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A rare cliffhanger in the House over a judicial nomination

By: **MARK PAZNIOKAS** | May 30, 2017

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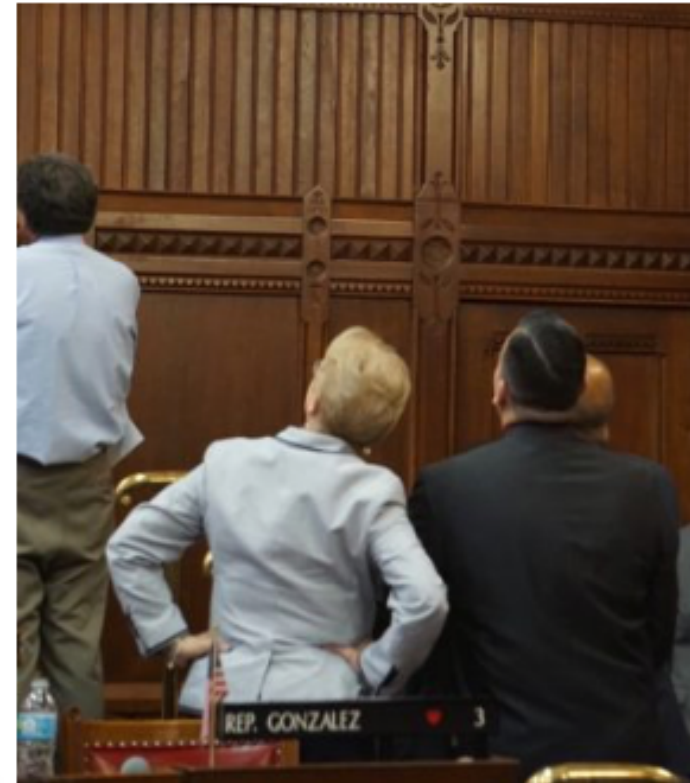
The House of Representatives engaged in a rare drama Tuesday by opening a roll-call vote over a judicial confirmation when the outcome was in doubt. It ultimately confirmed the nomination of Barry F. Armata of Suffield as a judge of the Superior Court by a vote of 78 to 71.

Rep. Minnie Gonzalez, D-Hartford, a harsh critic of the family court system and those who practice before it, including fellow members of the General Assembly, led opposition to Armata over questions about fees he charged as a court-appointed guardian ad litem of a minor child.

Gonzalez barely stopped short of accusing Armata of lying under oath before the legislature's Judiciary Committee, saying his answers to her questions about his billing practices were inaccurate. "I could say a different word, but I want to stick with he didn't give me accurate information," Gonzalez said.

Gonzalez, one of the non-lawyers on Judiciary, said Armata and other lawyers who practice in family court are members of the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts, a group of professionals who she says recommend each other's appointments in difficult custody cases.

"They have a pool of people, and that pool of people, they are like vampires. They like to suck the money out of the parents," she said.



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Reps. Minnie Gonzalez and Juan Candelaria watch the votes for Barry F. Armata.

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