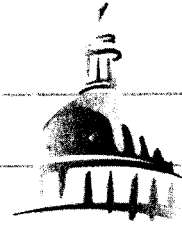


U.S. Senator Chuck Grassley • Iowa

Ranking Member • Senate Judiciary Committee

<http://grassley.senate.gov>



Prepared Statement of Ranking Member Chuck Grassley
Senate Committee on the Judiciary
Subcommittee on Crime and Terrorism
“Combating International Organized Crime: Evaluating Current
Authorities, Tools and Resources”
Tuesday, November 1, 2011

Yesterday Assistant Attorney General Breuer made a public statement regarding an ATF case known as Operation Wide Receiver. In the statement, he said:

“When the allegations related to Operation Fast and Furious became public earlier this year, the leadership of ATF and the U.S. Attorney’s Office in Arizona repeatedly assured individuals in the Criminal Division and the leadership of the Department of Justice that those allegations were not true.”

The Justice Department officially assured me that the allegations were not true. On February 4, 2011, the Department sent me a letter that read: “ATF makes every effort to interdict weapons that have been purchased illegally and prevent their transportation to Mexico.” However, as Mr. Breuer’s admissions in yesterday’s statement made clear, the Department’s claim was not true.

According to documents received last night, Mr. Breuer’s deputy asked the most basic question of Wide Receiver that anyone should have known to ask of Fast and Furious upon becoming aware of the number of guns involved: “[D]id ATF allow the guns to walk, or did ATF learn about the volume of guns after the FFL began cooperating?” In Operation Wide Receiver, around 300 guns were walked by ATF. In Fast and Furious, just 5 of the straw buyers were allowed to purchase nearly 1000 guns while an FFL was cooperating, while being watched by ATF, while their phone calls were being monitored by a wiretap approved by Justice Department headquarters, and while a prosecutor from headquarters was assigned to the case.

The headquarters prosecutor was assigned to Fast and Furious because of an email that ATF Director Ken Melson sent Mr. Breuer in December 2009. Director Melson requested an attorney to work with ATF Phoenix Field Office on a case. Mr. Breuer said it was a “terrific idea” and assigned someone from the Gang Unit by March 2010.

That same month, Deputy Attorney General Gary Grindler—now the Attorney General’s Chief of Staff—was being briefed in person on investigative details of Fast and Furious. The briefing included a very detailed PowerPoint presentation from ATF, and Mr. Grindler made a number of hand-written notes on a print-out of the PowerPoint. The PowerPoint included such details as the fact that by March 12, one straw buyer had already bought as many guns as were ever walked in Wide Receiver. The PowerPoint also included a map of where in Mexico guns were being recovered and the amount of money each straw buyer had spent on the gun purchases, most in the tens of thousands of dollars, along with a note from Mr. Grindler saying “all cash.”

The American people—and especially the family of murdered Border Patrol Agent Brian Terry—deserve answers from the Justice Department about why they claim they didn’t know gunwalking was occurring in Operation Fast and Furious when the department’s fingerprints are all over it.