

Statement of

The Honorable Patrick Leahy

United States Senator
Vermont
May 6, 2004

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On the Nomination of Jonathan Dudas for Director, Patent and
Trademark Office and Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property
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The Patent and Trademark Office plays an enormously important role in the development of new technologies and the growth of our economy. It must encourage the development of new ideas by helping ensure that innovators will enjoy the fruits of their labor. At the same time, it must also encourage the deployment of those new ideas to the people who can use them. To do this, the Patent and Trademark Office has to modernize its processes, to improve the quality and efficiency of its work. The PTO took an important step toward these needed improvements when it released the Twenty-First Century Strategic Plan.

The PTO must now implement this plan, and the person the Administration has chosen to lead the agency through these very important times is Jonathan Dudas. Mr. Dudas is a graduate of the University of Illinois and the University of Chicago. He is a very impressive young man. He practiced law for eighteen months in Chicago before taking a position with Representative Hyde in 1995. We worked with him during his tenure with the House Judiciary Committee. In 2001, he joined Speaker Hastert's staff, and in 2002, he joined the PTO. For the last three and one half months, he has been the Acting Director of the PTO.

If Mr. Dudas is confirmed, he will oversee the PTO during a critical time. He will not only be charged with implementing the Twenty-First Century Strategic Plan. He will also face other significant challenges. American corporations are under threat of retaliatory sanctions, because of a World Trade Organization opinion that says that we are discriminating against Cuba and Cuban trademarks through a law known as Section 211. There are currently two different bills that purport to solve this problem, one by Senator Baucus, and another by Senator Domenici. I will be interested in hearing what Mr. Dudas says is the right way to fix this problem. Moreover as the Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property, he will be the Administration's leading voice on intellectual property policy and practice. He will need to coordinate closely with our own Registrar of Copyrights and with the United States Trade Representative, the Department of Justice and many other departments and agencies throughout the Federal Government.

I look forward to hearing from Mr. Dudas and to exploring some of these important issues with him.

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