

**Statement Of Senator Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.),
Chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee,
Hearing On Judicial Nominations
June 4, 2014**

Today, we will hear from four well-qualified judicial nominees, one to the district court in the great state of Vermont and three to U.S. Court of Federal Claims.

I am happy to welcome Vermont Supreme Court Justice Geoffrey Crawford. Justice Crawford has significant criminal and civil experience. He was a Vermont trial court judge for 11 years and recently became an Associate Justice on the Vermont Supreme Court. He formerly was a partner in a Burlington law firm. Justice Crawford earned his B.A., *cum laude*, from Yale University and his J.D., *cum laude*, from Harvard Law School.

I recommended Justice Crawford to President Obama after he was vetted and recommended to me by Vermont's non-partisan Judicial Nominating Commission. I did not know Justice Crawford personally before this process but when I did meet him I was struck by his brilliance, compassion, and humility. Justice Crawford earned a stellar reputation in Vermont's legal community and also from those who had appeared him as a careful jurist who understands the effects that legal rulings have on people's lives. I have no doubt that once confirmed he will bring that same understanding and impartiality to the Federal courthouse in Rutland, Vermont.

I also welcome to the Committee today, three nominees to serve on the Court of Federal Claims—Judge Nancy Firestone, Thomas Halkowski, and, in particular, Lydia Griggsby, who has served on my Judiciary Committee staff since 2006 and currently serves as my Chief Counsel for Privacy and Information Policy. I recommended Lydia to the President for this position because I know her intellect and good judgment will make her a fine judge. Before Lydia came to work for me on committee, she served in the Justice Department and tried several matters before the Court of Federal Claims. Once she is confirmed, the court's gain will certainly be the Judiciary Committee's loss.

Judge Nancy Firestone has served with distinction on the U.S. Court of Federal Claims since 1998. I have no doubt that her expertise will be a great benefit to the court as she continues her service for another 15-year term. Thomas Halkowski is a principal at Fish & Richardson, a law firm specializing in intellectual property law in Wilmington, Delaware. He began his legal career clerking on the court to which he is nominated for Judge Roger Andewelt. He also clerked for then-Chief Judge Helen Nies on the Federal Circuit so once he is confirmed, his career will have gone full circle.

I welcome all of the nominees here today. After I turn to Ranking Member Grassley, you will have an opportunity to introduce us to your families.

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