

Statement of

The Honorable Patrick Leahy

United States Senator
United States Senate
May 10, 2012

I hope that we can assemble a quorum quickly to accomplish what is possible this morning.

On our agenda are the nominees to the Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board from our April 18 hearing. I worked with Senator Durbin and others to establish and then reestablish the Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board. I chaired our hearing and we took a break from our important job of considering judicial nominations in order to consider these important nominations.

At a time when our Nation faces growing threats to national security at home, abroad and in cyberspace, having a fully functioning Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight board is more important than ever. Congress is currently working on various cybersecurity proposals. Many would have a significant impact on the privacy rights and civil liberties of all Americans. I have received many phone calls and letters from Vermonters who are very concerned about their personal liberties. Protecting our privacy and civil liberties should not be a partisan issue. I hope we can all join together to approve this bipartisan slate of nominees.

Mindful that next week is Police Week, I have also included on our agenda legislation to reauthorize the bulletproof vest partnership program that I initiated with Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell. I have asked my staff to work with Senator Grassley 's to see whether we can agree, as we did with the Drug Free Communities program, on extension legislation. At his request, I have also included a bill introduced by Senator Grassley on the agenda, the Officer Safety Act.

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