

GOODWIN LIU TO GET SENATE FLOOR VOTE ON CLOTURE THURSDAY

News broke this afternoon that Harry Reid might file for cloture on a floor vote on Obama's nominee for the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals, Goodwin Liu:

Goodwin Liu's bid for a federal judgeship may be headed for a crucial vote this week, in what would be the biggest fight yet over any of President Barack Obama's nominees for the lower federal courts.

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) is considering filing a cloture petition as soon as tonight, a spokesman said. That would set up a vote later this week on whether to end debate on Liu's nomination, a motion that needs the support of 60 senators to pass. The Democratic caucus controls 53 seats, so they would need Republican help to defeat a filibuster.

Well, shocking as it may be, and it really is, Harry Reid indeed pulled the trigger:

Prior to adjournment on Tuesday, May 17th, Senator Reid filed cloture on Executive Calendar #80, Goodwin Liu, of California, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit. Senators should expect a roll call vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the Liu nomination to occur at a time to be determined on Thursday.

This is a fairly astounding happening as Liu was first nominated to the 9th in February of 2010, but the nomination died at the end of the 2010 session from lack of even an attempt to call for

a floor vote. President Obama promptly renominated Liu, and he was again promptly reported out of the Judiciary Committee on a straight party line vote, but it appeared as if the nomination would be again be left to die a quiet death. Apparently not.

If you do not know about Goodwin Liu, you should. Liu is quite arguably the brightest and most accomplished young legal liberal star in the universe. He is the future of any liberal hope on the Supreme Court; like Antonin Scalia or John Roberts on the right, Liu is the future legal heavyweight for the liberal future. At only 39 years of age, Liu's resume and record of accomplishment, service and involvement in the law makes Elena Kagan look like a malnourished piker. He is literally that good and valuable for the future, Liu is worth fighting for tooth and nail. For a great look at Goodwin Liu the man and scholar, take a look at Bob Egelko's in depth biography from the San Francisco Chronicle.

So Goodwin Liu is set to get a floor vote on cloture Thursday, and if that threshold can be passed, he would look good on an up or down vote for confirmation. That is the good news. The bad news is, unless Harry Reid and/or the Obama White House have cut some kind of deal to get Liu through, there is little, if any, chance his nomination can muster the 60 votes necessary for cloture. And, despite some fast checking this afternoon, I can find no evidence of any such a deal having been cut or even discussed.

We will know by Thursday night whether Harry Reid and the Obama White House actually had a plan to get Goodwin Liu through and confirmed, or whether they just want the issue done and over with. One thing is for sure, it will not happen unless there is a plan and they have whipped some GOP support for cloture. Will Reid and Obama be heroes or goats? Stay tuned.