

Statement of
The Honorable Patrick Leahy

United States Senator
Vermont
July 28, 2010

Statement Of Senator Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.),
Chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee,
On The Nomination Of Beryl Howell To Be A
United States District Court Judge For The District Of Columbia
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I am delighted to introduce Beryl Howell to the Committee, now as a nominee. Those of you who have served with me here from 1993 through 2003 will remember her as my General Counsel and one of the most effective members of our Judiciary Committee staff. With her background as a highly-decorated Federal prosecutor, Senator Sessions will remember her work on many criminal justice and national security issues. Senator Hatch will no doubt remember her work on our Digital Millennium Copyright Act, our Anti-Cybersquatting Consumer Protection Act and our No Electronic Theft Act. Senator Kyl and Senator Grassley will recall her work on our National Information Infrastructure Protection Act and our Computer Fraud and Abuse statute, and on important oversight matters including our bipartisan hearings on Ruby Ridge that led to improvements at the FBI. Senator Cornyn will be interested in her work on Electronic Freedom of Information initiatives and her induction into the Freedom of Information Act Hall of Fame.

What some of you may not know is her background before she joined the Senate staff, and her work since. She grew up in a proud military family. She was awarded her undergraduate degree with honors in Philosophy from Bryn Mawr College in Pennsylvania, and earned her law degree at Columbia University School of Law, where she was a Harlan Fiske Stone Scholar. She clerked for Judge Dickinson Debevoise on the United States District Court for the District of New Jersey.

Having worked as a student assistant in a U.S. Attorney's office, she joined the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York in 1987. As an Assistant U.S. Attorney, she worked there almost six years and rose to be the Deputy Chief of the Narcotics Section. Her grand jury investigations and prosecutions included complex public corruption, narcotics and money laundering cases involving the leadership of the Chinatown Flying Dragons gang, the Cali drug cartel and others.

Descriptions of her cases read like crime novels. She successfully prosecuted the leadership of a Chinatown gang, called the Flying Dragons, for heroin trafficking, and extradited the head of the gang after he fled to Hong Kong. She successfully prosecuted a group of Colombian drug dealers and arrested the gang members just as they were packing almost \$20 million in cash from narcotics proceeds into a hidden compartment of a truck to smuggle it out of the country. Then,

some of these defendants attempted a prison escape by bribing officials, and she successfully prosecuted the perpetrators of the escape plan. She also handled the successful investigation and prosecution of over 20 corrupt New York City building inspectors engaged in extortion.

Her work was recognized by her twice being awarded the U.S. Attorney Special Achievement Award for Sustained Superior Performance, by commendations from the FBI, DEA and the New York City Department of Investigation, and ultimately by the prestigious Attorney General's Director's Award for Superior Performance. I always felt lucky to have hired her.

She left us in 2003 to help establish the Washington, D.C., office of a consulting and technical services firm specializing in digital forensics, computer fraud and abuse investigations as the Executive Managing Director and General Counsel of Stroz Friedberg. While in the private sector, she received the FBI Director's Award for her work assisting in a Government cyber-extortion investigation.

She was a member of the Commission on Cyber Security of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, has taught legal ethics as an adjunct professor at the American University Washington College of Law and has twice been confirmed by the Senate to serve as a member of the bipartisan U.S. Sentencing Commission, to which she was appointed by President Bush. She contributed to the Sentencing Commission report that led to our breakthrough this year with Senate passage of historic legislation that Senator Durbin, Senator Sessions and Senator Coburn crafted to end sentencing disparities, the Fair Sentencing Act.

We rarely have before us nominees to the bench with the breadth of experience that she brings. She has spent more than 23 years in public service. In addition to her experiences in the Legislative, Executive, and Judicial branches of the Federal Government, she has also been a law professor, a lawyer in private practice; and a principal and in-house general counsel at a business that she helped to grow from one office to 11 offices around the world.

She and her husband have raised their three children in the District and are long-time citizens here. That involvement, her public service background and her steadfast commitment to justice make her an ideal nominee. I commend President Obama for choosing to nominate her. I urge this Committee to approve her nomination and the Senate to grant its consent so that she may be appointed and serve all the people of the District of Columbia fairly and impartially as a United States District Court Judge.

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