

**Prepared Opening Statement of Senator Chuck Grassley of Iowa**  
**Ranking Member, Senate Judiciary Committee**  
**Executive Business Meeting**  
**May 26, 2022**

Before discussing the nominations on the agenda, I want to again address the tragedy in Texas. My colleagues have said they want to do something to prevent future mass shootings. I'm going to continue working hard to pass my EAGLES Act, which would give school officials and others the training they need to recognize the signs of a person mobilizing to violence, and intervene.

I also want to take a moment to speak about the bill I've worked on with Senators Cruz and Tillis, the *Protecting Communities and Preserving the Second Amendment Act*. This bill would help block dangerous people from getting guns by ensuring that agencies and institutions submit accurate records to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System, or NICS. The bill would also create two new criminal offenses targeting straw purchases of firearms. And it would strengthen penalties for gun trafficking and other "lying and buying" offenses. These new penalties give law enforcement the tools they need to prosecute and punish individuals who commit these heinous crimes.

I've invited my Democratic colleagues to talk with me about this bill in the past but haven't gotten a response. The offer is still open. It will make a real difference in combatting mass shootings.

We have five judicial nominees up for a vote today. I'll be supporting Judge Childs. She's said she doesn't believe in a "living constitution." She's worked on administrative law at both the state and federal level, and that's a uniquely large part of the D.C. Circuit's docket. Senator Graham has been a strong supporter of her, and she's been a district court judge in his home state for more than a decade.

Given her administrative law experience and Senator Graham's support, I think she's as good a pick as we could expect from this administration for the D.C. Circuit. I'll also say that I was more likely to support her after seeing how dishonest liberal dark money groups were in campaigning against her.

I'll be opposing the other nominees. Three are some of the most activist judicial nominees we've seen.

Nancy Abudu decided to work at SPLC in 2019 despite years of broad public concern about the way the organization operates. At her hearing, she repeatedly refused to condemn the SPLC labeling mainstream groups that it disagrees with as "hate groups." She claimed that she had nothing to do with the SPLC's defamatory "hate groups" label. But she told the committee that she was responsible for overseeing special litigation, including against hate groups.

She also claimed to oversee all of the organization's "legal programmatic work." The SPLC is involved in a case about a state law regulating transgender medical treatment for children. The district courts of Alabama are looking into whether SPLC engaged in "judge shopping." I don't know of another nominee that we've voted on when we knew a court was investigating possible misconduct. Conveniently, the nominee says she has no involvement in "the filing of complaints, the briefing, and any oral arguments." That's the entire case, so it's not clear what she means when she says she oversees cases.

Ms. Choudhury has made numerous statements critical of law enforcement. At her hearing, she told Senator Kennedy that she'd said that police killing unarmed black men "happens every day" in America. When police groups strongly opposed her, she had a confirmation conversion. After her hearing, she claimed she never made the statement. But she never explained why she thought it sounded like something she'd say.

I also wanted to briefly address Natasha Merle's nomination. She's claimed that voter ID and the border wall are "things that support and are grounded in white supremacy." That's an outrageous claim against millions of Americans. Voter ID is supported by 80% of Americans. She also said that deploying federal law enforcement personnel to protect the federal courthouse in Portland in July 2020 was "completely unprovoked and unnecessary." She wrote that ridiculous statement after rioters had been targeting the courthouse for two weeks. Rioters even threw balloons full of accelerant into the courthouse and tried to light it on fire with large, commercial fireworks. They knew federal agents were in the building at the time.

With their activist records, I don't believe these nominees will respect the rule of law and follow the law as written. So I'll be opposing each of them.

I also want to comment on the bill on the markup today, the *Public Safety Officer Support Act*. The mental health of our law enforcement officers and first responders is vital to their ability to continue to protect and serve. That is why I've introduced legislation focusing on this issue, like the *Fighting PTSD Act*, which advanced out of this committee last week to help law enforcement and first responders get the help they need for the trauma they experience on the job.

However, I've heard from an important constituency of public safety officers that the *Public Safety Officer Support Act* contains some provisions that concern them. I'd like to continue working with the bill's sponsors to see if we can get all public safety officers comfortable with the bill. I'm also concerned not only that this bill lacks a CBO score, but also that it may price well into the billions. We should know exactly what we're voting for.

I'll vote to advance the bill today, but it appears there may still be some work to do in order to get it through the Senate.