

**Statement of Senator Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.),
Chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee,
March 12, 2013**

This morning we continue the meeting we began last Thursday on matters I listed for consideration the week before. I look forward to our concluding our Committee consideration of these important items.

Last Thursday we had a bipartisan vote for the Stop Illegal Trafficking in Firearms Act, S.54. That was the first legislative vote on measures related to gun violence in either the Senate or the House since the Newtown tragedy. I thank every Democratic Senator on the Committee and the Committee's ranking Republican, Senator Grassley, for their support.

The White House called our action last week "an important bipartisan step" that takes on "the very serious problem of gun trafficking." At the signing of the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act and Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act last Thursday, the President termed the Judiciary Committee's action on our bill a "big step" and "real progress." He noted that our bill "would crack down on folks who buy guns only to turn around and funnel them to dangerous criminals."

I want to continue to make progress on this legislation and other bills that can be effective in reducing illegal gun violence in our country. We have the strong support of several leading law enforcement organizations on the gun trafficking bill, including the Fraternal Order of Police, the FBI Agents Association, the Major Cities Chiefs Association, the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association, the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives, and the Police Executive Research Foundation. Last week I received a letter from the NAACP in strong support, as well. I thank all of these organizations for their assistance and support.

Today we will continue our work on three remaining gun violence measures that have been on our agenda for the past weeks: Senator Schumer's proposal to close loopholes in the background check system for firearm purchases, Senator Boxer's proposal to enhance the safety of our schools, and Senator Feinstein's bill to reinstitute an assault weapons ban. I aim by the end of the week to have completed Judiciary Committee action on these legislative proposals.

After brief opening remarks by our ranking member, I intend to turn to Senator Schumer and Committee consideration of his bill to close loopholes in the background check system, the Protecting Responsible Gun Sellers Act of 2013. We must suspend consideration of Senator Feinstein's bill until she can be with us. But I intend to return to it and complete Committee action on it this week.

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