

Report: Immigration judge choices partisan

by UPI

WASHINGTON - Bush administration appointees to immigration judgeships are increasingly being chosen based on political connections, The Washington Post reported.

The administration has emphasized partisan political ties ahead of expertise in recent years in selecting immigration judges, despite laws prohibiting those kinds of considerations, the Post reported Monday.

Citing its own analysis of Justice Department, immigration and other records, the newspaper said at least one-third of immigration judges appointed by the Justice Department since 2004 have either had Republican connections or have been administration insiders. Half were lacking experience in immigration law.

Two newly appointed immigration judges -- both described by the newspaper as Republican loyalists -- were failed candidates nominated by President George W. Bush to the U.S. Tax Court. One had taken inappropriate income tax deductions, the Post said, and the other was found not qualified to be a tax judge by an American Bar Association panel.

The appointments have begun to reshape the immigration court system, in which judges annually deport almost 250,000 immigrants, who have limited rights to appeal and no rights to legal representation, the newspaper said.

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