

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATIONS PLACED ON THE
EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to executive session and that the Commerce Committee be discharged from further consideration of the nominations of Ellen G. Engelman to be Administrator of the Research and Special Programs Administration at the Department of Transportation, and Kirk Van Tine the General Counsel of the Department of Transportation, and they be placed on the Executive Calendar.

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

NOMINATION OF BRUCE COLE, OF
INDIANA, TO BE CHAIRPERSON
OF THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT
FOR THE HUMANITIESNOMINATION OF JOHN W. GILLIS,
OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE DIRECTOR
OF THE OFFICE OF VICTIMS
OF CRIME

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the HELP Committee be discharged from further consideration of the nomination of Bruce Cole to be the Chairperson of the National Endowment for the Humanities and that the Judiciary Committee be discharged from the consideration of the nomination of John W. Gillis to be Director of the Office of Victims of Crime; that the nominations be considered and confirmed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action, and any statements therein be printed in the RECORD.

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

The nominations considered and confirmed are as follows:

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

Bruce Cole, of Indiana, to be Chairperson of the National Endowment for the Humanities for a term of four years.

JUDICIARY

John W. Gillis, of California, to be Director of the Office of Victims of Crime.

NOMINATION OF JOHN GILLIS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, yesterday the Judiciary Committee conducted confirmation hearings that included the President's nomination of John Gillis to direct the Office for Victims of Crime at the Department of Justice. These hearings had been scheduled long before the tragic events of Tuesday, September 11, 2001. This was the first hearing of the committee since the terrorism Tuesday morning that prompted the postponement of hearings on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Mr. Gillis had come from California before air traffic was suspended on Tuesday. Also included in the hearing were judicial nominees from New York, Connecticut and Mississippi who were able to drive to Washington in order to participate in the hearing. I thank Senator MCCONNELL for serving as the Ranking Republican.

Mr. Gillis described his background in law enforcement as a police officer with the Los Angeles Police Department and his work with the New York Port Authority. We also heard first hand of the tragic loss of his daughter and of his work on behalf of homicide victims and other victims of crime.

We discussed the outstanding staff of the Office for Victims of Crime, the important work in which they are engaged, and the incredible challenges that Mr. Gillis and that office will face.

I have worked closely with Mr. Gillis' predecessor in the Office for Victims of Crime for several years. With Aileen Adams, I worked on victims legislation to assist in our response to the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Building in Oklahoma City in April of 1995. Indeed, I sponsored the Victims of Terrorism Act amendment when the Senate considered anti-terrorism legislation in June 1995 and I continued working to ensure that legislation remained part of the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, which was finally enacted on April 24, 1996.

Thereafter, we worked on special appropriations to assist the victims of the Oklahoma bombing and special legislation to ensure their rights in connection with the trial. Last year, working with Katherine Turman, we were able to enact improvements to our 1995 legislation for victims of terrorism in order to double the cap on the Victims of Crime Act emergency reserve fund to \$100 million and provide greater flexibility to the Office for Victims of Crime to use the emergency reserve in carrying out programs that assist victims of terrorism and mass violence.

In addition, over the years I have worked with Senator SPECTER and others on a series of legislative actions to provide financial and educational benefits to federal and state public safety officers killed or injured in the line of duty, including educational benefits for their dependents.

We will be reviewing all of these provisions in the days and weeks ahead in the wake of the devastation of Tuesday.

Although nominees to head the Office for Victims of Crime traditionally have not always participated in a confirmation hearing, I wanted to include Mr. Gillis at a Senate hearing to highlight the importance of the work of this Office, the critical importance of crime victims' rights, and the assistance and compensation provided by the Federal Government.

Along with other Senators strongly committed to assisting crime victims

and protecting their rights, I reintroduced the Crime Victims Assistance Act of 2001 in April of this year. In preparing our bill, we consulted closely with a number of victims organizations and with the Office for Victims of Crime. That legislation, which enhances the rights and protections of victims of crime, establishes innovative new programs to help promote compliance with State victim rights laws and improves the manner in which the Crime Victims Fund is managed and preserved, is an important matter and a high priority for me. I was heartened when Mr. Gillis pledged to work with us on this initiative.

Toward the end of yesterday's hearing, I suggested that I would try to clear the nomination of John Gillis to be Director of the Office for Victims of Crime on an extraordinary and expedited basis. I noted that Attorney General Ashcroft had, on the eve of the nomination hearing, called me at home in support of this nomination. Yesterday I requested that the Majority Leader proceed to the nomination and that the Senate confirm John Gillis. I thank the Majority Leader for taking action and I want to thank all Democratic Members of the Senate and my colleague from Vermont for approving that request. In these difficult days, confirming Mr. Gillis to head the Office for Victims of Crime so that he may lend his hand to the efforts of those working so diligently in that Office and in State and local government and private efforts in New York, Virginia and around the country, is a small but significant step that the Senate can and should take.

I am gratified that overnight whatever problem or concern had threatened to delay Senate action on this nomination has been resolved. I thank all Senators for their willingness to move forward under these extraordinary circumstances to confirm John Gillis to be Director of the Office for Victims of Crime. In particular, I thank the senior Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. NICKLES) for his effort to clear this nomination for expedited Senate action today. His personal intervention helped make this possible. I have had the privilege of working over the years with Senator NICKLES on victims legislation. He has shown again today his commitment to the interests of victims of crime and terrorism.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the following nominations be considered en bloc: Calendar Nos. 363 through 383; 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.