

Statement of

The Honorable Patrick Leahy

United States Senator
Vermont
June 4, 2009

Statement Of Senator Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.),
Chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee,
Executive Business Meeting
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I welcome everyone back from the Memorial Day recess. This Committee was extremely productive during the first several months of the year, both in terms of legislation and Justice Department nominations. We seemed to stall on other matters in the Committee last month. I hope the return from the recess means that everyone is refreshed and ready to redouble our efforts. We have a great deal we need to do.

We have a full agenda today including many matters that have been before the Committee for several weeks. We can finally take action on the President's nomination of Judge David Hamilton of Indiana to the Seventh Circuit. He is a well-respected and well-qualified nominee strongly endorsed by his home state Senators. I hope the first judicial nomination of this presidency, one that has the bipartisan support of Senator Lugar, the senior Republican in the Senate, is approved by the Committee today.

We should also take action on the nomination of Judge Andre Davis of Maryland to a long vacant Maryland seat on the Fourth Circuit, and the nomination of Tom Perez to serve as the Assistant Attorney General in charge of the Civil Rights Division at the Justice Department.

We also have the opportunity to vote on the nomination of Judge Gerard Lynch of New York to fill a vacancy on the Second Circuit, and that of Mary Smith to serve as the Assistant Attorney General managing the Tax Division at the Justice Department.

Then we will turn our attention back to the State Secrets Protection Act and our legislative agenda.

Both the list of nominees and our legislative agenda continue to grow with new and important matters. We really need to make progress. We have many important matters awaiting us this summer. We need to address the anomaly in copyright law that will be corrected by the bipartisan Performance Rights Act. We need to consider the expiring provisions of the USA PATRIOT Act. We need to work through the extension of the Satellite Home Viewer Act, so that those of our constituents who watch television through satellite reception do not see their service interrupted. In addition, the vacancy on the Supreme Court that will arise when the current term ends this month means that we will need to focus on the consideration of President Obama's nomination of Judge Sonia Sotomayor to succeed Justice Souter.

With much to do, I hope that all members will cooperate and we can make real progress working out way through our agenda this morning.

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