Transportation be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, December 13, 2007, at 10 a.m., in room 253 of the Russell Senate Office Building, for the purposes of conducting a hearing.

At this hearing, the committee members will hear from the five Federal Communications Commission comissioners on current proceedings involving media and telecommunications policy.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, December 13, 2007, at 2:30 p.m., in room SD366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building in order to conduct a hearing. At this hearing, the committee will hear testimony regarding forest restoration and hazardous fuels reduction efforts in the forests of Oregon and Washington.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Environment and Public Works be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, December 13, 2007, at 9 a.m. in room SD–406 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building in order to conduct a hearing entitled, ''The Clean Water Act following the recent Supreme Court decisions in Solid Waste Agency of Northern Cook County and Rapanos-Carabell.''

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Finance be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, December 13, 2007. at 10 a.m., in room SD–215 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, in order to conduct a hearing entitled ''The Housing Decline: The Extent of the Problem and Potential Remedies.''

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Finance be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, December 13, 2007, at a time to be determined in room SD–215 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to consider the nominations of Christopher A. Padilla, to be Under Secretary of Commerce for International Trade; Christina H. Pearson, to be Assistant Secretary Public Affairs, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; Benjamin Eric Sasse, to be Assistant Secretary Planning and Evaluation, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; and Charles E.F. Millard, to be Director of the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, December 13, 2007, at 2:30 p.m. in order to hold a hearing on global fight against AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate in order to conduct an Executive Business meeting on Thursday, December 13, 2007, at 10 a.m. in room SD–226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

Agenda

I. Resolutions of Contempt

II. Bills

S. 2402, FISA Intelligence Surveillance Substitution Act of 2007, (Specter); S. 344, A bill to permit the televising of Supreme Court Proceedings, (Specter, Grassley, Durbin, Schumer, Feingold, Cornyn); S. 1638, Federal Judicial Salary Restoration Act of 2007, (Leahy, Hatch, Feinstein, Graham, Kennedy); S. 1829, Protect Our Children First Act of 2007, (Leahy, Hatch, Schumer); S. 431, Keeping the Internet Devoid of Sexual Predators Act of 2007, (Schumer, McCain, Grassley, Specter, Kyl); S. 2344, Internet Safety Education Act of 2007, (Menendez).

III. Resolution

S. Res. 388, Designating the week of February 4 through February 8, 2008, as ''National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Week'', (Crapo, Biden).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent for the Committee on Veterans' Affairs to be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, December 13, 2007. The Committee will meet off the Senate Floor in the Reception room to consider the nomination of LTG James B. Peake (Ret.) for Secretary of Veterans Affairs after the first Floor vote that occurs on Thursday.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on December 13, 2007, at 2:30 p.m. in order to hold a closed hearing.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT OF GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT, THE FEDERAL WORKFORCE, AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs' Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, December 13, 2007, at 10:00 a.m. in order to conduct a hearing entitled, ''Prioritizing Management: Implementing Chief Management Officers at Federal Agencies.''

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Tess Mullen of my staff be granted floor privileges for the duration of today's session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider Executive Calendar Nos. 392, 397, 398, 399, and 400; and the Coast Guard nominations at the Secretary's desk; that the nominations be confirmed, the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table, the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action, and the Senate then return to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The nominations considered and confirmed en bloc are as follows:

THE JUDICIARY

Amul R. Thapar, of Kentucky, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Kentucky, vice Joseph M. Hood, retiring.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Ronald Jay Tenpas, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Attorney General.

Gregory A. Brower, of Nevada, to be United States Attorney for the District of Nevada for the term of four years.

Diane J. Humetewa, of Arizona, to be United States Attorney for the District of Arizona for the term of four years.

Edmund A. Booth, Jr., of Georgia, to be United States Attorney for the Southern District of Georgia for the term of four years.

NOMINATIONS PLACED ON THE SECRETARY'S DESK

IN THE COAST GUARD

PN1039 COAST GUARD nominations (271) beginning STEVEN C. ACOSTA, and ending Marc A. Zlomek, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 7, 2007.

PN1055 COAST GUARD nominations (4) beginning Damon L. Bentley, and ending Tanya C. Saunders, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 15, 2007.

NOMINATION OF AMUL R. THAPAR

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, the Senate continues, as we have all year, to make progress filling judicial vacancies by considering yet another nomination reported out of committee this month. The nomination before us today for a lifetime appointment to the Federal bench is Amul R. Thapar, to the Eastern District of Kentucky. He has the support of both home State Senators. I acknowledge the support of Senators MCCONNELL and BUNNING, and want to thank Senator WHITEHOUSE for chairing the hearing on this nomination.

In November, the Judiciary Committee reached a milestone by voting to report our 40th judicial nominee this year. That exceeds the totals reported in each of the previous 2 years, when a Republican-led Judiciary Committee was considering this President's nominees.

I am delighted to promptly consider the nomination of Mr. Thapar. The National Asian Pacific American Bar Association wrote to us in support of his nomination, which is the first of a South Asian American to be an Article III judge by this President. When confirmed, he would become only the seventh Asian Pacific American Article III judge in our Nation's history.

Amul R. Thapar is the U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Kentucky in Lexington, KY. Before that, he served as an Assistant U.S. Attorney in the Southern District of Ohio and in the District of Columbia. He worked in private practice at the law firms of Squire, Sanders & Dempsey and Williams & Connolly LLP and worked as a general counsel for Equalfooting.com. Mr. Thapar served as a law clerk for Judge Nathaniel R. Jones on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit and for Judge S. Arthur Spiegel on the District Court for the Southern District of Ohio. He graduated from Boston College and the University of California, Berkeley Boalt Hall School of Law.

When we confirm the nomination we consider today, the Senate will have confirmed 37 nominations for lifetime appointments to the Federal bench this session alone. That exceeds the totals confirmed in all of 2004, 2005, and 2006 when a Republican-led Senate was considering this President's nominees; all of 1989; all of 1993, when a Democratic-led Senate was considering President Clinton's nominees; all of 1997 and 1999, when a Republican-led Senate was considering President Clinton's nominees; and all of 1996, when the Republican-led Senate did not confirm a single one of President Clinton's circuit nominees.

When this nomination is confirmed, the Senate will have confirmed 137 total Federal judicial nominees in my tenure as Judiciary chairman. During the Bush Presidency, more circuit judges, more district judges—more total judges—were confirmed in the first 24 months that I served as Judiciary chairman than during the 2-year tenures of either of the two Republican chairmen working with Republican Senate majorities.

The Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts will list 45 judicial vacancies and 14 circuit court vacancies after today's confirmations. Compare that to the numbers at the end of the 109th Congress, when the total vacancies under a Republican-controlled Judiciary Committee were 51 judicial vacancies and 15 circuit court vacancies. That means that despite the additional vacancies that arose at the beginning of the 110th Congress and throughout this year, the current vacancy totals under my chairmanship of the Judiciary Committee are below where they were under a Republican led-Judiciary Committee. They are almost half of what they were at the end of President Clinton's term, when Republican pocket filibusters allowed judicial vacancies to rise above 100 before settling at 80. Twenty-six of them were for circuit courts.

When the President consults and sends the Senate well-qualified, consensus nominations, we can work together and continue to make progress as we are today.

I congratulate the nominee and his family on his confirmation today.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now resume legislative session.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—S. 2338

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate may proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 481, S. 2338, at a time to be determined by the majority leader following consultation with the Republican leader, and that when the bill is considered, it be considered under the following limitations: that the only first-degree amendments in order be the following, and that the time for debate for the Coburn amendment be limited to 60 minutes equally divided and controlled in the usual form; that there be 30 minutes of general debate on the bill equally divided and controlled; Dodd-Shelby amendment relating to a moratorium; Coburn amendment relating to reverse mortgages; that upon the use or yielding back of all time, the disposition of all amendments, the bill be read a third time and the Senate proceed to vote on passage of the bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

BREAST CANCER STAMP REAUTHORIZATION

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask the Chair to lay before the Senate a message from the House with respect to S. 597, Breast Cancer Stamp Reauthorization.

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message:

S. 597

Resolved, That the bill from the Senate (S. 597) entitled ''An Act to extend the special postage stamp for breast cancer research for 4 years'', do pass with the following amendments:

Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert:

SECTION 1. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY.

Section 414(h) of title 39, United States Code, is amended by striking ''2007'' and inserting ''2011''.

SEC. 2. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.

The National Institutes of Health and the Department of Defense shall each submit to Congress and the Government Accountability Office an annual report concerning the use of any amounts that it received under section 414(c) of title 39, United States Code, including a description of any significant advances or accomplishments, during the year covered by the report, that were funded, in whole or in part, with such amounts.

Amend the title so as to read: ''An Act to amend title 39, United States Code, to extend the authority of the United States Postal Service to issue a semipostal to raise funds for breast cancer research.''.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate concur in the House amendments and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

DESIGNATING THE C. CLYDE ATKINS U.S. COURTHOUSE

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Environment and Public Works Committee be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 2671 and that the Senate then proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The clerk will state the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2671) to designate the United States Court House located at 301 North Miami Avenue, Miami, Florida, as the ''C. Clyde Atkins U.S. Courthouse.''

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read the third time and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating thereto be printed in the RECORD, without intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (H.R. 2671) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

CHIMPANZEE SANCTUARY ACT

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 536, S. 1916.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will state the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows: