

Statement of
The Honorable Patrick Leahy

United States Senator
Vermont
August 6, 2009

Statement Of Senator Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.),
Chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee,
Executive Business Meeting
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We meet today to consider and report Executive Branch nominations, including that of David Kappos to be Director of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (PTO) and Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property. He is a nominee who is well respected on both sides of the aisle and in all parts of the intellectual property community. I chaired his confirmation hearing last week.

The PTO needs strong and accountable leadership. It has a significant backlog of applications, and faces serious challenges as a result of the difficult economic environment. All of us who have been deeply involved in the patent reform effort share an interest in improving patent quality and reducing the backlog.

I look forward to working with Mr. Kappos, once he is confirmed, on patent reform legislation that will improve and modernize the statutory framework for our patent system. Ultimately, patent quality begins at the PTO and requires effective leadership. I am pleased that the President has nominated someone for this position with strong qualifications and ability.

We also have the opportunity to make progress by reporting the nominations of two additional U.S. Attorney nominees and a U.S. Marshal nominee. They all have the support of their home state Senators.

These four nominees will join the 17 nominees reported by this Committee that remain pending on the Senate Executive Calendar. A dozen of those nominations have been pending since before May 12, for almost three months, without action. I remain hopeful that the Senate Republican leadership will work with us to clear all these nominations for confirmation before the extended August recess. Those that cannot be confirmed by unanimous consent or on a voice vote this week should be scheduled with appropriate time agreements for debate, and up-or-down votes upon the Senate's return the week of September 8.

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