Statement of

The Honorable Patrick Leahy

United States Senator
Vermont
February 15, 2007

Opening Statement of Senator Patrick Leahy
Chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee
Executive Business Meeting
February 15, 2007

INTRODUCTION

I regret that we are proceeding today under these circumstances outside our normal meeting room. We do so to accommodate Senate votes on two judicial nominees and the Senate schedule.

I thank all Members who are joining us to do our work this morning.

Yesterday we proceeded with an extraordinary hearing on judicial security and independence and heard testimony by Associate Justice of the Supreme Court Anthony Kennedy. I certainly do not recall a sitting Justice appearing before this Committee to discuss legislative matters. It was also extraordinarily helpful to hear from such an outstanding representative of the Judiciary on legislative matters that concern that coequal branch of our Federal Government. I thank Justice Kennedy for his participation and thoughtful testimony. The issues we discussed included the court security bill on our agenda today, including the issue of judicial compensation, and the importance of judicial independence. I am sorry that other responsibilities and the weather prevented some Members from attending.

AGENDA

It is my hope that even given the weather that seems to have paralyzed so much of Washington, D.C., and with the business being conducted on the Senate floor, we can assemble a quorum in order to report the data mining reporting legislation, S.236, the Sentencing Commission nominations on the agenda today and the commemorative resolutions introduced by Members from both sides of the aisle.

I would also like to make progress and report, if possible today, the drug competition bill, S.316; the important court security bill on which we have now held another hearing, S.378; and the loan forgiveness for prosecutors and defenders initiative, S.442.

That is our agenda for today. I ask for and look forward to the cooperation of our Members in getting our work done.

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