

Statement Of Senator Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.)
Chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee
On Judicial Nominations
July 10, 2013

Yesterday the Judiciary Committee held a respectful, productive hearing for the President's nominee to be FBI director. I hope we will do the same this morning as we welcome four of President Obama's qualified judicial nominees. I am confident that, if we have a fair hearing today, we will agree that these nominees are deserving of bipartisan support.

Patricia Millett, who is nominated to one of three vacancies on the District of Columbia Circuit, has distinguished herself as an appellate advocate who served in the Office of the Solicitor General under both President Clinton and President Bush. She has argued 32 cases before the Supreme Court, and another 36 before Federal courts of appeal. She is also no stranger to this Committee, having testified here in 2008 at the request of Committee Republicans.

Earlier this week, the Senate voted unanimously to confirm Wyoming Attorney General Gregory Phillips to the Tenth Circuit. With his confirmation, the number of pending appeals per active judge on that court dropped from 150 to 135. The D.C. Circuit currently has 177 pending appeals per active judge. Despite that higher caseload, some Senate Republicans argue that the D.C. Circuit's caseload is too low, and that three of its judgeships should be eliminated. Most of these Senators voted to confirm Attorney General Phillips, even though his confirmation means that the Tenth Circuit will now have the lowest caseload in the country, just as earlier this year they supported the confirmation of Jane Kelly to the Eighth Circuit, which gave that court the lowest caseload in the country. I hope those Senators will reconsider their double-standard and not play politics with an independent branch of government.

The Committee also welcomes Gregory Woods, nominated to the Southern District of New York, Debra Brown, who is nominated to the Northern District of Mississippi, and Elizabeth Wolford, who is nominated the Western District of New York. All have the support of their home state Senators.

I want to again commend Senators on both sides for the way yesterday's hearing was conducted, and I look forward to continued bipartisan cooperation on the consideration of President Obama's nominees.

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