

MORE ON IMMIGRATION JUDGES

The Legal Times has an excellent story providing the background to stories the LAT and WaPo posted the other day. A discrimination lawsuit by an experienced immigration lawyer, Guadelupe Gonzalez, sparked an internal debate that resulted in DOJ backing off its prior opinion that Immigration Judges were exempt from civil service guidelines.

Nor was it well-known that a discrimination suit filed by Guadelupe Gonzalez led to internal debate within the Justice Department over the appointment process and to a hiring freeze of immigration judges that began in December — a freeze that wasn't lifted until last month. Justice's immigration judge selection process is currently being probed by the department's inspector general and its Office of Professional Responsibility for potential violations of federal civil service laws.

[snip]

Back at the Justice Department, an internal dispute arose over whether a competitive, merit selection process was required, — Sampson's attorney, Bradford Berenson wrote in response to inquiries. — The issue was highly uncertain and legally complex. — The Civil Division objected to using political considerations to hire immigration judges and, by December, Attorney General Gonzales's office, with Sampson's full support, had agreed to suspend hiring while the process was reviewed.

A Justice Department spokeswoman says she's not aware that there had ever

been an internal dispute over hiring. Nevertheless, she acknowledged that the department had recently revised its policy. As of April, all openings are now publicly posted, and the new process replaces the initial vetting, evaluation, and interviewing function for all candidates in the Office of the Chief Immigration Judge and EOIR," she says.

The article also expands on the list of unqualified shills who have gotten Immigration Judge positions because of their political connections. It provides an extended profile of Francis Cramer, a Judd Gregg buddy who was singled out by the GAO as singularly unqualified to be an Immigration Judge. And it provides a long list of others: