

**Prepared Statement by Senator Chuck Grassley of Iowa
Chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee
Survivors' Bill of Rights: Implementation and Next Steps
June 26, 2018**

Good morning. Today our Committee will focus on an issue of enormous importance: ensuring that victims of sexual violence are fairly treated in the criminal justice system.

Two years ago, we made important progress in this area, by incorporating a package of new rights for victims of sexual violence in the federal criminal code. By law, rape victims in federal cases now have the right to have their sexual assault evidence preserved for a specified period, to be notified before the evidence is destroyed by law enforcement, and to receive the results of their forensic exam.

Today we will review the implementation of that new law, known as the Survivors' Bill of Rights. We'll also explore additional ways to encourage more victims of sexual violence to come forward and report the crime to the authorities.

I want to welcome back Amanda Nguyen to this Committee. I introduced a package of survivors' rights as an amendment to a bill before this Committee in 2016, at Amanda's urging. After working closely with Amanda on multiple drafts of that legislation, the Judiciary Committee unanimously approved these rights as an amendment to the Adam Walsh Reauthorization Act of 2016. The Senate then approved the legislation, 89 to zero, before the House followed suit with similar legislation some weeks later. The President signed the Survivors' Bill of Rights in 2016.

But we still need to do more to fully understand the reasons why less than half of rape survivors ever come forward and report the crime. Some victim advocates argue that our criminal justice system re-victimizes survivors. Others maintain that the failure to report is due to fear of reprisal, a desire to keep the crime a secret from others or a perception that the police cannot help. I hope that both Amanda as well as Terry Crews, who have bravely come forward to share their experiences, can help shed more light on this issue through their testimony today.

I intend to advance additional legislation to further promote crime victims' rights. More crime victims should receive notice of mechanisms for enforcing their rights under federal law, for example. We also need to ensure that Justice Department employees receive training on victims' rights. And, as suggested by the Government Accountability Office, we could take additional steps to improve the collection of victim restitution.

Finally, I look forward to hearing from the National Institute of Justice, which convened a working group to develop best practices for collecting and preserving evidence in sexual assault cases. The 35 recommendations developed by this working group were the product of about two years of work. They include suggested ways to better support rape victims throughout the criminal justice process. That's of vital importance, because research suggests that rapists typically strikes multiple times before being apprehended. I'd like to thank Dr. Howard Spivak of

NIJ, the lead author of the report containing these recommendations, for sharing his expertise with us.

In closing, I hope that today's hearing will help us better understand two things: first, the impact that the Survivors' Bill of Rights has had. And second, what more we can do to better promote justice for victims in the criminal justice system.