

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 15, 2008

The Honorable Arlen Specter
711 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Specter:

I am responding to your letter of April 10, 2008, regarding several pending judicial nominations.

As a former constitutional law instructor, I fully appreciate the important work that our federal judges do and the need to fill judicial vacancies. However, I have great respect for the Senate's constitutional advice and consent role in the confirmation of these judges.

The concerns you have raised in your letter are important ones. However, since I am not a member of the Judiciary Committee, I would defer to Chairman Leahy on the scheduling of any committee votes on these pending nominations, and I would defer to Senator Reid on the scheduling of any floor votes.

Moreover, I am confident that we can work in a bipartisan fashion to continue to fill vacancies. Just last week, the Senate confirmed five judicial nominations. And today, Chairman Leahy has announced a resolution reached with the Administration over Sixth Circuit nominations. These events highlight a desire on all sides to ensure that vacancies on the bench are filled.

Thank you for seeking my views on this issue.

Sincerely,



Barack Obama
United States Senator