

Statement of

The Honorable Patrick Leahy

United States Senator
United States Senate
November 17, 2011

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Chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee
Executive Business Meeting
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Last week's successful markup of the Respect for Marriage Act was an important meeting of this Committee. I want to thank all Senators who participated for their contributions to the debate. I believe that our meeting was historic and an important step toward equality.

This morning we should complete consideration of the matters held over from last week's meeting. We should be able to vote to approve the five criminal law bills delayed from last week. There are bills that were approved by the House of Representatives by overwhelming bipartisan votes of 399 to 3, 359 to 9 and 398 to 18. The other two bills are Senate counterparts for the Investigative Assistance for Violent Crimes Act and the Federal Restricted Buildings and Grounds Improvement Act. I will defer to Senator Whitehouse, who ably chairs our Crime and Terrorism Subcommittee, and thank him for his leadership in helping us move these matters forward. I also thank Senator Blumenthal for his important work on these matters, and for taking the lead on filling an important loophole in the law.

I congratulate Senator Coons and Senator Graham on Senate passage last week of the House companion to their bill, S.1808, to treat the family members of those in active military service more fairly in tolling certain immigration deadlines.

In addition, I have included on our agenda two additional measures on which members have been hard at work. Senator Whitehouse has worked with Senator Sessions on a measure needed by the U.S. Marshals to ensure that they can be effective in investigations of sex offenses and with missing children, S.1792.

Senator Sessions has asked that I also add S.671 to the agenda, and I have done so. I do not support the additional administrative subpoena power provided by that bill. I think such power should be checked by judicial authority and not exercised unilaterally. I think the expansion of government power without check is unnecessary. But even though I do not think that aspect of the bill wise, I have included it on our agenda at Senator Sessions' request. I will also not insist that the matter be held over and delayed from action.

We can also make more progress on nominations by approving the three judicial nominees from our November 2 hearing. The Ninth Circuit needs Judge Nguyen and I know that Senator Cornyn would like to see the two Texas nominees confirmed to Federal trial courts in Texas.

We can act on all of these matters today.

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