

product, and yet we have 47 million uninsured Americans and the highest infant mortality and lowest life expectancy of any other industrialized nation, we must do whatever we can to encourage adoption of electronic prescribing and electronic medical records, not keep in place policies that deter adoption.

I understand and appreciate that the DEA has a very important law enforcement function and needs to have the tools to enforce the laws and prosecute law breakers. However, electronic prescribing is not a barrier to that. The systems that have been used for years to transmit prescriptions electronically are secure and auditable. In fact, electronic prescribing will not only help enforcement but will create new opportunities to prevent abuse of controlled substances. Existing e-prescribing processes are actually more secure than written prescriptions. Banking transactions have been conducted for years electronically, and authorities have been able to prosecute people who misuse the technology. I am confident we can do the same with respect to any misuse regarding controlled substances.

I know that the DEA has acknowledged that e-prescribing offers many benefits and has considered ways to allow the electronic transmission of controlled substance prescriptions. And I know that DEA and Health and Human Services held a public meeting last year to begin to address this issue. That was a great first step, but progress has been very slow and now we need to solve this problem in a way that realizes the benefits of health IT, is secure, scalable within the industry, and that protects the DEA's interests.

One relatively easy fix may be to simply amend the Controlled Substances Act to permit electronic prescribing. There may be other ways to address the problem, and I am open to discussing those. What is critical is that we find a way to allow e-prescribing for all medications soon—every day we delay, the cost in dollars and lives grows. We need incentives to encourage adoption of e-prescribing, not roadblocks to adoption. Increased use of electronic prescribing will increase patient compliance, improve health outcomes, reduce medication errors, and reduce health care costs.

It is my sense that DEA should not invest additional resources in pursuing plans to allow e-prescribing of controlled substances through measures that are unnecessarily high in cost and complexity.

I join my colleagues in urging DEA to quickly adopt rules allowing electronic prescribing of controlled substances that rely on the high level of security built into the existing e-prescribing infrastructure and are deemed workable by all stakeholders.

Absent a timely adoption of such DEA rules, I look forward to working with my colleagues to find a solution to the prohibition on electronic prescribing of certain medicines this year.

Mr. President, I see the chairman of the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions is here, and I would appreciate his comments on this issue.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Rhode Island for drawing our attention to this barrier in the advancement of electronic prescribing. The use of electronic prescribing technologies offers an opportunity to improve health care outcomes by reducing medication errors and improving patient compliance with physician orders and screening for dangerous drug-drug interactions. Physicians and pharmacies in Massachusetts have begun to adopt e-prescribing and patients are benefiting. Massachusetts was recently recognized as the State with the highest volume of electronic prescriptions per capita. Electronic prescribing systems offer security advantages beyond those available through a paper-based system by requiring user authentication and generating an audit trail of prescriptions submitted to pharmacies. Creating a method by which controlled substances can be safely and securely prescribed electronically will encourage physicians' adoption of the technology. I support the Senator from Rhode Island's proposal for a joint report by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration and the Department of Health and Human Services to evaluate how electronic prescribing of controlled substances can be safely achieved. I also urge the Drug Enforcement Agency to adopt rules allowing controlled substances to be electronically prescribed and in the absence of such rules look forward to working with my colleagues to address the issue legislatively.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I agree with the Senator from Massachusetts. I am committed to working with the Senator from Rhode Island, the Senator from Michigan, and the chairman of the HELP Committee to solve this problem.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I thank the chairman and all my colleagues for their help on this issue.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, today I voted to table an amendment offered by Senator COBURN to H.R. 3093, the Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act of 2008, which would have shifted funding to the Civil Rights Division within the U.S. Department of Justice for the investigation and prosecution of unsolved civil rights cases.

I share Senator COBURN's fervent and sincere desire to solve these ghastly crimes. However, I do not believe that his amendment would achieve this important task. Instead, the Senate should consider and pass S. 535, the Emmett Till Unsolved Civil Rights Crime Act. I am a cosponsor of this bill, which would commit the resources of the U.S. Government to investigating and prosecuting racially motivated murders that occurred on or before December 31, 1969. The bill des-

ignates an official within the U.S. Department of Justice, and another within the Federal Bureau of Investigation, to investigate, prosecute, and coordinate the investigations of civil rights violations that occurred prior to 1970 and resulted in a death.

There is an urgent need for the Congress to enact this measure. Given the advanced age of defendants and potential witnesses, there remains only a small window of opportunity in which to solve these cases. Ultimately, the purpose of this bill is to provide justice to the families of those who were murdered for racially motivated reasons prior to 1970. The bill expresses the sense of Congress that all authorities with jurisdiction, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation and other entities within the U.S. Department of Justice, should expeditiously investigate unsolved civil rights murders, and provide the resources necessary to ensure timely and thorough investigations in the cases involved.

The families of the victims of these heinous crimes deserve no less. It is my hope that this bill, which has been approved by the Senate Judiciary Committee, will soon be voted upon and passed by the Senate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

#### NOMINATION OF JENNIFER WALKER ELROD TO BE UNITED STATES CIRCUIT JUDGE FOR THE FIFTH CIRCUIT

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider Executive Calendar No. 302, as under the previous order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Jennifer Walker Elrod, of Texas, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Fifth Circuit.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent for 5 minutes under the time of Senator LEAHY.

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

#### NOMINATION OF RICHARD A. JONES

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I am honored to come to the floor today to speak on behalf of Richard Jones. He is a distinguished lawyer and a King County Superior Court judge from my home State. He is a man who enjoys broad bipartisan support, and he deserves a seat on the Federal bench.

President Bush nominated Judge Jones to be a district court judge for the Western District of Washington State. He is an excellent choice. I am very proud to be here this afternoon to support him, and I urge my colleagues to support him as well.

If you were to ask lawyers or judges in my home State about Judge Jones,

some of the descriptions you would hear are, “He is admired by everyone in the justice system.” “He gives respect, and he gets respect.” “The test of one’s performance is the way they handle the smaller cases. Richard displays precisely that same degree of sensitivity to all who appear before him.”

The Seattle Times described this nomination by saying:

This is a lifetime appointment with no room for mistakes, and we believe there is no mistake here.

I couldn’t agree more. Judge Jones has handled some of the most difficult cases in western Washington in the past decade and he has won the respect of everyone who has come before him. He presided over the sentencing of Gary Ridgway, who was known as the “Green River Killer.” Ridgway pleaded guilty to 48 counts of aggravated first-degree murder in 2003 and is one of the most prolific serial killers in American history. That would be a tough case for any judge, but Judge Jones earned praise for the sensitivity and dignity he showed for the victims of the Green River killer.

As a result of that case—and in recognition of his long service to Washington State—in 2004, Judge Jones received the “Judge of the Year Award” from the Asian Bar Association of Washington, from the King County Bar Association, from the Washington State Bar Association, and from the Washington State Trial Lawyers Association.

Judge Jones has also been praised by his peers for handling cases far out of the media spotlight with the same care and attention. Both Senator CANTWELL and I assisted the President in choosing Judge Jones from a list of very qualified candidates. When I met him, I was so impressed with his sensitivity, his professionalism, and his overall sense of fairness. Throughout his career, Judge Jones has won high praise for his judicial demeanor and for the respect he shows all parties.

In the courtroom, Judge Jones is known for making articulate and powerful statements that make clear where he stands. He clearly meets the standards of fairness, evenhandedness, and adherence to the law we all expect from our Federal judges.

In his personal background, he graduated from Seattle University and the University of Washington School of Law. In private practice, Richard Jones successfully represented both plaintiffs and defendants in a variety of civil cases. As a State and a Federal prosecutor, he had extensive experience prosecuting criminal cases. Most recently, as a full-time King County Superior Court judge, Richard Jones has distinguished himself and won broad support.

In addition to all of those professional responsibilities, Judge Jones also has been deeply involved in community activities. He served as a YMCA board member and mentored

minority youths. He has worked in the community to expand opportunities for students to pursue legal careers by supporting youth-oriented legal programs. Judge Jones has shown a commitment to the people of his community, and that is one of the reasons why they have shown a commitment to him. Since he was first appointed in 1994, the voters of King County have reelected him three times. I know I speak on behalf of a large number of people in my State’s legal and law enforcement community in saying that our Federal bench will be stronger with Richard Jones.

It is my pleasure to be here on the floor this afternoon to support his nomination. He has garnered bipartisan support in my State, and I am confident that his record of fair and unbiased service will earn him a bipartisan vote on the floor of the Senate today. I urge all of my colleagues to support this nomination.

I yield the floor.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, we have nominations before us for lifetime appointments to the Federal bench of Jennifer Walker Elrod of the Fifth Circuit, Roslynn Renee Mauskopf for the Eastern District of New York, Richard Jones for the Western District of Washington, and Sharion Aycock for the Northern District of Mississippi.

The yeas and nays have not been ordered on any of these, have they?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Only the nomination of Ms. Elrod has been reported.

Mr. LEAHY. But no request has been made for the yeas and nays; is that correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is correct.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, for the interest of my colleagues, I do not anticipate—I do not intend to ask for the yeas and nays on any of these. I have discussed this with the distinguished senior Senator from Pennsylvania, Senator SPECTER, and I believe I am authorized to speak for him that he is not going to be requesting the yeas and nays.

Mr. CARDIN. Would my distinguished chairman yield for a moment?

Mr. LEAHY. Yes.

Mr. CARDIN. As you know, I am going to be opposing the nomination of Jennifer Walker Elrod, but I will not be seeking a record vote.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I thank the distinguished Senator from Maryland. I know he is going to be speaking on that nomination and stating his reasons for opposition, but I wanted it known by both leaders that I will not be requesting a rollcall vote on any of these. I see the distinguished senior Senator from Mississippi is on the floor and I have advised him of that also.

The Senate continues, as we have all year, to make progress filling judicial vacancies when the White House will work with us. The nominations before us today for lifetime appointments to the Federal bench are Jennifer Walker

Elrod for the Fifth Circuit, Roslynn Renee Mauskopf for the Eastern District of New York, Richard Jones for the Western District of Washington, and Sharion Aycock for the Northern District of Mississippi. They each have the support of both home State Senators. I thank Senators MURRAY, CANTWELL, COCHRAN, LOTT, HUTCHINSON, CORNYN, SCHUMER and CLINTON for their work in connection with these nominations.

The progress we have made this year in considering and confirming judicial nominations is sometimes lost amid the partisan sniping over the most controversial nominations.

If the nominations we consider today are confirmed, the Senate will have already confirmed 33 nominations for lifetime appointments to the Federal bench this session alone. That is more judicial nominations than were confirmed in all of 2005 or 2006 with a Republican majority. It is 16 more confirmations than were achieved during the entire 1996 session, nearly doubling that session’s total of 17, when Republicans stalled consideration of President Clinton’s nominations.

Judge Elrod would be the Fourth Circuit court nominee confirmed so far this year. That is more than the number of President Clinton’s circuit court nominations confirmed by this time in 1999 with a Republican-led Senate and four more than the Republican-led Senate confirmed in the entire 1996 session. That was the session in which not a single circuit court nominee was confirmed. That is more than were confirmed in all of 1993 and equals the total in 1983.

If the nominations are confirmed today, the Senate will have confirmed 21 circuit court nominations and 133 total Federal judicial nominees in my tenure as Judiciary chairman. During the Bush Presidency, more circuit judges, more district judges—more total judges—have been confirmed in the first 24 months that I served as Judiciary chairman than during the 2-year tenures of either of the two Republican chairmen working with Republican Senate majorities.

Today, we consider a nominee to the Fifth Circuit. During the Clinton administration several outstanding nominees to the Fifth Circuit were pocket filibustered. They included Judge Jorge Rangel of Texas, Enrique Moreno of Texas and Alston Johnson of Louisiana. They were pocket filibustered without a hearing or committee consideration. In contrast, the Judiciary Committee has proceeded with this nomination.

The Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts will list 44 judicial vacancies after today’s confirmations. The President has sent us only 20 nominations for these remaining vacancies. Twenty-four of these vacancies—more than half—have no nominee. Of the 16 vacancies deemed by the Administrative Office to be judicial emergencies, the President has yet to send us nominees for half of them. Of the 15 circuit court

vacancies, 6—more than a third—are without a nominee. If the President would decide to work with the Senators from Michigan, Rhode Island, Maryland, California, New Jersey, and Virginia, we could be in position to make even more progress.

We have helped cut the circuit vacancies from a high mark of 32 in the early days of this administration, to as few as 13. Contrast that with the Republican-led Senate's lack of action on President Clinton's moderate and qualified nominees that resulted in increasing circuit vacancies during the Clinton years from 17 to 26. During those years, the Republican-led Senate engaged in strenuous and successful efforts under the radar to keep circuit judgeships vacant in anticipation of a Republican President.

More than 60 percent of current circuit court judges were appointed by Republican Presidents, with the current President having appointed more than 30 percent of the active circuit judges already.

Two of the vacancies being filled today are categorized by the Administrative Office of the United States Courts as judicial emergency vacancies. With these confirmations we will have proceeded to fill 18 such vacancies this year.

Jennifer Walker Elrod is a judge on the 190th District Court for Harris County, TX, a position she has held since 2002. A native of Port Arthur, TX, and a graduate of Baylor University and Harvard Law School, Judge Elrod clerked for Judge Sim Lake on the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Texas and spent 8 years in private practice at Baker Botts before joining the bench.

Roslynne Renee Mauskopf has served as U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of New York since her 2002 appointment by President Bush. Ms. Mauskopf received her B.A. from Brandeis and her law degree from Georgetown before spending 13 years as assistant district attorney in the New York County District Attorney's Office and serving a stint as New York State's inspector general.

Richard Anthony Jones has been a judge on the King County Superior Court since 1994. Previously, Judge Jones, a graduate of Seattle University and the University of Washington School of Law, served as an assistant U.S. attorney in the Western District of Washington, staff attorney for the Port of Seattle, and deputy prosecuting attorney for King County, also spending 6 years in private practice at Bogle and Gates.

Sharion Aycock has been a state trial judge on the First Circuit Court District in Tupelo, MS, since 2003. A native of Tupelo, MS, Judge Aycock, who received her B.A. from Mississippi State University and her J.D. from Mississippi College School of Law, served for 8 years as Itawamba County prosecuting attorney, and spent time in private practice in Mississippi as a solo practitioner and at law firms.

I congratulate the nominees and their families on their confirmations today.

The Judiciary Committee has reported dozens of measures to the Senate that await action, from privacy legislation to war profiteering legislation to court legislation, all on a bipartisan basis. Yet we are stalled on several important matters.

I have spoken before of the Republican objection to our going to conference to finish work on the Court Security Improvement Act, S. 378, which the committee reported to the Senate back in March. We had to overcome a filibuster just to consider it. It ultimately passed the Senate 97 to zero. We are being prevented from going to conference to resolve differences with the House by Republican objection.

I have spoken before about the War Profiteering Prevention Act, S. 119, what has been stalled for months by unspecified Republican objections.

I have spoken before about the Emmett Till Unsolved Civil Rights Crimes Act, S. 535. It was reported unanimously by the Judiciary Committee, yet a Republican Senator objected to Senate passage this week.

Similarly there is a modest bill to extend temporary judgeships in five districts, S. 1327. That simple bill is likewise being prevented from passage by a Republican objection.

Today, I want to focus on another important measure, the School Safety and Law Enforcement Improvement Act.

Two months ago, the Senate Judiciary Committee originated the School Safety and Law Enforcement Improvement Act of 2007, a legislative package that responds to the tragic deaths that occurred this past April on the campus of Virginia Tech. We tried to show deference to Governor Kaine and the task forces at work in Virginia and to complement their work and recommendations. Working with several Senators, including Senators BOXER, REED, SPECTER, FEINGOLD, SCHUMER, and DURBIN, the Committee originated this bill and reported it before the commencement of the academic year in the hope that the full Senate could pass these critical school safety improvements this fall.

Over the past 2 weeks, Senator SCHUMER and I have tried separately to pass the component of the bill designed to fix flaws in the Nation's background check system. Regrettably, our efforts were blocked by a single Senator.

I do not think the Senate should continue to stand by and wait for the next horrific school tragedy to make the critical changes necessary to insure safety in our schools and on our college campuses. Risks of school violence will not go away just because Congress may shift its focus. In just the last few weeks we have seen tragedy at Delaware State and Memphis, as well as incidents in California and New York. I urge the Senate to move aggressively with the comprehensive school safety legislation.

It includes background check improvements together with other sensible yet effective safety improvement measures supported by law enforcement across the country. Accordingly, I urge the Senate to take up and swiftly pass S. 2084. If we are prohibited by objection from doing so by unanimous consent, then let us move to it and let those with objections seek to amend those provisions to which they object.

There are too many incidents at too many colleges and schools nationwide. This terrorizes students and their parents. We should be doing what we can to help. Just this past week, a troubled student wearing a Fred Flintstone mask and carrying a rifle through campus was arrested at St. John's University in Queens, NY, prompting authorities to lock down the campus for 3 hours.

The next day, an armed 17-year-old on the other side of the country in Oroville, CA, held students hostage at Las Plumas High School, which also resulted in a lock-down. The students in these situations escaped with their lives.

University of Memphis student Taylor Bradford was not so lucky. He was killed on campus this past Sunday morning in what university officials believe was a targeted attack. He was 21 years old. Shalita Middleton and Nathaniel Pew were not so lucky. They were both wounded during an incident at Delaware State and are still hospitalized from the gun shot wounds with Ms. Middleton still in serious condition. They are each only 17 years old.

The School Safety and Law Enforcement Improvement Act responds directly to incidents like these by squarely addressing the problem of violence in our schools in several ways. The bill enlists the States as partners in the dissemination of critical information by making significant improvements to the National Instant Background Check System, known as the NICS system. The bill also authorizes Federal assistance for programs to improve the safety and security of our schools and institutions of higher education, provides equitable benefits to law enforcement serving those institutions, and funds pilot programs to develop cutting-edge prevention and intervention programs for our schools. The bill also clarifies and strengthens 2 existing statutes—the Terrorist Hoax Improvements Act and the Law Enforcement Officers Safety Act—which are designed to improve public safety.

Specifically, title I would improve the safety and security of students both at the elementary and secondary school level, and on college and university campuses. The K-12 improvements are drawn from a bill that Senator BOXER introduced in April, and I want to thank Senator BOXER for her hard work on this issue. The improvements include increased funding for much-needed infrastructure changes to improve security as well as the establishment of hotlines and tip-lines, which

will enable students to report potentially dangerous situations to school administrators before they occur.

To address the new realities of campus safety, title I also creates a matching grant program for campus safety and security to be administered out of the COPS Office of the Department of Justice.

The grant program would allow institutions of higher education to apply, for the first time, directly for Federal funds to make school safety and security improvements. The program is authorized to be appropriated at \$50,000,000 for the next 2 fiscal years. While this amounts to just \$3 per student each year, it will enable schools to more effectively respond to dangerous situations on campus.

Title II of the bill seeks to improve the NICS system. The senseless loss of life at Virginia Tech revealed deep flaws in the transfer of information relevant to gun purchases between the States and the Federal Government. The defects in the current system permitted the perpetrator of this terrible crime to obtain a firearm even though a judge had declared him to be a danger to himself and thus ineligible under Federal law.

Seung-Hui Cho was not eligible to buy a weapon given his mental health history, but he was still able to pass a background check because data was missing from the system. We are working to close gaps in the NICS system. Title II will correct these problems, and for the first time will create a legal regime in which disqualifying mental health records, both at the State and Federal level, would regularly be reported into the NICS system.

Title III would make sworn law enforcement officers who work for private institutions of higher education and rail carriers eligible for death and disability benefits, and for funds administered under the Byrne grant program and the bulletproof vest partnership grant program.

Providing this equitable treatment is in the best interest of our Nation's educators and students and will serve to place the support of the Federal Government behind the dedicated law enforcement officers who serve and protect private colleges and universities nationwide. I commend Senator JACK REED for his leadership in this area.

Title IV of the bill makes improvements to the Law Enforcement Officers Safety Act of 2003. These amendments to existing law will streamline the system by which qualified retired and active officers can be certified under LEOSA. It serves us all when we permit qualified officers, with a demonstrated commitment to law enforcement and no adverse employment history, to protect themselves and their families wherever they may be.

Title V incorporates the PRECAUTION Act, which Senators FEINGOLD and SPECTER asked to have included. This provision authorizes grants to develop prevention and intervention programs for our schools.

Finally, title VI incorporates the Terrorist Hoax Improvements Act of 2007, at the request of Senator KENNEDY.

Let us go forward and act now on this important bill. The Virginia Tech Review Panel—a body commissioned by Governor Tim Kaine to study the Virginia Tech tragedy—recently issued its findings based on a 4-month long investigation of the incident and its aftermath. This bill would adopt a number of recommendations from the Review Panel aimed at improving school safety planning and reporting information to NICS.

We must not miss this opportunity to implement these initiatives nationwide, and to take concrete steps to ensure the safety of our kids.

I recognize that there is no panacea to end the sad phenomenon of school violence. The recent tragedies should prompt us to respond in realistic and meaningful ways when we are presented with such challenges. I hope the Senate can promptly move this bill forward to invest in the safety of our students and better support law enforcement officers across the country.

Mr. President, I apologize to my colleagues for my voice. We seem to have enough matter in the air to affect it. I look forward to the fact that in a couple of days I will be in Vermont where the air is much nicer, although I do love this area. I once had a longtime resident of Washington, DC, sitting on the front lawn of my farm in Middlesex, VT, looking out over miles of valleys surrounded by mountains. You don't see another person, just this magnificent view. It was a clear day.

I said to him: There, what do you think of that view?

He said: I don't like it.

I said: What do you mean? You came here from Washington, and you are seeing one of the most beautiful views anywhere in the State of Vermont, and you don't like it? What don't you like about it?

He said: I don't trust air that I cannot see.

Well, we cannot see the air there, but, boy, we can breathe it. I enjoy that.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania is recognized.

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I yield 5 minutes to the Senator from Mississippi and then 5 minutes to the Senator from Texas.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi is recognized.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I will yield 15 minutes to the Senator from Maryland following that.

#### NOMINATION OF JUDGE SHARION AYCOCK

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I am pleased to support the nomination of Judge Sharion Aycock and recommend her confirmation as U.S. district court judge for the Northern District of Mississippi.

Judge Aycock is exceptionally well qualified by reason of her education,

her experience, and her temperament to serve as a U.S. district court judge. As a lawyer, she was highly respected, and as a judge on our State court that has general, civil, and criminal jurisdiction, she has served with competence and distinction and with a keen sense of fairness. She will reflect great credit on the Federal judiciary, in my opinion. Judge Aycock has earned the respect and admiration of her fellow lawyers, as well as the judges who have worked with her. She has been selected to serve in many professional and community positions of trust and responsibility.

The American Bar Association's Standing Committee on the Federal Judiciary unanimously concluded that she is "well qualified" to serve as a Federal district court judge. This is the highest rating a judicial nominee can receive from the American Bar Association.

She was born and raised in the northeast Mississippi town of Tremont in Itawamba County, where she graduated from high school with honors and was elected President of the student body.

She also graduated with honors from Mississippi State University in 1977, studying economics and political science. While a student there, she was selected for membership in Phi Kappa Phi, the Nation's oldest and largest honor society. She was inducted into the Mississippi State University Hall of Fame, the university's highest undergraduate honor. She also served as President of her social sorority.

She received her law degree from the Mississippi College School of Law, where she served as co-editor in chief of the Law Review and as treasurer of the Student Body Association. She graduated second out of a class of 146 and was admitted to practice law by the Mississippi State Bar.

After graduating from law school, Ms. Aycock returned to Itawamba County and started her own practice in 1984. During her 12 years of law practice, she represented the Itawamba County Board of Supervisors and the Board of Education, the town of Tremont, the city of Fulton, and the Northeast Mississippi Natural Gas District. She served as the Itawamba County prosecuting attorney from 1984 to 1992 and was honored as the State's most distinguished juvenile justice professional.

Judge Aycock was elected circuit court judge for the First Circuit Court District of Mississippi in November 2002. She was unopposed when she sought reelection 4 years later, in November 2006.

Except for statewide elected officials, trial judges have the largest geographic areas of responsibility in our State under their jurisdiction. The fact that she was unopposed when she was reelected in 2006 means that many people respected and appreciated the tremendous job she had done as a trial judge. Her court's docket is one of the busiest in the State of Mississippi, and