

**Prepared Statement by Senator Chuck Grassley of Iowa
Chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee
Executive Business Meeting
June 15, 2017**

Good morning. Today we have several nominees on the agenda who are ripe for consideration, as well as two new bills.

We'll vote on two District Court Judges today:

- David Nye for Idaho
- Scott Palk for the Western District of Oklahoma

These nominees were nominated by President Obama last year and we held a hearing for them then. When they were re-nominated by President Trump this year, I gave Members who were not on the Committee last Congress an opportunity to ask them written questions if they wanted to, just like I did in the past for President Obama's nominees.

Both these nominees have strong home state support and were reported out of this Committee last Congress by voice vote.

Also on today's agenda is Francis Cissna to be Director, United States Citizenship and Immigration Services. As this Committee knows from firsthand experience, Francis has a brilliant legal mind and is an undeniable expert in the intricacies of our nation's lawful immigration system.

He has years of experience across both the public and private sectors—including stints in the Department of State and in leadership and management roles in the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Policy. And of course, he served as a detailee on my immigration team.

Now, I've heard some concern that Francis doesn't have enough management experience. But I'm a little confused by this. He's held management roles at DHS for over 8 years. He is truly an immigration expert, and our Committee should appreciate that someone with so much experience and knowledge is taking the helm of USCIS. I'm happy to support his nomination today.

We'll also vote today on the nomination of Vishal Amin, to be the Intellectual Property Enforcement Coordinator—IPEC.

Mr. Amin is a well-qualified nominee, having worked on IP issues at the United States Patent and Trademark Office, Office of the Secretary of Commerce, White House, and most recently the House Judiciary Committee. I'll vote to confirm Mr. Amin.

Stephen Boyd to be Assistant Attorney General for Legislative Affairs is also on today's agenda. Mr. Boyd currently serves as the Chief of Staff for the Office of Legal Policy. We will not vote on his nomination today. There are two reasons.

First, because of the number of overdue pending letter responses from the Justice Department that, unfortunately, to some extent, go back to the unresponsive Obama Administration. At the time of Mr. Boyd's confirmation hearing, the Committee was waiting for more than 15 overdue letter responses. Some of these responses were due more than six months ago in the fall of 2016.

Second, the Department has refused to make Mr. Boyd available for a conversation with the Committee's Oversight and Investigations staff. The Department needs to improve its communications with the Committee Members and staff. It needs to be more serious about answering the mail and questions from Congress. And, of course this is a problem that was even worse under the Obama administration. But, with a new administration, I want to do something about it. I hope that we will resolve these outstanding letter responses soon. So, his nomination is held over.

The first bill on our agenda is the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2017, S. 1312. I introduced this bipartisan bill last week. It would extend a number of the grant programs under the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, which we last reauthorized in 2013. Senators Feinstein, Cornyn, Klobuchar, Hatch, and others are cosponsors. The bill has the support of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, Rights4Girls, Shared Hope International, Polaris, the National District Attorneys Association, the National Criminal Justice Association, among others.

The second bill on our agenda is the Abolish Human Trafficking Act, S. 1311. Senator Cornyn is the lead sponsor. I am a cosponsor, along with Senators Klobuchar, Feinstein, Coons, Hatch, and others. Among its major provisions, this bill would enhance penalties for human traffickers and extend the Domestic Trafficking Victims Fund, which our Committee established in 2015. This bill, too, has widespread support from advocacy organizations.

Both S. 1311 and S. 1312 will be held over.

I'll now turn to Senator Feinstein for her remarks.