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By Carl Golden

Special to the Times

While it is unfair to the nominees and an example of irresponsible governance, the political downside to the Democrats' reported strategy of a protracted delay in considering **Gov. Chris Christie's recommendations for the state Supreme Court** (<http://www.nj.com/politics/index.ssf/2012/12>)



In this photo provided by the New Jersey Governors's Office, New Jersey Superior Court Judge David Bauman, right, speaks as New Jersey Governor Governor Chris Christie listens after Christie announced Bauman's nomination to the New Jersey Supreme Court at the Statehouse in Trenton, N.J., Monday, Dec. 10, 2012. (AP Photo/New Jersey Governor's Office, Tim Larsen)

[/christie\\_press\\_conference.html](#)) is negligible.

A decision to wait until after the November election to act gives **Christie** (<http://topics.nj.com/tag/chris-christie/index.html>) an opportunity to stamp his feet and rail about a do-nothing Democrat-majority Legislature, but ultimately to no avail.

**Senate President Stephen Sweeney** (<http://topics.nj.com/tag/stephen-sweeney/index.html>) let some air out of the trial balloon when he said he hadn't established a timetable for committee hearings for the nominees and that published reports suggesting an eight-month delay came from anonymous sources in his party caucus. His lack of a definitive denial, however, lent credence to the speculation.

Disputes over gubernatorial nominees have never been galvanizing campaign issues.

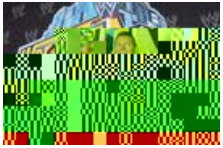
has never been particularly high — a history not lost on Senate Democrats.

Tax and spending issues will again dominate the gubernatorial and legislative campaigns, abetted by differing platforms on job creation and economic growth, education funding, health care, transportation and progress — or lack of progress — in rebuilding shore regions devastated by Hurricane Sandy last October.

Democratic legislative candidates have no reason to fear being the target of criticism for the strategy of delay, clearly understanding that voters are motivated by the worrisome kitchen table issues that directly impact their daily lives. On the list of personal political priorities, Supreme Court nominees don't make the cut.

Adding to their comfort level is the legislative districts' composition which tilts heavily toward incumbents. Absent a crushing landslide in the gubernatorial race, Democrats will likely retain control of the Legislature.

Middlesex County state Sen. Barbara Buono, the presumptive Democratic gubernatorial nominee, may make use of the impasse by blaming the governor for attempting to stack the Supreme Court with justices who share his political philosophy, particularly on the question of the constitutionality of the state's formula for allocating aid to local school districts.



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