

**Statement of Senator Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.),
Ranking Member, Senate Judiciary Committee,
on Executive Business Meeting
June 25, 2015**

We have bipartisan legislation on the agenda today that I worked on with Senators Grassley and Lee. The measure would extend for an additional seven years the antitrust exemption permitting colleges and universities to collaborate on issues of need-based financial aid. This exemption, which has existed since 1994, allows qualifying colleges and universities to collaborate on the formula used to determine how much families can pay for college. Antitrust exemptions should not be a blank check, however, which is why this exemption is not permanent. This is bipartisan, bicameral legislation and I look forward to reporting it when we return from recess.

There are also three judicial nominations on today's agenda. Notably, once we report out the pending nominees to the Third Circuit and to the Eastern District of Tennessee, the Committee will have finally considered all the nominees held over from last Congress. Two of these nominees were first nominated last November, more than seven months ago, and the third was nominated in February. I hope the Senators from Pennsylvania and Tennessee have convinced the Republican members on this Committee that there is no good reason for further delay, so that we can report them out today and try to make some progress on filling judicial vacancies.

Unfortunately, the Republican-led Senate has not confirmed a single judge this work period. Not one. We have confirmed only four district judges so far this year, and not one circuit judge. At this point in 2007, with Democrats in the majority during the Bush administration, we had confirmed 18 judges – 15 district and 3 circuit court judges. Six of the 18 first had hearings in 2007, were reported to the floor without needless delay and confirmed in a timely manner. Currently pending on the floor we have 12 judicial nominees who were reported out of this Committee by voice vote – 6 were reported unanimously last year and again this year. I hope we can work together to get back to regular order in the Senate.

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