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Silbert OK'd Over Tunney's Protest

Washington

Senator John V. Tunney (Dem-Calif.) lost a long fight in the Senate Judiciary Committee yesterday when the panel voted 9 to 2 to confirm Earl J. Silbert as U.S. attorney for the District of Columbia.

Tunney, who had fought the nomination on the ground that Silbert had restricted the original Watergate investigation, told committee members:

"This man blew the Watergate investigation. He ducked his responsibilities at a crucial moment in time. I cannot endorse him, and I ask you to refuse to do so as well."

Only Senator James Abourezk (Dem-S.D.) joined Tunney in opposing the nomination of Silbert, who as assistant U.S. attorney had investigated and prosecuted the original seven Watergate burglars in January, 1973.

Silbert, who is acting U.S. attorney for the District of Columbia, was first nominated by former President Nixon in October, 1973. Tunney successfully blocked the nomination in committee, and it died there. But President Ford renominated Silbert.

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