

**Statement Of Senator Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.),
Chairman, Committee On The Judiciary,
On Committee Consideration Of The Free Flow Of Information Act, S. 987
Executive Business Meeting
July 25, 2013**

Today, the Committee will begin consideration of legislation to establish a qualified privilege for journalists to protect their sources and uphold the public's right to know. Recent allegations of the Department of Justice's collection of Associated Press telephone records underscore the importance of protecting journalists. We were again reminded of this just last week when the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit held in a split decision that there is no reporter's privilege in a criminal leak case involving *New York Times* reporter James Risen. This decision sets a dangerous precedent and it makes the need for passing meaningful media shield legislation even more important. I hope we will work in a bipartisan manner to achieve this goal.

Last week, I thanked Republicans for allowing the Committee to report to the full Senate the nomination of James Comey to be Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. It is the right of any member of this Committee to hold over new business, however. I understand the minority would like to hold over the bipartisan Free Flow of Information Act and the four judicial nominees on the agenda today. I ask unanimous consent that a letter of support for the Free Flow of Information Act from the Vermont Association of Broadcasters be made part of the Record. Next week, I expect we will be engaged in more lengthy debate but in the meantime, I will continue working with the sponsors of the media shield legislation to make further improvements and we will return to this important issue next week.

#####