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— SINCE 1888 —

OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE LOS ANGELES SUPERIOR COURT

dailyjournal.com

915 EAST FIRST STREET, LOS ANGELES, CA 90012 (213) 229-5300

## GOP Targets Governor's Judicial Picks

By Unanimous Vote, Delegates Push for More Republicans On State Benches

By Savannah Blackwell

Daily Journal Staff Writer

SAN FRANCISCO — State Republican Party pooh-bahs gathered in San Jose two weeks ago with a slate of proposed measures aimed at smacking into line their centrist leader, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Among their grievances was that the governor supported a minimum-wage hike and proposed \$68 billion in new debt to fund public works construction. At the convention, Schwarzenegger's aides quietly massaged the troops and kept those issues from boiling over.

But on one issue, party loyalists would not be quieted: They passed a resolution condemning Schwarzenegger for appointing judges who are Democrats, or at least not Republican. The unanimous resolution passed by the 1,400 delegates urged Schwarzenegger to stop overlooking "qualified Republican attorneys" and shun "liberal Democrats."

"This is an issue that we as Republicans are united on," said Steve Baric, an Orange County prosecutor who chairs the 2,000-member California Republican Lawyers Association, the group that pushed for the resolution.

"Moderates and conservatives agree the governor needs to appoint more Republicans to the bench," Baric said.

By the time Schwarzenegger took the convention stage Feb. 24, after two years as governor,



Associated Press

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger schmoozes after speaking at the California Republican Party convention in San Jose. Delegates unanimously agreed on the need for more Republican judges.

he had appointed 118 Superior Court judges: 59 Republicans, 47 Democrats and 12 who decline to state party affiliation.

The governor did not address the issue specifically at the convention, but, two days later, on "Meet the Press With Tim Russert," Schwarzenegger flouted his moderate bona fides and said he had no intention of shifting right before standing for reelection in November.

"I will run as an Arnie Republican," he said. "You can't put me in a box."

Schwarzenegger's aide, Julie Soderlund, said, "The governor focuses on appointing the most qualified individuals to the

bench, period."

Not all Republicans are upset with Schwarzenegger's judicial appointments.

Beverly Hills lawyer Eric M. George, the high-powered Republican son of Chief Justice Ronald M. George, said, "I'm one Republican who agrees with what this governor is doing."

George helped Gov. Peter Wilson pick his judges and now advises President Bush and Schwarzenegger on their judicial appointments.

"History and common sense refute the idea that any political party has a lock on great jurists," George said.

This is not the first time

Schwarzenegger has been criticized for his judicial appointments. Groups representing women and minority lawyers have complained about the selections too.

In September, the La Raza Lawyers Association of California complained Schwarzenegger had appointed only two Latino judges. Shortly after that, 11 and three more

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