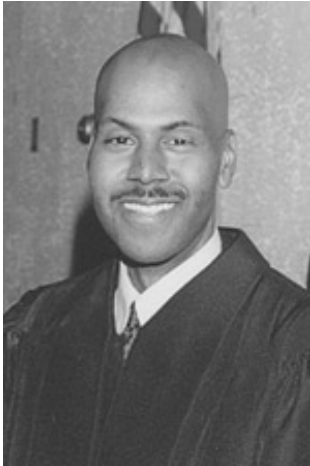


Blocked nomination of first Black openly gay federal judge

Written by

Friday, 27 September 2013 09:22



(MIAMI)— Tuesday, Senator Marco Rubio blocked the appointment of Judge William L. Thomas, the first African-American openly gay judge to the federal bench. The decision comes a year after Senator Rubio’s initial support of the nomination. Judge Thomas received a “majority well-qualified” grade from the American Bar Association. The following statement was issued by Adora Obi Nweze, President of the Florida State Conference of the NAACP:

“Judge Williams L. Thomas is a well-qualified nominee for the federal appellate court. His proven discernment and decorum pushed him to the top of the list of nominees where he should rightfully stay.

Senator Marco Rubio’s dubious decision to block the nomination is an affront to the court that Judge Thomas would have proudly served. It is also an affront to the time and effort Senator Rubio himself dedicated during the careful selection and vetting process leading up to the official recommendation.

As the first black openly gay judge to the federal bench, Judge Thomas was poised to make history. For over one hundred years, the NAACP has supported diversity throughout the court system in order to ensure political, educational, social, and economic equality for all people.

We urge Senator Rubio to issue a “blue slip” and allow for the continuance of the nomination process. We oppose any practice or ideology that would unjustly block a qualified candidate from serving his country due to political pressure or discrimination.”