

Statement of

The Honorable Patrick Leahy

United States Senator
United States Senate
September 8, 2011

Opening Statement of Senator Patrick Leahy, Chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee
Executive Business Meeting
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Today the Committee has the opportunity to complete action on a number of matters. They include 10 judicial nominees on whom the Committee held hearings in July, the Blue Alert bill that Senators Cardin and Graham have championed to help law enforcement, and six U.S. Attorney and U.S. Marshal nominees. It is fitting as we approach the 10th anniversary of 9/11, that we take these actions today.

I know that the National Blue Alert bill is a priority for the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP). The FOP reelected Chuck Canterbury of South Carolina as their National President during August. I congratulate National President Canterbury and the FOP Executive Director Jim Pasco on the work they and their members do. I try to see that we are responsive to their needs. Senator Cardin's and Senator Graham's Blue Alert bill is something they care about and that we should enact. It is a bipartisan bill deserving of bipartisan support.

When I listed this matter on the agenda in July, I said that I wanted us to pass it for law enforcement and first responders before the 10th anniversary of the September 11 attack. With that anniversary approaching this Sunday, we remember the courage so many in law enforcement showed that day. Every day, more than 900,000 law enforcement officers put their lives on the line. We owe it to them to make certain that the tools are in place to respond quickly and effectively when they are threatened or when tragedy strikes.

This bill takes important steps to ensure that, in those tragic instances when a law enforcement officer is seriously injured or killed, information can go out quickly to all relevant law enforcement agencies. It is strongly supported by the Fraternal Order of Police and the National Sheriff's Association.

Senator Cardin and Senator Graham have worked to address concerns others had with their original language. I have circulated a substitute that they have worked hard to craft.

Among the judicial nominees before us today are several from the home states of Senators on this Committee, from California, Delaware, New York, Texas and Arizona. We are seeking to expedite consideration of the Arizona nominee because of the judicial crisis there. She would fill the vacancy created by the tragic killing of Chief Judge John Roll. Democratic members are prepared to act favorably on them all. We also have several U.S. attorney and marshal nominees,

including four to serve in Texas.

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