

# Silberman Nomination Abandoned

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By Ronald J. Ostrow

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President Ford, forging Senate support for his upcoming veto of a bill to delay his oil import levy, has abandoned plans to nominate Deputy Attorney General Laurence H. Silberman as his chief trade negotiator.

Administration sources said yesterday that Mr. Ford, in return for shelving the nomination, received a commitment to vote to sustain his veto from Sen. Russell B. Long (D-La.). Long, chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, could influence other conservative Democrats.

A spokesman for Long denied there was any link between the senator's support for the veto and Mr. Ford's decision against nominating Silberman.

The administration sources, however, said Mr. Ford did yield to Long on the Silberman nomination because the President regards the outcome of the battle over the oil import levy as crucial to his legislative prospects for the remainder of his term.

"If he can't win on this one, Congress will maul him," said one official who lobbies on Capitol Hill for the administration.

A White House source said a "name check" already has begun on the person who will be nominated to the trade post instead of Silberman, a man the source said is acceptable to Long.

Administration sources said Long's opposition to Silberman stemmed mainly from Silberman's refusal to commit himself to accepting Robert A.

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Best chief economist on the Finance Committee, as his deputy.

Long's spokesman denied this, too, contending Best was not interested in the job.

Senate sources said other members of the Finance Committee, including Sens. Herman E. Talmadge (D-Ga.) and Carl Curtis (R-Neb.), had conveyed their doubts about the Silberman nomination to Long. They were said to have cited inexperience in the trade field and "an arrogance toward Congress" as reasons for opposition.

Until the need for obtaining an oil levy commitment from Long arose, Mr. Ford appeared determined in his intention to nominate Silberman.

Serving as No. 2 man in the Justice Department under former Attorney General William B. Saxbe, who was often away from the department "jawboning" on law and order as Saxbe put it, Silberman earned Mr. Ford's gratitude for his direction of the agency during a stormy period.