

Prepared Statement by U.S. Senator Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa)  
Ranking Member, Senate Judiciary Committee  
Executive Business Meeting  
Thursday, November 4, 2021

Today we have six judicial nominees, five U.S. Attorney nominees, and two bills on the agenda. We'd like the judicial nominees and S. 2629 held over since they're on the agenda for the first time.

Let me say a few words about S. 2342, the *Ending Forced Arbitration of Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Act*.

One of my top priorities is to protect victims of sexual assault and harassment. I was a supporter of the original *Violence Against Women Act* (VAWA) in 1994, and I voted to reauthorize it multiple times. This year, I cosponsored a legislative fix which ensures that the Crime Victims Fund will receive over \$1 billion in additional deposits every year. I've worked on bills to enhance the rights of survivors in the criminal justice system.

In 2018, I led this committee's oversight of the FBI investigation of Larry Nassar. I worked with Senator Feinstein on legislation to impose a mandatory reporting requirement on coaches and instructors who witness abuse of young athletes.

I've been a consistent advocate for victims to have their day in court. S. 2342 addresses an important issue: preventing employers from sweeping sexual assault or sexual harassment claims under the rug by enforcing mandatory arbitration agreements.

I'm voting for the bill. All victims of sexual assault or sexual harassment deserve to have their voices heard and to have the option to go to court if they so choose. Mandatory arbitration shouldn't be enforceable in these cases. Under the bill, individuals who want to arbitrate their claims will still be able to do so.

The bill, as originally drafted, included an exemption for union negotiated employment agreements. In other words, if you're a union member and you're sexually assaulted, your right to go to court may be negotiated away by your union.

I'm pleased that the bill sponsors listened to our concerns about how the exemption weakened the legislation. The managers' amendment strikes that provision. Now, S. 2342 applies to *all* victims of sexual assault and harassment. I'd like to thank the Chairman and Senator Graham for their efforts on this bill.

I'm voting for S. 2342 to support the victims of sexual assault and sexual harassment. They should have a choice to either go to court or arbitration.

