

Testimony of

The Honorable Patrick Leahy

November 29, 2001

Opening Statement of Chairman Patrick Leahy
Business Meeting of Senate Judiciary Committee
November 29, 2001

I want to thank all Senators for their participation in yesterday's oversight hearing and for their cooperation today in moving a number of nominations and other items. The agenda lists 9 judicial nominees and 9 executive branch nominees.

We can begin by approving our subcommittee reorganization. Copies have been circulated showing the Subcommittees, the respective chairs and ranking and other members.

In addition, I can report that over the last several weeks, with the help of Senator Hatch, we have revised, streamlined and updated our questionnaire for nominees in a manner that the Administration finds acceptable.

With the cooperation of the Administration and the nominees, we are able to proceed with an extensive group of nominees. They include a 10th Circuit Court of Appeals nominee and 8 District Court nominees from Kentucky, Kansas, Arizona, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Georgia, Louisiana, and the District of Columbia who participated in hearings in late October.

We are also proceeding with what is the tenth and, I believe, final Assistant Attorney General nomination, that of Thomas L. Sansonetti to be an Assistant Attorney General for the Environment and Natural Resources Division. We have another 7 United States Attorneys to consider from Louisiana, Hawaii, Washington, Oklahoma, Texas and Georgia. And we have an extremely important nomination for the Commerce Department, that of James Rogan to head the Patent and Trademark Office and serve as Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property.

In addition, we have legislative items on the agenda with strong bipartisan support. There is the camera in the courtroom bill, S.986, that Senators Grassley and Schumer have taken the lead on and that Senators Feingold, Specter, Durbin, DeWine, Edwards, Cantwell and I have cosponsored.

We have a Hatch-Leahy substitute to S.304, the important Drug Abuse Education, Prevention and Treatment Act. This substitute should allow us to report that matter today and, we hope, lead to final passage before the end of the year.

Finally, there are resolutions for National Civic Participation Week and National Lao-Hmong Recognition Day.