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Freedberg confirmed for Pa. court

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By **EDWARD SIEGER**
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The Pennsylvania Senate on Monday unanimously confirmed Northampton County President Judge Robert A. Freedberg to the Pennsylvania Superior Court.

State Sens. Lisa Boscola and Robert Wonderling contacted Freedberg at his Forks Township home shortly after the vote to alert him of the news.

Boscola, D-Northampton/Lehigh/ Monroe, served as deputy court administrator under Freedberg for three years.

"I'm proud of him, I really am," she said Monday night.

The Senate Judiciary Committee on Friday unanimously endorsed Freedberg's nomination. Freedberg, 64, said he spoke last week with the Superior Court president judge, who's eager for him to get to work on a heavy caseload.

Superior Court judges earn about \$165,000 a year.

Freedberg is scheduled to meet today with state Chief Justice Ronald D. Castille to discuss when he'll begin his new duties. Freedberg said he expects the transition could happen quickly, perhaps within a week.

"I'm looking forward to this new challenge," he said. "It's important work."

Freedberg, a Common Pleas jurist since January 1980, said he must finish writing some opinions and meet with the court administrator to discuss a few assignments.

As part of his nomination to fill the Superior Court vacancy, Freedberg agreed not to seek re-election at term's end in January 2010. He hopes to stay on as a senior judge as retirement is not yet an option for the man who passed the bar in November 1969.

"I enjoy work and I enjoy what I do," Freedberg said.

He also took the opportunity to thank Gov. Ed Rendell and the area lawmakers who supported his nomination.

"I'm genuinely appreciative of the fact that (Rendell) thought I could make a contribution at this level," Freedberg said. "And thanks to the senators who supported and confirmed me."

Boscola, who said the timing of Monday's vote was a bit unexpected, said Freedberg's fairness, balance, intellect and experience would qualify him as an excellent senior judge following his term. Freedberg could maintain senior judge status until age 78.

"He's a remarkable jurist, and they're going to want him," Boscola said.

At least four or five lawyers have already expressed interest in the pending vacancy created by Freedberg's departure, Boscola said. She could not yet say whether a possible appointment would be added to a future package of other Common Pleas appointments or whether it's better to wait for the next election.

As for the next president judge, Freedberg said it will up to the remaining seven county judges to decide.

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