on Tuesday said he shouldn't be filibustered, even though they worried about the direction he would take the court.

Alito "would tilt that court in a direction that will restrict personal freedoms, strengthen the

role of government and corporations in our lives and allow the expansion of power of the presidency," said Sen. Byron Dorgan, D-N.D., who announced he would oppose Alito after voting to end debate.

Kennedy spoke to the inevitability of the outcome Tuesday morning, saying in an appearance on CBS's "The Early Show" that "Judge Alito will be elevated to that court."

Alito has assured senators that once on the court he would not have an agenda.

Several Democrats didn't believe him, and questioned him intently at those five-days of hearings after Alito would not discuss his opinions about abortion or other contentious topics. At one point, his wife, Martha Ann, started crying and left the hearing room as her husband's supporters defended him from the Democratic questioning.

Alito's path to the Supreme Court is infused with New Jersey connections. Born in Trenton as the son of an Italian immigrant, he attended Princeton University. He headed to Connecticut to receive his law degree, graduating from Yale University in 1975. He worked as an assistant U.S. attorney and the U.S. attorney in New Jersey before becoming an appeals court judge.

His late father, Samuel Alito Sr., was the director of New

Jersey's Office of Legislative Services from 1952 to 1984. Alito's sister, Rosemary, is a top employment lawyer in New Jersey.

Alito was not the White House's first choice for the Supreme Court. Bush picked Roberts when O'Connor first announced she was stepping down last year.

After Roberts was promoted to the top spot after Chief Justice William Rehnquist died, the White House against passed over Alito for the vacant seat, instead selecting White House counsel Harriet Miers.

Miers' withdrawal following a barrage of conservative criticism in late October finally brought Alito's name to the forefront, although he then had to contend with constant references as "Scalito" or "Scalialite," references to his judicial similarity to Justice Antonin Scalia.

"I'm my own person. And I'm not like any other justice on the Supreme Court now or anybody else who served on the Supreme Court in the past," Alito said at his confirmation hearing.

On the Net:
 Senate: <http://www.senate.gov>
 White House: <http://www.whitehouse.gov>
 Supreme Court: <http://www.supremecourtus.gov>



Diggin' it

TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Lacy O'Neal of Colby, left, looked at a map of playalakes with High-Plains Archeology Group president Nancy Arendt Sunday at the Prairie Museum of Art and History. The group had on display artifacts found at area playalakes as part of Kansas Day activities Sunday at the museum.

Flood victims frustrated with response

McLOUTH (AP) — Some northeast Kansas residents hit by torrential downpours that caused major flooding in early October have been frustrated since in their efforts to obtain federal assistance.

"Everybody's been turning their backs on us," said Shirley Noll. She and her husband, Joe, were flooded out of the home on their farm near McLouth.

Jefferson County officials say about 100 houses had damage from waters that rose suddenly early the morning of Oct. 2. The flooding also caused damage in Atchison, Shawnee and Jackson counties.

Justin Pike of Rep. Jim Ryun's Topeka office said residents of the four counties have complained about the lack of federal flood assistance. "We've asked people having problems to contact us," Pike said.

Jefferson County officials were told damage there did not meet guidelines that would make people eligible for assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Shortly after the flood, Gov. Kathleen Sebelius said homeowners and businesses could apply for Small Business Administration disaster assistance loans.

The Nolls said that they were told first by the SBA that a loan officer hadn't been assigned to them and subsequently that it was up to their county to initiate the process. County Commissioner Lynn Luck said was news to county officials.

The county officials also said they learned FEMA has no official guidelines specifically preventing local flood victims from receiving assistance from that agency. FEMA representatives told the Nolls Kansas hasn't requested aid from FEMA.

"We go back to the starting point again because nobody seems to know anything," Luck said.

The commissioners plan to write the governor asking her to make an official request for FEMA funds, although Luck wasn't optimistic.

Officials in the offices of the governor and the Kansas adjutant general's office continue to say Jefferson County didn't match up with FEMA guidelines for assistance to individuals, so no request was made.

Ryun's office also isn't sure FEMA funds can be made available, so Pike said other options being explored include a mixture of grants and loans that might be avail-

able from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Services Agency and Rural Development, as well as the SBA.

"We've been working with all three of those agencies to cut down

on the confusion," Pike said. "There is still something in the works."

Ryun, R-Kan., said in a written statement that he was disappointed the SBA has been unable to process the flood claims.



USED GRAND PIANOS IN EXCELLENT CONDITION

Priced at 50% or more OFF of New Price

- STEINWAY-M, Ebony - 5'7"
- BALDWIN-SF10, Ebony - 7'0"
- YOUNG CHANG GRANDS
- PLAYER GRANDS W/PIANO DISC

PIANOS UNLIMITED INC.
1-800-201-4551

Oil Changes - Brakes - Shocks - Struts
Alignments - Starting/Charging System

TRY US FOR AUTO SERVICE TOO!

Transmission Fluid Change - Batteries
Automotive A/C - Radiator Service - Exhaust

FREE Alignment Check

With purchase of 4 Michelin or BFG passenger tires. #110600 Expires 2-28-05

Lube, Oil & Filter Change with 4 Tire Rotation & Balance

\$34.99

Most Cars w/coupon Discount #110600 Expires 2-28-05

12 Month Interest Free Financing* **Visit us at www.tohaastire.com**

*Wells Fargo financing with approved credit purchase over \$250 Shop/Hazardous Material charges may apply.

USED TIRES

STARTING AT **\$5**

Huge Selection of Used & New Takeoff Passenger & Light Truck



T.O. Haas Tire

COLBY
910 South Range • 462-3957

TB hits cattle

ST. PAUL, Minn. (AP) — Minnesota's cattle have lost a "tuberculosis-free" status, meaning producers will face restrictions on moving animals out of state.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture revoked the state cattle industry's TB-free status Monday after the recent discovery of a fifth infected beef herd in northwestern Minnesota.


The loss of the designation makes it more expensive and time-consuming for some of the state's cattle producers to move their animals across state lines.

The outbreak poses no danger to humans unless they drink unpasteurized milk, rub noses with or are sneezed on by an infected cow. The bacteria that causes bovine TB is not found in meat, and it is killed when milk is pasteurized.

Agricultural officials have responded by killing almost 4,000 cattle from five infected herds in hopes of stopping the disease before it can infect the rest of state's 2.4 million head.

The state can regain its TB-free status after a two-year waiting period if no new cases are found.

Minnesota's cattle industry employs about 3,850 people and annually pumps \$5.3 billion into the state's economy, according to the state Department of Agriculture.



Incredible Offer!
While supplies last.

Motorola v710
\$49.99*
SAVE \$200!


No mail-in rebates required!

- ♥ 1.2 megapixel Camera
- ♥ Watch TV from this phone!
- ♥ MP3 Player
- ♥ Bluetooth® Compatible
- ♥ Video Capture & Playback
- ♥ Speech Recognition
- ♥ & Much More!

Have a heart to heart talk

with your new Nex-Tech Wireless phone!

We've got it!
Great phone deals & Nationwide Coverage



Nokia 6015 FREE*

- ♥ Integrated speakerphone
- ♥ Voice Dialing
- ♥ Mobile Internet capable
- ♥ Alarm clock with snooze
- ♥ & Much More!

Get 2 lines for \$69.98 monthly access & share:

- 1,300 Anytime Minutes 800 anytime local minutes • 500 anytime regional plus minutes
- Unlimited Nights & Weekends and Mobile-to-Mobile in the local coverage area
- Roll Over Minutes applies to local unused minutes
- FREE Nationwide long distance on the regional plus & local network

1st month access FREE*

when you sign up for service before Feb. 28, 2006


Get the most out of your phone with our i connect data services...

Unlimited text messaging
only \$9.99 per month

i connect value pack

- 7 mb of mobile web
- 80 multimedia messages
- 250 text messages
- only \$9.99 per month

Visit our online accessory shopping mall at www.nex-techwireless.com to personalize your phone!



Colby
North West Wireless
990 S Range Rd Suite B
785-269-7500

Atwood
The Great Outdoors
109 Grant Street
785-626-9425

Hoxie
TRW Communications
940 Oak Avenue
785-657-7500

Toll Free 877-621-2600 Online www.nex-techwireless.com

* 2-year contract required on qualified rate plan. 1st month free is access fee only. Certain restrictions apply. See stores for details.

Tell your friends
why you've gotta have Nex-Tech Wireless & **earn \$20**
See stores for details.