

Prepared Opening Remarks of Senator Chuck Grassley of Iowa
Ranking Member, Senate Judiciary Committee
Executive Business Meeting
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Today we are voting on three nominees. I will support two of them: Judge Griggsby for the District of Maryland and Ronald Davis to be head of the Marshal Service. I think both of them are well qualified for these positions.

The third nominee, Judge Boardman, I will oppose. Judge Boardman is currently a Magistrate Judge in the District of Maryland and before that spent most of her career as a federal defender in Maryland. As I've said many times, we need to carefully scrutinize these federal-defender nominees because the left seems to think they'll rule a certain way.

But beyond that, as I mentioned at the hearing yesterday, I have concerns that nominees whose careers are so defined only by criminal-defense may not be up to the task of serving as a generalist judge.

Unfortunately, I think Judge Boardman falls into that trap. At her hearing she was asked basic questions about constitutional law by Senator Kennedy—as were many, many nominees under President Trump. I don't think she passed Professor Kennedy's exam.

I have no doubt she'd have excelled at questions of criminal procedure, but that's only one part of a judge's job—along with basic constitutional law. Unlike circuit judges, district judges don't always have the luxury of cleaning up their legal views in writing after the fact. I'm therefore a 'no' on Judge Boardman.

We're also advancing two bills that were held over: the *Prohibiting Punishment of Acquitted Conduct Act* and the *First Step Implementation Act*. I'm a cosponsor of these bills. They're specific and tailored reforms. They're bipartisan. And they seek to strike the balance in our criminal justice system of promoting public safety while ensuring fairness.

With that in mind, I want to talk about an important consideration with these bills: violent crime. There's an unfortunate trend of increased violent crime across the country. Iowa isn't immune to this. I don't take this issue lightly. As recent as last week, I wrote a letter to the Attorney General asking how he plans to combat violent crime while simultaneously moving funds away from law enforcement, which he said he was doing.

So I want all my colleagues to know violent crime is on my mind as we consider these bills. In drafting and reviewing them, I sought to strike the balance of protecting public safety but being smart and fair. I think these bills do that. But my door is always open to discuss with any colleague how we can best promote justice and fight violent crime. That's why I welcome the opportunity to work with my colleagues on further refinements, if necessary, before the bills advance to the Senate floor. We should be careful and intentional; respectful and open-minded. And in the context of criminal justice bills, we must be balanced.

Thank you Chairman Durbin for bringing these bills forward and leading the effort to discuss their merits and possible amendments.