

**Prepared Statement by Senator Chuck Grassley of Iowa
Chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee
Executive Business Meeting
November 16, 2017**

Good morning. We have a number of nominees on today's agenda for the first time and the Minority has requested that they be held over. They are:

- Steve Grasz, 8th Circuit
- Terry Doughty, Western District of Louisiana
- Terry Moorner, Southern District of Alabama
- Mark Norris, Western District of Tennessee

There are also two US Attorney nominees on today's agenda on whom we'll vote as well as one piece of legislation.

I'll speak more in depth on the nominees next markup when we actually vote on their nominations, but I'll note that the American Bar Association (ABA) testified before the Committee yesterday regarding the surprising "Not Qualified" rating they gave Mr. Grasz.

In both written and oral testimony, the Committee wasn't given a lot of specifics about how the ABA evaluators reached their decision regarding their rating except to say that it was based on "peer review" interviews and that "many" of Mr. Grasz's colleagues said he was biased and wouldn't be able to set aside his personal policy preferences and follow precedent if he were to be confirmed.

Of course, the ABA doesn't share the names of those who said this because they claim it allows for the interviewees to be more candid about a nominee.

This certainly may be true. But it's also true that there is another particular danger in giving too much power to testimony that comes from folks who know they won't ever be held accountable for their words or accusations. So, the evaluators based their decisions to not recommend Mr. Grasz on their belief that he couldn't separate his personal beliefs from how he'd rule as a judge.

Even Senator Feinstein yesterday said this was a subjective standard.

Again, I'll have more to say about this particular nominee and the ABA evaluation process next time, but I wanted to note that they did testify on this nomination.

Today, we have Kevin and Avonte's Law of 2017, S. 2070, on the agenda. I want to thank Senators Klobuchar, Tillis, Schumer, Burr, Durbin, and Coons for their cosponsorship of this measure, which last July passed the full Senate by voice vote.

The House passed a related companion bill in December, but we ran out of time before the 114th Congress adjourned to resolve differences between the two chambers' versions. This year, however, Congressman Smith and I introduced the same bill text in both chambers on the same day.

Our bill would update and extend a Justice Department program known as the Missing Alzheimer's Disease Patient Alert Program. That program reportedly had a high success rate in locating missing individuals who enrolled in it.

We've retitled the program and changed it to support not just people with dementia but also children with developmental disabilities. It allows Justice Department grants to be used for education programs to help prevent wandering by these individuals and for technology to reunite caregivers with missing family members.

For example, because police often are the first people to respond when a child goes missing, the bill will make resources available to equip first responders with the training necessary to better prevent and respond to these cases. These activities will help save lives and conserve police resources.

The measure's entitled "Kevin and Avonte's Law" in honor of two young, autistic boys who wandered away from their caretakers and drowned. One of the two, Kevin Curtis Wills, jumped into Raccoon River near his hometown in Jefferson, Iowa, at the age of nine. Research suggests that up to half of autistic children wander, and those who do are strongly attracted to bodies of water, often with similarly tragic results.

We've received endorsement letters from the Alzheimer's Association, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, Autism Speaks, the Autism Safety Coalition, the Arc, and the National Down Syndrome Society, among many others. I seek unanimous consent to include those in the Record.

I'll now turn to Senator Feinstein for her remarks.