

NOMINATION OF J. GARVAN
MURTHA

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I thank the distinguished chairman for his usual courtesy. My remarks will be very brief.

One of the reasons I wanted to speak was to thank the distinguished chairman and thank the Republican leader, Senator DOLE, and thank our distinguished ranking member, Senator BIDEN, and the distinguished Democratic leader, Senator DASCHLE, for their willingness to move through a number of judicial nominations last night, one of which was for the State of Vermont.

Vermont, as the distinguished chairman knows, is currently, because of retirements and promotions and other reasons, the only State in the union that does not have a Federal district judge, other than in senior status. The distinguished chairman of our committee worked with me, Senator JEFFORDS, and others, to help us move through very quickly the nomination of Gar Murtha to be the new Federal district judge. I applaud the Senator from Utah for that, and I thank him for his help.

Mr. President, I will make a couple of personal comments. I have known Gar Murtha from the years when both he and I were young lawyers, young prosecutors in the State of Vermont. I knew him as a prosecutor of great ability and total integrity. My family and the Murtha family have been close and dear friends from that time. I have watched he and his wife, Meg, raise their three wonderful children, Elizabeth, John and Will. They are model members of their community. They are respected by everyone—Republican, Democrat, Independent, liberal, conservative and moderate—within their community as people of great family values and true traditional Vermont values. He is also known as a lawyer of the highest excellence.

When the U.S. Senate voted to confirm Gar Murtha as a Federal judge last night, I think it made a very, very wise choice indeed.

I told President Clinton, when I asked him to nominate Gar Murtha, that he could do so knowing that this is a decision that would be one he could always be proud of. He would know that it is a decision he could make without any concern or qualm, just as I had no concern or qualm in recommending Gar Murtha to the President of the United States.

So my feeling as a Vermonter, first and foremost, is that I am glad to see we are now going to have a Federal district judge. But, also, as one who has known Gar Murtha for 25 years, I know that our State is fortunate to have him, and the Federal bench is fortunate to have him. He follows in a great tradition of tremendous Federal judges we have had in Vermont—Judge Oakes, Judge Coffrin, Judge Parker, Judge Billings, Judge Gibson, Judge Leddy and Judge Holden. These are people

that I have known, and I have practiced law before many of them. Gar Murtha will now be part of a very stellar constellation indeed.

When I recommended Mr. Murtha to the President back in December, I described him as a respected lawyer from the southern part of Vermont who has a wide range of legal experience. He has distinguished himself by his contributions to the community and by his participation in efforts to improve our justice system. I told the President that he could feel very secure in making this nomination and that in the years to come it will reflect well on him, the Senate, and Vermont.

I have great confidence that Gar Murtha will be a fair, thoughtful, and judicious addition to the Federal bench in Vermont.

Mr. Murtha is an outstanding lawyer and exceptional person who will make a fine Federal judge and serve all of the people of Vermont and the Nation and the interests of justice by applying the law fairly and honestly.

I first met Gar when I was serving as State's attorney for Chittenden County and he as deputy State's attorney for Windham County. I was in the northwestern part of the State and he in the southeastern. He developed and has maintained a reputation of absolute, rock-ribbed integrity.

I know of his involvement in the community, in the State, and in the bar in a number of positions, including his service as a public defender here in the District of Columbia, his service on the Second Circuit Task Force on Gender, Racial, and Ethnic Fairness and on the Second Circuit's Committee on Federal Rules.

The father of three, Mr. Murtha has demonstrated in his family life, in his civic life, and in his professional life, the sense of community that Vermonters value so highly. He has served on a number of boards and commissions in southern Vermont. He is active in youth, community, and civic organizations.

Gar is a person of great fairness and integrity and an outstanding lawyer with wide-ranging experience. I have every confidence that he will make an outstanding Federal judge, who will be just, practical, and hardworking on behalf of all. I have heard from lawyers and people from all over the State who have expressed their support for this nomination and their appreciation that their Federal judge will be one who will ensure a fair trial for all, whether plaintiff or defendant, whether poor or rich.

Since Judge Billings assumed senior status and Judge Parker was confirmed to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit last year, Vermont has been without a full-time U.S. district judge. Vermont deserves to have its Federal judges considered, confirmed, and in place ready to rule on important matters.

In light of these circumstances, I want to extend special thanks to the

majority leader, the Judiciary Committee chairman, the Democratic leader and our ranking member and all our colleagues for proceeding promptly on this nomination and confirming Mr. Murtha to the Federal court bench.

It was my honor and privilege to recommend J. Garvan Murtha to the President of the United States and to present him to the Senate Judiciary Committee for consideration of his nomination to be the next U.S. district judge for Vermont. It is now my pleasure to thank our Senate colleagues for the consent that they provide to this nomination and to announce to the people of Vermont that the nomination of their new Federal judge has been confirmed by the U.S. Senate.

COMPREHENSIVE TERRORISM
PREVENTION ACT

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, this is a very important bill. It is apparent that we are trying to get a list of the amendments that people have so that we can hopefully get a unanimous-consent agreement on amendments and, when we get that, finish this bill in a very expeditious, good way.

Last evening, the President of the United States sent a letter to the distinguished Republican leader with regard to this bill. It is a very interesting letter. President Clinton, in this letter, has expressed his interest in "working with the Congress toward the enactment of this critical legislation as soon as possible".

I share the President's commitment to do exactly that.

His letter outlines a number of provisions which he feels should be in the bill. Indeed, most of the proposals he cites are already addressed by the substitute, S. 735. To the extent that S. 735 does not address some of these issues, I believe we are already aware of amendments covering these issues which some of our colleagues plan to offer.

Accordingly, in order to assure that we can meet the President's request to enact this critical legislation as soon as possible, I believe we should try to reach a unanimous-consent agreement on amendments.

The Democrats have already made us aware of at least 17 amendments. I believe all of what the President has requested in his letter which is not addressed in S. 735 would be addressed by one or more of these amendments. There are only a handful of Republican amendments thus far. Three of them are substantive and a few others are more technical in nature.

Before we take up amendments, I will say that I hope our Democratic colleagues will do all they can to help us to reach a unanimous-consent agreement on the total list so that we can wrap up this bill for today. I am dismayed that we need to wait to resolve these matters. Nevertheless, we are going to do what is right in this area.