

Calendar No. 241

107TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 986

To allow media coverage of court proceedings.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 5, 2001

Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. SMITH of New Hampshire, Mr. ALLARD, Mr. FEINGOLD, Mr. SPECTER, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. DEWINE, Mr. ALLEN, Mr. EDWARDS, and Ms. CANTWELL) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

NOVEMBER 29, 2001

Reported by Mr. LEAHY, without amendment

A BILL

To allow media coverage of court proceedings.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. DEFINITIONS.**

4 In this Act:

5 (1) **PRESIDING JUDGE.**—The term “presiding
6 judge” means the judge presiding over the court
7 proceeding concerned. In proceedings in which more

1 than 1 judge participates, the presiding judge shall
 2 be the senior active judge so participating or, in the
 3 case of a circuit court of appeals, the senior active
 4 circuit judge so participating, except that—

5 (A) in en banc sittings of any United
 6 States circuit court of appeals, the presiding
 7 judge shall be the chief judge of the circuit
 8 whenever the chief judge participates; and

9 (B) in en banc sittings of the Supreme
 10 Court of the United States, the presiding judge
 11 shall be the Chief Justice whenever the Chief
 12 Justice participates.

13 (2) APPELLATE COURT OF THE UNITED
 14 STATES.—The term “appellate court of the United
 15 States” means any United States circuit court of ap-
 16 peals and the Supreme Court of the United States.

17 **SEC. 2. AUTHORITY OF PRESIDING JUDGE TO ALLOW**
 18 **MEDIA COVERAGE OF COURT PROCEEDINGS.**

19 (a) AUTHORITY OF APPELLATE COURTS.—Notwith-
 20 standing any other provision of law, the presiding judge
 21 of an appellate court of the United States may, in the dis-
 22 cretion of that judge, permit the photographing, electronic
 23 recording, broadcasting, or televising to the public of court
 24 proceedings over which that judge presides.

25 (b) AUTHORITY OF DISTRICT COURTS.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other
2 provision of law, any presiding judge of a district
3 court of the United States may, in the discretion of
4 that judge, permit the photographing, electronic re-
5 cording, broadcasting, or televising to the public of
6 court proceedings over which that judge presides.

7 (2) OBSCURING OF WITNESSES.—

8 (A) IN GENERAL.—Upon the request of
9 any witness in a trial proceeding other than a
10 party, the court shall order the face and voice
11 of the witness to be disguised or otherwise ob-
12 scured in such manner as to render the witness
13 unrecognizable to the broadcast audience of the
14 trial proceeding.

15 (B) NOTIFICATION TO WITNESSES.—The
16 presiding judge in a trial proceeding shall in-
17 form each witness who is not a party that the
18 witness has the right to request that the image
19 and voice of that witness be obscured during
20 the witness' testimony.

21 (c) ADVISORY GUIDELINES.—The Judicial Con-
22 ference of the United States may promulgate advisory
23 guidelines to which a presiding judge, in the discretion of
24 that judge, may refer in making decisions with respect to
25 the management and administration of photographing, re-

1 cording, broadcasting, or televising described under sub-
2 sections (a) and (b).

3 **SEC. 3. SUNSET.**

4 The authority under section 2(b) shall terminate 3
5 years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

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