

into question his legitimacy to lead that country. The killing of innocent civilians must stop now before this becomes another Rwanda.

In light of these facts, I request that you convene a hearing as soon as possible into this atrocity committed by forces loyal to rebel leader Ouattara, as well as into what I believe were flawed elections that gave legitimacy to his claim of the presidency.

Based on the evidence I have seen, and having spoken with various African dignitaries, I brought this issue of fraudulent elections in Cote d'Ivoire to the attention of Secretary of State Clinton on two occasions spanning the past few months. I called for the United States to support new elections there, but thus far, these efforts have received an inadequate response. Based on the news that Ouattara has murdered 1,000 people in Duekoue, I hope the U.S. will reconsider its position and that you will hold this hearing.

The United States must call for an immediate ceasefire to prevent Ouattara and his rebel army from committing a mass slaughter of Ivoirians, especially the hundreds of youth with sticks and baseball bats, who have formed a human chain around Gbagbo's residence and presidential palace.

I know your plate is full now regarding the situation in Libya, but I know you are sensitive to this situation and hope you will hold this hearing.

Sincerely,

JAMES M. INHOFE,
U.S. Senator.

Mr. INHOFE. I yield the floor. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant editor of the Daily Digest proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BENNET.) Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF JIMMIE V. REYNA TO BE UNITED STATES CIRCUIT JUDGE FOR THE FEDERAL CIR- CUIT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to report the following nomination.

The assistant bill clerk read the nomination of Jimmie V. Reyna, of Maryland, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Federal Circuit.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there be will 1 hour of debate equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that, however the time is divided, the vote begin no later than 5:30.

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

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I thank the majority leader for beginning another work week by scheduling a con-

firmation vote on an important judicial nomination. The nomination of Jimmie V. Reyna to the Federal circuit was reported unanimously by the Judiciary Committee on March 10. I expect his nomination to be confirmed with strong bipartisan support, likely unanimously.

That is also true of many of the other judicial nominations pending on the Senate's Executive Calendar, including several for what have been designated judicial emergency vacancies in New York, California, Florida and Tennessee. With nearly one out of every nine Federal judgeships vacant, we should act responsibly to address this vacancies crisis by voting promptly on nominations favorably reported by the Judiciary Committee. After this confirmation today, the nominations of another dozen judges and that of the Deputy Attorney General of the United States will remain pending and awaiting Senate consideration and final Senate action. Several of the judicial nominations and that of the Deputy Attorney General have been waiting final Senate action since last year.

At his confirmation hearing in February, Mr. Reyna was introduced to the Judiciary Committee by both of his home State Senators, Senator MIKULSKI and Senator CARDIN of Maryland. Senator CORNYN of Texas, a Republican, also joined Senator CARDIN in recommending Mr. Reyna to President Obama. When he is confirmed, Mr. Reyna will become the first Latino to serve on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit. A past president of the Hispanic National Bar Association, Mr. Reyna has excelled in private practice for 30 years, specializing in international trade law. He was unanimously rated by the American Bar Association's Standing Committee on the Federal Judiciary as well qualified to serve on this court, its highest possible rating.

The Judiciary Committee received letters of support for Mr. Reyna's nomination from the Customs and International Trade Bar Association, CITBA, and from the former Chairs of the ABA Section of International Law. In its letter, CITBA described Mr. Reyna's temperament as "ideal" and commented that "[h]e is fair and focused and he has dedicated his life not just to practice in this field of law, but to scholarly writing in this field." The former Chairs of the ABA Section of International Law write that they "believe he has the professional credentials, the experience and skills, the appropriate temperament, and the fair and sound judgment that would enable him to serve on the Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit with distinction and honor."

Mr. Reyna's nomination demonstrates President Obama's commitment to working with Senators to select well-qualified nominees, and his commitment to increasing diversity on the Federal bench. It is appropriate that we are considering Mr. Reyna's nomination in a timely manner. There is no reason it should take weeks and

months for the Senate to consider nominees reported by the Judiciary Committee, particularly those who are consensus nominees.

Mr. Reyna's nomination is one of 13 judicial nominations currently awaiting a Senate vote after being favorably reported by the Judiciary Committee. Two of those nominations have twice been considered by the Judiciary Committee and twice reported with strong bipartisan support, first last year and again in February. They are Susan Carney of Connecticut to fill a judicial emergency vacancy on the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit and Michael Simon to fill a vacancy on the District Court in Oregon. Another has been reported favorably three times with bipartisan support, that of Jack McConnell to the District of Rhode Island. Another currently pending nomination has been reported favorably four times, that of Judge Edward Chen to a judicial emergency vacancy on the Northern District of California. All of these nominations have long been ready for a Senate vote. So are nominations now pending to fill a judicial vacancy on the DC Circuit, a second judicial emergency vacancy in California, judicial emergency vacancies in New York, Tennessee, and Florida, two vacancies in Virginia, and a vacancy in New Jersey. I expect the Judiciary Committee will consider and report additional judicial nominations this week, adding to the number of judicial nominations ready for final Senate action.

Federal judicial vacancies around the country still number too many, and they have persisted for too long. Nearly one out of every nine Federal judgeships remains vacant. Whereas the Democratic majority in the Senate reduced vacancies from 110 to 60 in President Bush's first 2 years, judicial vacancies still number 95 over 26 months into President Obama's term. By now, judicial vacancies should have been cut in half, but we have barely kept up with attrition.

Regrettably, rather than reduce vacancies dramatically as we did during the Bush administration, the Senate has reversed course during the Obama administration, with the slow pace of confirmations keeping judicial vacancies at crisis levels. Over the 8 years of the Bush administration, from 2001 to 2009, we reduced judicial vacancies from 110 to a low of 34. That has now been reversed, with vacancies first topping 90 in August 2009 and staying above that level since. The vacancy rate which we already had reduced from 10 percent at the end of President Clinton's term to 6 percent by this date in President Bush's third year, and ultimately to less than 4 percent in 2008, has now risen back up to nearly 11 percent.

This high level of vacancies puts at serious risk the ability of all Americans to have a fair hearing in court.