

Prepared Statement by Senator Chuck Grassley of Iowa
Chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee
Executive Business Meeting
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As we all know, yesterday President Obama nominated Judge Garland for the Supreme Court. I had a chance to speak with Judge Garland yesterday and I congratulated him on his nomination.

I won't go into all the specifics about our conversation, but I did tell him, just as I shared with the President yesterday morning, that Republicans have made our position on this vacancy very clear, and that we will give the American people a voice and the opportunity this year to debate the role of the Supreme Court in our system of government. I also told him that if we're able to schedule an in-person meeting in a couple week, I didn't want him to be misled. I'll tell him the same thing in any in-person meeting that I told him yesterday.

Now, I'd like to turn to the business of the Committee and say a few words about the bipartisan work the Senate is accomplishing.

Earlier this week, the Senate passed the FOIA Improvement Act by unanimous consent. This bill passed the Judiciary Committee last year with strong bipartisan support. In fact, it was one of the first items we reported at the start of this Congress. Since then, I've worked alongside Ranking Member Leahy and Senator Cornyn to address a few concerns that were raised. The result, through good faith negotiations, is a bill that strikes the right balance and makes much-needed improvements to FOIA. Among many other reforms, the bill codifies a presumption of openness in FOIA. This tells agencies that their default setting should be openness and transparency, not secrecy.

I'd like to note that it's Sunshine Week, an annual nationwide initiative highlighting the importance of openness and transparency in government. So I'm especially proud that the bill passed this week. It's another example of good, bipartisan legislation that's come out of this Committee and gone on to pass the Senate. Let's keep that momentum going as we move ahead to tackle other important issues.

As a matter of fact, the comeback vote in the Senate after our Easter State work period will, hopefully, be the Trade Secrets Act. It's just another of a long line of accomplishments by this committee in this Congress.

Today, we are considering for the first time the FBI Whistleblower Protection Enhancement Act, S. 2390. This has been a truly bipartisan effort with Ranking Member Leahy. The bill takes what we learned from our hearing last March. For the first time, the bill protects disclosures made to supervisors, and establishes a fair and independent review process. The bill is on the agenda for the first time and it will be held over.

We have two additional bills on the markup agenda, S. 2613 and S. 2614, which will be held over as well. One of these bills, Kevin and Avonte's Law, will help protect some of our nation's most vulnerable citizens: developmentally disabled children and seniors with dementia. I

cosponsored this bill with Senators Schumer and Tillis. It has the support of the Alzheimer's Association, the American Society on Aging, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, the Autism Society of Iowa, and Safe Minds, to name a few.

The second bill, known as the Adam Walsh Reauthorization Act, would extend the authorization for several key programs that exist to protect missing and exploited children. These programs make resources available to states for implementation of their sex offender management programs and for the apprehension of sex offenders who fail to register as such. This bill has the support of John Walsh, the father of the boy for whom the Adam Walsh Act is named, as well as the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

S.247, the Expatriate Terrorist Act, will also be held over.

We have three nominees to be Judges for the Court of International Trade who are ready to be reported out: Elizabeth Drake, Jennifer Groves, and Gary Katzmman.

The nominee to the District Court of Hawaii, Clare Connors, is being considered today for the first time, so she'll be held over.

We'll turn to those nominees when we get to the agenda.

With that, I'll turn to my good friend, Ranking Member Leahy.