

Statement of

The Honorable Chuck Grassley

United States Senator
Iowa
February 16, 2011

Statement of Senator Charles Grassley
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate

Before the Committee on the Judiciary

On the Nominations of:

Jimmie V. Reyna, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Federal Circuit Vincent L. Briccetti, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of New York John A. Kronstadt, to be United States District Judge for the Central District of California Michael Francis Urbanski, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Virginia Arenda L. Wright Allen, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Virginia

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Mr. Chairman,

I join you in welcoming the nominees who are here today with their families and friends.

This week, we confirmed two more nominees to vacancies in the federal judiciary - both judicial emergencies. We have now confirmed five nominees during this new Congress. We have taken positive action, in one way or another, on nearly half of the 50 judicial nominees submitted during this Congress. So we are moving forward, as I indicated I would do, on consensus nominees.

On today's agenda are four District Court nominations, and a United States Circuit Judge for the Federal Circuit.

Mr. Chairman, I will not take the time here to repeat the full biographical information on our nominees, but will take a minute or two to comment on our nominees.

I would note that all of our District Judge nominees have some sort of prior federal experience. I commend them for their public service.

Mr. Vincent L. Briccetti is the President's nominee for the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York. This vacancy has been designated a judicial emergency. Mr.

Briccetti has been in private practice for most of his legal career but also served four years as a federal prosecutor.

Judge John Kronstadt currently serves as a Judge on the Los Angeles County Superior Court, where he has served since 2002. He is nominated for the Central District of California. This is the same District where he clerked for Judge William Gray, after graduating from Yale Law School. This vacancy has been designated a judicial emergency as well.

Judge Michael F. Urbanski has been nominated to the District Court in the Western District of Virginia. This is the same court where he currently serves as a Magistrate Judge. He was appointed to this position in 2004.

Arenda L. Wright Allen has been nominated to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Virginia. Since 2005, Ms. Wright Allen has been an Assistant Federal Public Defender in the Eastern District of Virginia. Prior to joining the Public Defender's office, she served for approximately 15 years as an Assistant U.S. Attorney, first in the Western District of Virginia and then in the Eastern District of Virginia. She also served as a Defense Attorney in the Judge Advocate General's Corps, United States Navy, from 1985 to 1990.

Jimmie V. Reyna, nominated to the Federal Circuit, has significant experience in international trade issues, one of the major concerns of the Circuit.

The Federal Circuit is unique among the Courts of Appeals. It is not geographical based but has nationwide subject matter jurisdiction in designated areas. In addition to international trade, the Court hears cases on patents, trademarks, government contracts, certain money claims against the United States government, veterans' benefits, and public safety officers' benefits claims. Of particular interest to me, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit has exclusive jurisdiction over cases related to federal personnel matters. That includes exclusive jurisdiction over appeals from the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) which hears whistleblower cases under the whistleblower protection act.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your courtesy. Again, I welcome the nominees, congratulate them on their nominations, and look forward to their testimony