

**Statement of Senator Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.),
Ranking Member, Senate Judiciary Committee,
Executive Business Meeting
January 28, 2016**

Yesterday, we had a constructive hearing about the opioid and heroin abuse crisis. I was encouraged by the bipartisan agreement that we need to attack this problem in a comprehensive way – and that we need to provide Federal funding to support those efforts. I thank the chairman for agreeing to list the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act on the agenda, and hope that we can report it to the full Senate as quickly as possible. Families in Vermont and throughout the country are calling on us to devote more resources to combat this epidemic – and not just pay lip service to the needs of our communities struggling with addiction.

I have also heard from businesses about the need to protect trade secrets. In Vermont, trade secrets protect the specialized knowledge of woodworkers and artisans who have been crafting heirloom products for generations. Trade secrets are relied on by countless businesses to help keep their products and services unique, but today trade secret law is the one form of intellectual property protection that currently lacks a federal civil remedy. The bipartisan Defend Trade Secrets Act that is on the agenda today will fill this gap in the law.

I appreciate that the bill's sponsors worked with me to improve this legislation, which is critical for Vermont businesses. I also thank Chairman Grassley for working with me on an amendment to provide needed protections for whistleblowers who share confidential information in the course of reporting suspected illegal activity to law enforcement or when filing a lawsuit, provided they do so under seal. Our amendment is supported by the Government Accountability Project and the Project on Government Oversight (POGO), and I look forward to its adoption.

This morning we will also consider the Judicial Redress Act. This bill will extend certain privacy rights in U.S. courts to citizens of those countries with which we have strong data sharing agreements in place. I have heard from numerous U.S. technology companies and from European leaders about the importance of this bill to finalizing the umbrella law enforcement agreement that the Obama Administration has painstakingly negotiated, and for completing negotiations on a new Safe Harbor agreement for commercial data transfers.

Vermonters have long valued strong privacy protections, so I understand why this bill is a priority for our international partners. It is important that we live up to our commitments abroad and encourage both strong law enforcement partnerships and strong business relationships. With consideration of this bill I am hopeful we will do that today.

We will also consider the Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act (JASTA). We have successfully moved JASTA twice before through this Committee, and I once again support its passage. This legislation has long been sought by the victims of the September 11th attacks who seek justice in U.S. courts against those who helped perpetrate the attacks. I have heard directly

from Vermonters who were affected that day and support this important bill. I hope we can once again report this bill to the full Senate and urge its swift passage.

Finally, I am glad we are voting today on three district court nominees, including two from Pennsylvania. However, I had expected to see listed on today's agenda the two other Pennsylvania nominees who have received a hearing. Both of these nominees have the strong bipartisan support of their home state Senators.

Mr. Chairman, last week you said members needed time to review these nominees' responses to follow up Questions for the Record. These responses were submitted to the Committee last Monday.

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