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## Trump's Push for U.S. Attorney Appointments Sparks Senate Clash

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President Donald Trump's ongoing effort to install his nominees as United States attorneys across the country has triggered both a legal standoff and a legislative impasse, highlighting the deepening struggle between the executive branch and Senate confirmation procedures.

Trump's second-term push to secure loyal federal prosecutors has faced resistance on multiple fronts. One of the most visible battles is unfolding in New Jersey, where Alina

Habba, Trump's former personal attorney and campaign spokeswoman, resigned from her interim post as United States attorney for the District of New Jersey, only to immediately assume the role in an "acting" capacity. The maneuver was seen as a way to avoid judicial intervention after federal judges attempted to appoint a replacement due to her expiring interim term.

Under federal law, interim United States attorneys may serve up to 120 days without Senate confirmation, after which the appointment power transfers to district court judges. By resigning and taking up the "acting" role, Habba effectively reset the clock, drawing scrutiny and criticism. While she stated via social media that she will not "cower to pressure" or "answer to politics," the situation has exposed deep tensions between Trump's Justice Department and New Jersey's federal judiciary.

Simultaneously, Trump's broader list of nominees for United States attorney positions is stalled in the Senate. Despite nominating over 30 candidates early in the year, only a handful have cleared the preliminary stages. None have reached a full Senate confirmation vote. A primary obstacle has been a blanket hold placed on the confirmation process by Senator Dick Durbin, who has cited past Republican tactics as justification. However, this tactic is now delaying the placement of key law enforcement officials nationwide.

Among the controversial nominees is former Fox News personality Jeanine Pirro, tapped to lead the Washington, D.C., office. Other candidates, including some with little to no prosecutorial experience, have faced bipartisan skepticism. Even Senator Chuck Grassley, a Republican and chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, acknowledged the contentious nature of some selections, saying, "We have plenty of controversial nominations."

The administration's reliance on "acting" and "interim" roles has allowed them to temporarily implement their law enforcement priorities, particularly on issues such as violent crime and border enforcement. Still, legal experts warn that constant turnover and lack of Senate-confirmed leadership create instability within U.S. Attorney offices. Elie Honig, a former prosecutor in New Jersey, noted that acting officials lack long-term authority and that rotating leadership "undermines morale."

Despite a promising start, the administration's efforts are now bogged down by political gridlock and internal missteps, including the failed nomination of Ed Martin to the Washington, D.C., post. Martin withdrew after media scrutiny revealed controversial past remarks and ethical concerns.

According to Max Stier, president and chief executive officer of the Partnership for Public Service, a nonpartisan group focused on effective governance, the current bottleneck is not due to a slow nomination pace but rather to the quality of candidates. “We’re seeing extraordinarily partisan and unqualified candidates being put forward,” he remarked in an interview with CNN.

As the Senate approaches its August recess, pressure is mounting on Republican lawmakers to strike a compromise and move at least a portion of the nominations forward. Without Senate-confirmed attorneys in place, the administration risks ceding influence in key judicial districts at a critical moment in Trump’s second-term agenda.