

Statement of
The Honorable Patrick Leahy

United States Senator
United States Senate
December 8, 2011

This morning we could complete our agenda and not have to meet at all next week. I did not move the time for our meeting in deference to our ranking member, so I urge members to keep their remarks brief so that we can complete our agenda by 10:30. We have a vote scheduled at 10:30, and after that vote, many of us have to attend a House-Senate conference on appropriations for the rest of the year.

In addition to completing consideration of the matters held over from our last meeting, I hope that the Committee will also be allowed to move forward without unnecessary delay to report our final judicial nominee for the year, Brian Wimes, who is supported by both Senator McCaskill and Senator Blunt and much needed in Missouri. We could also report the bipartisan bills before us that Senators Coons and Graham and Senators Feinstein and Kyl have sponsored and that concern urgent problems.

We should start by finally reporting the President's second nominee to serve as the head of the Tax Division at the Justice Department.

The two bills held over from our last meeting are bipartisan penalty enhancement measures on counterfeit drugs and economic espionage.

The Counterfeit Drug Penalty Enhancement Act is something I have worked on with Senator Grassley and with Senators Blumenthal and Bennet. It is now also cosponsored by Senators Whitehouse, Feinstein, Coons, Klobuchar and Kyl. The counterfeit drug trade is a multi-billion dollar criminal industry. It is wrong. Our bipartisan, bicameral legislation will increase penalties for trafficking in these counterfeit pharmaceuticals.

The Economic Espionage Penalty Enhancement Act was introduced by Senator Kohl with Senator Kyl as the lead Republican cosponsor. This bipartisan measure is intended to help stem a serious problem holding back our economic recovery.

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