

Prepared Statement by Senator Chuck Grassley of Iowa
Chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee
Executive Business Meeting
Chairman Chuck Grassley of Iowa
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Today we're going to vote on Judge Thapar's nomination to serve on the Sixth Circuit.

Now before we start, I know there's a lot in the news that we're all rightly interested in. That's why I sent letters yesterday with Ranking Member Feinstein and Senators Graham and Whitehouse asking the FBI and the White House for documents and other materials relating to former FBI Director Comey. We agree that we need these materials and we've already asked for them.

And yesterday the Deputy Attorney General announced that former FBI Director Mueller will serve as special counsel. He's unquestionably accomplished, qualified, and well-suited to the job. He headed the FBI for more than a decade throughout the Bush and Obama administrations. We even extended his term in office. He will be a rigorous and independent investigator.

What we're here to do today is vote on Judge Thapar's nomination. So I'm going to ask that we discuss the judge and vote while we're all here, and then if anyone wants to speak on other topics afterwards, they can do that.

Judge Thapar has served with distinction for a decade on the district court in Kentucky. He's frequently sat with judges of the Sixth Circuit by designation and he'll make a fine colleague for them. Judge Thapar became the first ever South Asian Pacific American federal judge when he took the bench in 2008. And he'll be only the second South Asian Pacific American circuit judge.

He demonstrated his qualifications and capabilities when he testified before us. He answered our questions about his record ably. And he responded to more than a hundred questions for the record. His answers to our questions show that he'll be an independent, fair-minded judge who applies the law to the facts before him. He'll do equal right by rich and poor, the "big guy" and the "little guy." That's what his record on the bench and his testimony before us show.

I've heard some comments from outside groups about Judge Thapar. It's the same chorus we heard during his hearing and during the Supreme Court hearing about little guys, "dark money," and interest groups. Of course it's really ironic that we hear complaints about outside groups from outside groups!

But let me quickly address a couple of the things I've heard. The judge isn't "against the little guy." He applies the law faithfully. At his hearing, we heard a lot about one case where the

judge dismissed some claims against a jail house nurse for mistreating an arrested patient. That's only half the story. The judge applied the law faithfully by dismissing claims that fell short of the legal bar that applied to them.

But he also allowed other claims against the nurse to go forward, because they cleared the legal bars that applied to them. It's not about ruling "for" or "against" the big guy or little guy, it's about faithfully applying the law. And that's what the judge has done.

Then I've heard outside groups complain about a case the judge decided about Kentucky's judicial ethics rules and political campaigns. The judge held that these rules governing a host of issues from political endorsements to campaign contributions inappropriately burdened the candidates' free speech rights. The Sixth Circuit reviewed his opinion. It called the judge's work "thoughtful and thorough" and "agreed with almost all of [his] reasoning and affirm[ed] almost all of [his] judgment."

"Outside groups" and "dark money" are old plays from a worn-out playbook. When you hear the play, it sounds like "outside groups" exist on only one side. But like I said, it's "outside groups" making these complaints about Judge Thapar.

And of course all last year, the groups on the left coordinated to attack me. They followed me all over Iowa, ran commercials and put up billboards. I never heard anyone on the other side complain about all the money these groups spent.

I've said before that there are dozens of advocacy groups who get involved in the nomination process, and there's nothing wrong with that. The fact that we spent our time with Judge Thapar discussing this issue just proves to you that there's nothing in his record to complain about. His decade-long record speaks for itself. He faithfully applies the law and does equal right by rich and poor. He'll make a fine Sixth Circuit judge and I'm pleased to support him.