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INSIDERS ▶	TODAY'S PAPER ▶		
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Panel likely to confirm Robert Ullmann as judge

By **Matt Rocheleau** | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT APRIL 01, 2013

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Attorney Robert L. Ullmann could be confirmed this week as an associate justice of the Superior Court after two members of the Governor's Council — one who had previously opposed Ullmann's nomination and one who had not yet decided — said Sunday they plan to vote in favor of Governor Deval Patrick's selection.

The eight-member council is slated to vote on Wednesday. The council had been scheduled to vote on March 13, but Patrick delayed the vote after it appeared the council might not confirm Ullmann.

Some council members had said they would vote against confirming Ullmann because he lacks experience in trying cases in Superior Court.

Ullmann has also been criticized by council members for the failure by the US attorney's office to prosecute

James “Whitey” Bulger during the early 1990s, when Ullmann was one of several federal prosecutors who oversaw wiretaps intended to catch the reputed gangster.

Governor’s Council member Michael J. Albano, who had previously not stated his position, announced Sunday that he will vote to confirm Ullmann.

Fellow councilor Terrence Kennedy said Sunday that he now plans to vote to confirm Ullmann as well.

Kennedy said Sunday he changed his mind shortly after the last scheduled vote when he said Patrick told him that future searches for nominees will include candidates who have more experience in the state’s criminal trial court system.

Albano said that deciding to support Ullmann’s nomination was “one of the most difficult” choices of his public career, which has spanned 33 years, including four two-year terms as mayor of Springfield.

He said Ullmann, who is married to a Globe reporter, is “clearly qualified” to become a Superior Court justice, but that his record as a federal prosecutor warranted thorough review.

Albano said that after reviewing some case files and conducting numerous interviews, including with Ullmann, he is now “satisfied” that Ullmann’s “actions” as a federal prosecutor “were appropriate given the totality of the circumstances.”

Information from the State House News Service was used in this report. Matt Rocheleau can be reached at matthew.rocheleau@globe.com.

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