

Many more U.S. attorney firings considered

by UPI

WASHINGTON -- Top U.S. Justice Department officials considered firing dozens of U.S. attorneys, not just the eight who were dismissed, The Washington Post reported Thursday.

Lists of targeted prosecutors obtained by the newspaper show that the agency considered firing at least 26 U.S. attorneys. The lists have been withheld from the public and include the names of 13 federal prosecutors who are still in their jobs, the Post said.

U.S. Attorney General Alberto Gonzales testified before a congressional committee last week that only eight U.S. attorneys were considered for dismissal. But his former chief of staff, D. Kyle Sampson, and other top officials considered many others for dismissal as well, sources told the Post.

Some of the prosecutors on the lists were not aware they had been considered for dismissal.

"Really? I wasn't aware of that." U.S. Attorney Paula Silsby of Maine, whose name was on four versions of the list, told the Post.

U.S. Sen. Charles Schumer, D-N.Y., said it appears the Justice Department's firing process was "out of control."

"When you start firing people for invalid reasons, just about anyone can end up on a list," he told the Post.

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