

**Prepared Statement by Senator Chuck Grassley of Iowa
Chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee
Executive Business Meeting
May 11, 2017**

Today we have one nomination and four bills on the Committee's agenda.

First, I'd note that the nomination of Amul Thapar to be United States Circuit Judge for the Sixth Circuit is on the agenda for the first time. I understand the Minority would like to hold the nomination over, and we'll take up his nomination next week.

Turning to legislation, the first bill is S.139, the Rapid DNA Act of 2017. It is sponsored by Senator Hatch. The Committee reported this bill and the Senate passed it in the last Congress. The bill would establish standards for a new category of DNA samples that can be taken more quickly and then uploaded to our national DNA index.

The second bill is S. 534, the Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse Act of 2017. Senators Feinstein, Collins, and I introduced this bill in March, in response to media reports about sexual abuse of child athletes. It imposes mandatory reporting requirements for the staff at amateur sports facilities across the country. It also extends the statutory period in which victims can file lawsuits against the perpetrators of sex crimes.

The next bill is S. 583, the American Law Enforcement Heroes Act of 2017. This bill is sponsored by Senator Cornyn. The bill would specify that in the COPS program, an allowable use of funds would be to prioritize the hiring and training of veterans.

The final bill is S. 867, the Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act, which is appearing on the agenda for the first time. The bill will be held over, and we will take the matter up at our next exec, which will be held during Police Week.

On a different topic, Mr. Comey testified before the Judiciary Committee last week. Senator Blumenthal asked him whether the FBI had ruled anyone out as a potential target of the investigation of allegations of collusion between the Trump campaign and the Russians. In response, Mr. Comey stated: "Well, I haven't said anything publicly about who we've opened investigations on. I briefed the Chair and Ranking on who those people are."

Mr. Comey was asked if the FBI is investigating the President. He refused to answer. Mr. Comey said he didn't want people to over-interpret his refusal, but that he wasn't going to comment on anyone in particular. He thought it would put him on a slippery slope of having to answer who else is or is not under investigation. That could reveal who is being investigated.

I understand why he took that position, but I don't agree – at least not when it comes to the President and senior government officials. The American people deserve to know if senior government officials are under active criminal or intelligence investigation.

Mr. Comey did brief Ranking Member Feinstein and me on who the targets of the various investigations are. It would not be appropriate for me to reveal those details before the professionals conducting the investigations are ready. So, I will not answer any questions about who are targets of the ongoing Russia investigations. But I will say this: Shortly after Director Comey briefed us, I tweeted that he should be transparent. I said he should tell the public what he told Senator Feinstein and me about whether the FBI is or is not investigating the President.

On Tuesday, the President's letter said that Director Comey told him he was not under investigation. Senator Feinstein and I heard nothing that contradicted the President's statement. Now Mr. Comey is no longer the FBI director. But the FBI should still follow my advice. It should confirm to the public whether it is or is not investigating the President. Because it has failed to make this clear, speculation has run rampant.

The intelligence community said that one of the Russians' goals is to undermine the American public's faith in our democratic institutions. Wild speculation that the FBI is targeting the President in a criminal or intelligence inquiry is not just irresponsible and unfounded. It provides aid and comfort to the Russians and their goal of undermining faith in our democracy.

So, what I suggest is that before this Committee does anything more on this matter, that all the Members get briefed by the FBI on what is actually going on.

Hopefully, that will help temper some of the unsubstantiated statements that have been made.