

**Statement of Senator Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.),  
Chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee,  
Executive Business Meeting  
June 12, 2014**

This morning we have a full agenda and I hope we can make some progress. We have 15 judicial nominees that can be reported out today with some cooperation and an important bipartisan bill introduced by Senator Coons and cosponsored by most of us here.

As the senior Senator from Vermont, I can tell you that it is very rare that we have a judicial nominee before us from my home state because we only have two authorized district court judgeships. Today, I hope the Committee will report the nomination of Justice Geoffrey Crawford to be the next federal district court judge in Vermont. Justice Crawford has earned a great reputation from his long service on the state trial court and he was recently elevated to our Supreme Court. I recommended him to the President because he is thoughtful, brilliant, and appreciates the impact that the courts have on the communities they serve.

Also on today's agenda is one of my longtime counsels, Lydia Griggsby. She has worked for me since 2006 and she currently serves as my Chief Counsel for Privacy and Information Policy. She has worked across the aisle on a number of issues over the years, and many of you know firsthand that she will make an excellent addition to the Court of Federal Claims. I hope we can report these nominations today before moving to consider the bipartisan Victims of Child Abuse Act.

This Committee is one of the busiest in Congress, and over the last year we have spent significant time reviewing the NSA's dragnet collection of Americans' data. We have held six public hearings in this Committee, and I have spoken with many of you about the USA FREEDOM Act that I introduced last year with Senator Lee. Recently, the House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed a version of our bill on a bipartisan vote that included support from Congressmen Mike Rogers, Bob Goodlatte, Jim Sensenbrenner, and John Conyers. I am committed to moving forward with surveillance reform legislation in the Senate, but we must fix some of the problems that have been identified with the House bill. Most importantly, we must be sure that any legislation we pass effectively bans bulk collection. I am working with members of this Committee, the executive branch, and other interested parties to come to an agreement on language. This is an historic moment – an opportunity to pass real reforms. I hope all Senators will join me in this effort.

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