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Rights Group Asks Delay On Rehnquist

The Leadership Conference on Civil Rights urged the Senate Judiciary Committee yesterday to put off today's vote on the Supreme Court nomination of Assistant Attorney General William H. Rehnquist.

In a letter to Judiciary Chairman James O. Eastland (D-Miss.), the organization contended that the record of Rehnquist's confirmation hearing was in a "deplorable state" of disarray that "would be deemed confusing and inadequate in a lower municipal court."

Conference leaders, Joseph L. Rauh Jr. and Clarence Mitchell, who appeared as witnesses against Rehnquist, argued that conflicting testimony and incomplete answers by the nominee required further exploration.

The 18-member committee is expected to approve Rehnquist with no more than five negative votes and to recommend confirmation of the other nominee, Richmond attorney Lewis F. Powell Jr., without opposition. The nominations are expected to reach the Senate floor in about a week.

Late yesterday Sen. Birch Bayh (D-Ind.) said new challenges to Rehnquist on civil rights grounds had been brought to his attention. He said he would raise them with the committee today.