

# U.S. SENATOR PATRICK LEAHY

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Closing Statement Of Senator Patrick Leahy,  
Chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee,  
Hearing On Oversight of the Federal Bureau of Investigation  
September 17, 2008

Many of us on both sides of the aisle have raised questions and concerns about whether the Attorney General's proposed new guidelines for the FBI's investigative activities would give the FBI sweeping new authority with minimal checks to prevent the kinds of abuses we have seen in such areas as national security letters.

This hearing could have been more productive in addressing those concerns if the Department of Justice had agreed with my request and Senator Specter's request to provide copies of the proposed guidelines. Like the limited briefings that have been given to staff, the exchange today was a good start, but not as meaningful as we would have wanted and it should have been.

I was pleased that this hearing began with Director Mueller promising this Committee that the FBI will be vigilant in investigating whether fraud or lawbreaking contributed to the ongoing financial crisis, the worst we have experienced since the Great Depression and one that has exposed the American taxpayers to trillions in losses and the devastation of homeowners and investments and lives across the country.

The Wall Street mess has many causes but it illuminates several problems we have seen before over the last eight years. They include incompetence in White House appointments to regulatory agencies that are supposed to be the public's on-the-scene watchdogs; squandering faith in market mechanisms by winking at increasing signs of excess and corner-cutting by rich and powerful corporations; and indifference to the widening gap between the super-rich and ordinary Americans, and to the lack of affordable housing. The Bush Administration has ignored those and other fundamentals of responsible economic and fiscal policy, and we need leadership that can make a fresh start to turn a bad situation around before it gets even worse.

I thank Director Mueller for appearing today before the Committee and for his openness to oversight and accountability. I look forward to working with an Administration where the Director's approach and responsiveness is not the exception, but the rule.

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