

**Opening Statement of Chairman Ron Johnson**  
**Business Meeting**  
**June 24, 2015**

*As prepared for delivery:*

Good morning.

Today we are considering 17 bills and three nominees to report out of our committee. That's a big lift in a small window of time, and I thank Ranking Member Tom Carper and other committee members and their staff for their hard work and preparation. If my math is right, 11 senators of this committee have bills on this markup. That's an important accomplishment.

Each of these bills meets my dual objectives of incremental change and continuous improvement. As I've said before, success in the business world often takes the form of small adjustments toward an end result. The same is true in Congress. All of us want what government we have to work effectively and efficiently for the American people. The bills on today's agenda aim to do just that. Most of them are policy no-brainers -- the type of common sense reforms that defy partisan rankling.

This is not to suggest these policy solutions were easy to come by. Sometimes it requires thinking creatively to address problems. For example, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has struggled to find Custom and Border Protection (CBP) officers to fill vacancies at critical ports. Although CBP has the funding and authority to meet its hiring needs, delays and inefficiencies in its hiring process have prevented it from keeping up with attrition. The Border Jobs for Veterans Act, a bill introduced by Senator Flake and which I am happy to cosponsor with Senators McCain and Schumer, recognizes that veterans who have served our country with valor have precisely qualities and qualifications that we should be seeking for in these positions. The bill ensures that the DHS and the Department of Defense work together to identify qualified separating service members to more efficiently match these individuals to open officer positions.

Similarly creative ideas underlie the District of Columbia Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency Act of 2015, a bill that I am proud to sponsor. In addition to other needed changes to the D.C. court system, this bill seeks to reward former offenders who are succeeding in their re-entry programs by authorizing the D.C. Court Offender Supervision Agency to provide modest programmatic incentives such as bus fares for job interviews or fees to cover the cost of the GED. A fair criminal justice system should reward success and not just focus on punishing those who trip up.

Given the long list of good-government bills on this agenda, it seems only fitting that today the committee will also vote on Carol Fortine Ochoa's nomination to be inspector general of the General Services Administration. Ms. Ochoa has been an independent watchdog of the federal government for over 20 years in various roles. Above all else, she has stressed the need for inspectors general to be independent, transparent and accessible to the public and to the Congress. I am confident that Ms. Ochoa will succeed in this new role.

I look forward to reporting these bills and nominees today and continuing to work in a bipartisan fashion with my colleagues in this committee to make steady, incremental changes in the federal government so it can work better for Americans.

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