

Lawmaker Hears Concerns on Ricks

By John Greiner
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Some callers to a state senator expressed concern about FBI agent Bob Ricks' role in a standoff with a religious cult near Waco, Texas, in 1993. *The Oklahoman* reported Tuesday that Gov. Frank Keating wants to name Ricks to head the state Department of Public Safety, which runs the highway patrol.

Sen. Mark Snyder, R-Edmond, is Ricks' senator and would have to agree to push for his nomination if Keating names Ricks to the post.

Snyder confirmed Tuesday that he received some calls about Ricks and most were from people objecting to the Oklahoma City FBI chief.

Fifteen calls were received, and only two favored Ricks, he said.

"There's always a handful about any nomination," Snyder said of the telephone calls.

He wouldn't identify the callers but did make available his secretary's notes on what most of the callers had to say.

Snyder said two thought Ricks would do a good job if selected to head the agency.

The secretary's notes showed one caller was "shocked that Governor Keating would recommend Bob Ricks in light of the Waco hearings taking place as we speak." The caller urged Snyder to carefully evaluate Ricks' behavior.

Ricks was the FBI spokesman during the federal standoff with the Branch Davidians near Waco.

The standoff ended when federal agents raided the Branch Davidian compound. A fire broke out and some 80 people inside the compound, including cult leader David Koresh, perished. The FBI said cult members set the fire.

Last week a hearing by two U.S. House subcommittees began on the incident.

Snyder said it is his understanding that there are others besides Ricks being considered by Keating for public safety commissioner. But Snyder wouldn't identify them.