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August 31, 2016

Via Electronic Transmission

The Honorable Loretta Lynch
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Attorney General Lynch,

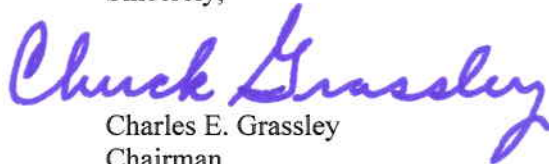
I write in response to an alarming report in *USA Today* yesterday concerning the Department of Justice's failure to implement the Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu National Blue Alert Act of 2015, which was passed by Senate Judiciary Committee and signed by the President in May 2015.¹ The bill, of which I was an original co-sponsor, established a voluntary nationwide system to give police an early warning of threats against police officers, similar to Amber Alerts for missing children.

As you are aware, police officers are facing a heightened threat environment, as exemplified by the tragic ambush of officers Ramos and Liu in New York City, as well as the more recent shootings of police officers in Dallas and in Baton Rouge. Indeed, this environment was one of the reasons I moved this bipartisan legislation through the Judiciary Committee, and why it was quickly passed by the entire Congress and signed into law. Indeed, the President himself has touted the bill on numerous occasions since he signed it.

Given this backdrop, it is stunning that, according to the report, the administration "has yet to implement any provision" of the law, in part because it took more than a year for the Department of Justice to determine which office would be responsible for implementing it. In addition, the law required that the Justice Department submit a report to Congress by May 19, 2016 concerning the effectiveness and status of Blue Alert plans being developed, but no such report was apparently submitted.

When it comes to protecting the lives of police officers, the Department should be moving with dispatch, as opposed to letting the inertia of the bureaucratic process delay the realization of this important alert system. According to the report, the Justice Department will have an implementation plan for this law within 60 days. But after fifteen months have passed, this still does not suggest that the Department is treating the matter with the required urgency. I request that such a plan be provided to my staff within 30 days, or on or before September 30, 2016. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,


Charles E. Grassley
Chairman

¹ Gregory Korte, *'Blue Alert' Bill, Signed with Fanfare, Now Stalled in Justice Department*, *USA Today*, August 30, 2016.