

Who Else: A Short List of Potential Comey Replacements

If U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Chief Judge Merrick Garland isn't President Donald Trump's pick to lead the FBI, or if the judge doesn't want to leave the bench, there are a lot of other highly qualified candidates that could be considered.

Right off the bat, we need to take several people who conservatives and Trump fans might love to see on the list, along with the very simple reasons why:

- **Former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani:** The president won't get to bring on someone who was so closely associated with his campaign, nor should he given some of the circumstances surrounding former FBI Director James Comey's firing;
- **New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie:** Too tainted by controversy to get the votes from Republicans; and
- **Milwaukee County Sheriff David Clarke:** There would be a lot of upside to nominating the first African-American to lead the FBI (and he's a Democrat), but he's made a lot of controversial statements that will likely give most senators a serious case of heartburn.

There are still others whom the president can (and should) consider to replace Comey who would do a very good job. But we're going to narrow this list down to the top four candidates who are most likely being vetted:

5. Ray Kelley

The former New York City police commissioner was actually considered for the job nearly 25 years ago when President Bill Clinton was considering a replacement for William Sessions. He instead served as both undersecretary of the

treasury for terrorism and financial intelligence and commissioner of the U.S. Customs Service in the Clinton administration.

4. John Pistole

He's not exactly a household name, but the president of Anderson University in Indiana isn't a stranger to controversy, either. He first served as deputy director of the FBI under presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama, then later served as administrator of the TSA in the Obama administration. He was responsible for enacting the controversial pat-down screening and X-ray scanning procedures that have now made the agency notorious.

3. Dana Boente

His name might sound familiar; that would be because he briefly served as acting attorney general after the president fired Sally Yates. He's spent almost all of his professional career as a federal prosecutor in a number of different roles, making him ideally suited for the law enforcement aspects of the FBI director's job. In his current role, he remains second in the line of succession to be attorney general.

2. Trey Gowdy

Although conventional wisdom suggests it's doubtful the congressman from South Carolina would want the job, he might be convinced to take it if he were granted the freedom to re-open the investigation into former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. And although he's rubbed a number of GOP senators the wrong way, his prosecutorial skills are beyond compare.

1. Mike Rogers

The former congressman from Michigan was a career FBI agent,

specializing in organized crime and corruption out of the Chicago Office, until he left the bureau to enter politics. He served seven terms in the House of Representatives and spent four years as chairman of the House Select Committee on Intelligence. He retired from Congress to pursue a career in talk radio, although he has more recently been a regular political analyst for the TV news networks.

Regardless of whom the president nominates, Democrats' ability to prevent the nomination from proceeding to a floor vote would be limited. And, once the nomination reaches the floor, the so-called "nuclear option" would mean Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., would only need to get 50 senators on board. {eoa}