

“It’s not that they are big things,” said one Democratic aide, “but they can mean big things back home.” Nominations to executive branch boards, judicial posts, commissions, and offices can be particularly difficult to hotline.

A case in point was the long list of executive nominations that went through the Senate November 21. The quest of Senator Harry Reid, D-Nev., to get one of his staffers, Gregory Jaczko, nominated and confirmed to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission began more than a year ago. Reid declared he would block all nonmilitary executive nominations until Jaczko got the seat reserved for a Democrat.

Talks to confirm Jaczko, or to let some other nominations through without his confirmation, were on and off again. Nominations stacked up. It was not until October that a package began to take shape.

The final package was worked out late on November 20 before the senators went home for Thanksgiving. Reid settled for the promise of a 2-year Jaczko recess appointment with some strings attached, and the White House saw erased, overnight, its huge bottleneck of unconfirmed nominees.

SOURCE: Adapted from Daphne Retter, “The Road Leading from ‘Hotline’ to Senate Wrapup is Not Necessarily a Short Trip,” *CQ Today*, November 29, 2004, 3.