

Statement of
The Honorable Orrin Hatch

United States Senator
Utah
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Statement of Chairman Orrin G. Hatch

Before the United States Senate Committee on the Judiciary

EXECUTIVE BUSINESS MEETING

Good morning. We have a very long agenda today but I think we can make a lot of headway if we get started as soon as possible.

There is something on this agenda for everyone to support. I also suspect that every member will find at least one item on this agenda that they will oppose. That includes me, and I made up the agenda.

First up will be the nominations. Because of my priority in moving the DNA bill, I held off on moving nominees for the last several weeks. Today, they are my top priority, and with the exception of Claude Allen who we will continue to hold over, I would like to move all of the other nominees, including Judge Boyko and Beryl Howell, who are both on the agenda for the first time today.

In addition to an impressive slate of judicial nominees, the agenda includes three U.S. Attorneys and four Sentencing Commissioners -- two of whom are former Committee staffers. I have always taken the view that members of the Senate family should be afforded great respect when they come before the Judiciary Committee and the full Senate.

Once we act on the nominees, I hope to move several bills on the agenda but first let me make a few comments on bills that we will not take action on today.

Last week, we reported the DNA bill. Since then my staff and Senator Leahy's staff have been in discussions with the House, DOJ, and interested members such as Senator Kyl, to attempt to craft a package that can gain an even broader range of support.

I remain hopeful that we can complete work on both the DNA bill and the Victims' Rights bill before Congress adjourns for the year.

Similarly, Senator Leahy and I are continuing our efforts to bring the affected parties together as we refine our copyright legislation, S.2560.

While I do not contemplate action on this bill at today's mark-up, negotiations will continue this afternoon to perfect language that will help bring an end to the rampant abuse of copyrighted material, for example, by some file sharing programs that facilitate the theft of music. At the same time, we must protect the rights of legitimate technology firms to develop faster and better products.

If I have to, I will lock up all of the key parties in a room until they come out with an acceptable bill that stops the bad actors and preserves technological innovation. I hope we will be able to bring the Committee a new draft at next week's mark-up.

At today's mark-up, I would like to move the Steroid Precursor bill, S.2195, that Senator Biden and I developed.

I would also like to see if we can make progress on the Courts Improvement Act and, if possible, on the ONDCP and L-Visa bills' if this is possible.

The Committee today will also hear from Senators Cornyn and Feingold who want to explain what their continuity of government legislation does so that members' can think further about this matter during the next week. I do not expect to vote on this measure today.

So we have a lot we can accomplish today.

Before I turn to Senator Leahy for any opening remarks he cares to make, I want to recognize the unfortunate death of Judge Richard Arnold from the Eight Circuit.

The federal bench has lost a leader. The country has lost a patriot. And his family and friends have lost the companionship of a truly wonderful person. Judge Arnold will be missed by many.