

**Statement Of Senator Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.),
Chairman, Committee On The Judiciary,
On Committee Consideration of The Free Flow Of Information Act, S. 987
Executive Business Meeting
September 12, 2013**

This morning we have a busy agenda so once we have a quorum we can get started. The Blue Alert Act is an important bill to support our law enforcement officers. I understand Republicans want to hold it over until next week. We have five judicial nominees listed for the first time and Republicans would like to hold them over as well. I do hope we can report the nomination of Ken Polite to be the US Attorney in Louisiana. He has been pending for over two months and I know of no concerns about his record. I also hope we can report out a Committee authorizing resolution before we resume consideration of the Free Flow of Information Act.

I support this legislation to establish a qualified privilege for journalists to protect their sources and the public's "right to know." I hope that we can make progress today. I commend Senators Schumer, Graham and others for their work on this bill. During our last meeting, the Committee adopted a substitute amendment to the bill. Several Senators have filed amendments to the bill. The lead sponsors have been working with Senator Feinstein, Senator Durbin and others to resolve concerns about the definition of who is covered by the bill. I understand that Senator Feinstein has an amendment to resolve those concerns that has the support Senators Schumer and Durbin. I hope that we can adopt this amendment and make progress on any other amendments that Senators wish to offer today.

More than 70 news media organizations have expressed their strong support of this legislation. I will place their letter in the record and I thank all of these organizations for their support of the Committee's work on this bill.

All of us – whether Republican, Democrat or Independent – have an interest in enacting a balanced and meaningful media shield bill to ensure a free flow of information to the American people. This bill carefully balances the need to protect confidential source information with the need to protect law enforcement and national security interests, so that we can better protect the American people's right to know.

I am proud to support this bill. I urge all Members, including those who will vote against the bill, to work in a constructive manner so that we can make progress today.

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