

**Prepared Statement by Senator Chuck Grassley of Iowa
Chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee
Executive Business Meeting
March 1, 2018**

Today, we have a number of nominees on the agenda. Five judicial nominees are on the agenda for the first time. They are:

- Joel Carson, 10th Circuit
- Colm Connolly, District of Delaware
- William Jung [JU-NG], Middle District of Florida
- Maryellen Noreika [NO-RAKE-A], District of Delaware
- Ryan Holte, Federal Claims

The minority has requested they be held over, so these five nominees are held over this week.

There is also one Administrative Conference nominee, one US Attorney nominee, and three US Marshal nominees on today's agenda.

There's a request that we hold over the Administrative Conference nominee, so he will be held over. We will vote on the US Attorney nominee and the 3 US Marshal nominees.

I would also like to comment on the tragedy that occurred in Parkland, Florida. The tragedy was devastating to all of us and to every American.

Schools should be refuges of learning, freedom, and peace, not a setting for violent crime.

Events like this require that we come together in a clear and bipartisan manner and find a way forward. There is a tendency among Republicans and Democrats on gun policy to hold out for legislation favored by groups on the extremes of the ideological spectrum. We appear to be in a unique moment where there is a real opportunity to work together on legislation that can advance a common cause: a safer and more civil society.

This morning I met with Senator Feinstein and Senator Cornyn to discuss issues where we can concentrate our efforts.

I believe we should work to protect constitutional rights and keep guns out of the hands of dangerous persons.

To this end, there have been a number of legislative proposals. This includes the STOP School Violence Act – which I am cosponsoring – and I thank Senator Hatch for his hard work on this bill.

This act reauthorizes the Secure Our Schools Act to offer Department of Justice grants to states to help our schools implement proven, evidence-based programs that stop school violence before it happens.

It will also provide grants to schools looking to improve their infrastructure to prevent and deter potential school shooters.

I will note that in 2013 I introduced an amendment with Senator Cruz that authorized \$300 million to make schools safer and improved the background check system. That amendment had the bipartisan support of more than half of the Senate, but failed because of lack of Democratic support.

Grassley-Cruz could have made a real difference and prevented some of these mass shootings. Instead, it failed because the Senate failed to come together for the good of the country. Hopefully that won't be repeated.

Another proposed bill that would look to keep firearms out of the hands of dangerous people is the Fix NICS bill.

A sad truth is that federal agencies and state governments do not always upload relevant information to the NICS database. This has had disastrous and tragic consequences, as we saw in the Sutherland Springs shooting.

The Fix NICS Act would require federal agencies to report this information and hold accountable those that do not. It would also provide resources to the states to increase their reporting.

I also support the ATF's effort to issue a regulation to ban bump stocks. If that effort proves unsuccessful, I'm also willing to consider a legislative ban.

These are legislative efforts that will prevent mass gun violence and make our country safer.

In addition to legislation, this committee has an important oversight role to play. The great tragedy of the Parkland shooting is that it was preventable. The FBI and local law enforcement failed to act on credible tips that should have neutralized the killer and gotten him help.

At my direction, the FBI and social media companies like Google and Facebook are briefing committee staff on their response to warnings about the shooter's behavior.

It has been clear from these briefings that the systems designed to prevent troubled individuals like the Parkland Shooter from engaging in violent acts failed miserably.

Government must be held accountable for its mistakes. It is also clear that private companies can do more to prevent future mass shootings by identifying threatening content and warning law enforcement officials.

To that end, we will be holding an oversight hearing on the shooting and school safety on March 14, 2018.