

**Prepared Statement by Senator Chuck Grassley of Iowa
Chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee
Hearing on Nomination of Senator Jeff Sessions
to be United States Attorney General
January 11, 2017**

Good morning. I want to welcome everyone back for the second day of the hearing on Senator Sessions's nomination to be Attorney General. As I said yesterday, I want everyone to be able to watch the hearing without obstruction. If people stand up and block the view of those behind them, or speak out of turn, it's not fair or considerate to others, so officers will remove those individuals.

Before we begin with opening statements, I wanted to go over a couple housekeeping items and explain how we're going to proceed today.

Senator Feinstein and I will give our opening statements. Then we'll turn to our witnesses for their opening statements. Following their statements, we'll begin with the first round of questions in which each Senator will have seven minutes. After we finish asking questions of the first panel, we'll turn to the final panel for their testimony.

With that I'll turn to my opening statement.

Yesterday, we met here from 9:30 a.m. until after 8pm, so that every Senator, both Democrats and Republicans, could ask Senator Sessions as many questions as they wanted to. I appreciated everyone's cooperation yesterday as we pressed through the day.

We heard from Senators Shelby and Collins who gave their strong endorsement for Senator Sessions. Their introductions described Senator Sessions' extensive experience, outstanding qualifications, and character.

I also want to note that yesterday, Senator Feinstein participated in her first nominations hearing as the Ranking Member. I'm looking forward to working with her in her new capacity.

In her opening statement yesterday Ranking Member Feinstein correctly observed, "today we are not being asked to evaluate him as a Senator. We are being asked to evaluate him for the attorney general of the United States—the chief law enforcement for the largest and best democracy in the world." She continued, "As attorney general, his job will not be to advocate for his beliefs. Rather, the job of the attorney general is to enforce federal law, even if he voted against a law, even if he spoke against it before it passed, even if he disagrees with the precedent saying that the law is constitutional." She concluded, "this hearing must determine whether this Senator will enforce the laws that he voted against."

And yesterday, through ten and a half hours of testimony, we got a clear and unequivocal answer to this threshold question.

He was asked repeatedly, if he would enforce the law, even if he disagreed with it as a policy matter.

Time and time again, Senator Sessions reaffirmed his commitment to this fundamental principle. As Attorney General of the United States his solemn duties are to the Constitution, and to enforce the laws duly enacted.

His fundamental commitment to the rule of law emerged as a central theme in our discussion yesterday.

And as I made clear in my opening statement, that's what I believe the Department desperately needs.

Yesterday's testimony further convinced me that Senator Sessions is the right choice to serve as our Nation's chief law enforcement officer at this critical time. We know that he is very well qualified for the position, having served as a prosecutor and as a lawmaker over three decades in public service.

We all know Senator Sessions will always be upfront with you. When he says he's going to do something, he will do it.

Senator Sessions will be an independent Attorney General, and he will enforce the law.

That's the bottom line.

With that I'll turn to the Ranking Member.