

United States Senate

OFFICE OF THE ~~MINORITY~~ LEADER  
**DEMOCRATIC**

February 12, 2009

~~The Honorable Harry Reid  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
S-221 Capitol Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510-0001~~

**MITCH McCONNELL**

Dear ~~Harry~~

**MITCH**

The Senate has the Constitutional duty to provide its Advice and Consent on Presidential nominations, a duty which we take seriously. In consultation with our Ranking Members, we reaffirm our commitment to conduct the appropriate review of these nominations, consistent with the long standing and best practices of committees, regardless of which political party is in the majority. These best practices serve the Senate well, and we will insist on their fair and consistent application.

Therefore, prior to considering any time agreements on the floor on any nominee, we expect the following standards will be met:

1. The FBI background check is complete and submitted to the committee in time for review and prior to a hearing being noticed.
2. The Office of Government Ethics letter is complete and submitted to the committee in time for review and prior to a committee hearing.
3. Financial disclosure statements (and tax returns for applicable committees) are complete and submitted to the committee for review prior to a hearing being noticed.
4. All committee questionnaires are complete and have been returned to the committee. A reasonable opportunity for follow-up questions has been afforded committee members, and nominees have answered, with sufficient time for review prior to a committee vote.
5. The nominee is willing to have committee staff interviews, where that has been the practice.
6. The nominee has had a hearing.
7. The nominee agrees to courtesy visits with members when requested.
8. The nominee has committed to cooperate with the Ranking Member on requests for information and transparency.

There will be additional requirements, honoring the traditions of the Senate, for judicial nominees. These common sense standards and long standing practices will ensure that the Senate has had the opportunity to fairly review a nominee's record and to make an informed decision prior to a vote.

Sincerely,

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MITCH McCONNELL  
REPUBLICAN LEADER

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