

Opening Statement by Senator Chuck Grassley of Iowa
Ranking Member, Senate Judiciary Committee
Executive Business Meeting
June 24, 2021

Today we're reporting out two bills and voting on three nominees. I support the two bills, S. 807, the Cameras in the Courtroom Act of 2021, and S. 818, the Sunshine in the Courtroom Act of 2021.

I am a longstanding proponent of Cameras in the Courtroom. I have been introducing legislation to open up our courtrooms to the American people for over 25 years now. I think if the American people can see how justice is done, they'll have a better appreciation for it. Right now the working of the courts is a remote process that most people don't really know about unless they're lawyers or criminals. These bills would help change that.

The Cameras in the Courtroom Act tells the Supreme Court to televise its hearings absent a vote by a majority of the Court that doing so would violate due process. The Sunshine in the Courtroom Act allows presiding judges to televise their proceedings subject to various protections for security and due process.

There's a lot of talk these days about "reforming" the courts in a way that's just a preemptive threat against the Justices for ruling in ways people may not like. These bills aren't that. These are actual reforms to get actual transparency and improve civic health. I hope we can report out these bills today and bring greater transparency to the workings of the third branch.

We also have three nominees. I am opposing all of them.

Margaret Strickland is a nominee to the District of New Mexico. She is an accomplished criminal-defense attorney, like the vast majority of Biden's nominees. Also like the vast majority of Biden's nominees, Ms. Strickland won't admit to having a judicial philosophy. At the same time, when Ms. Strickland applied to be a district judge, her reaction was apparently to call Chris Kang at Demand Justice for advice. To borrow from one of my Democratic friends, I can't help but notice coincidences sometimes.

If you reach out to Demand Justice about getting a judgeship and you then get the judgeship, the burden is on you to show me that you're a bill of rights judge and not a criminal defense judge. Ms. Strickland unfortunately doesn't satisfy that burden.

I will also be opposing the nomination of Ms. Jaddou to be Director of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. I've long had concerns about DHS's unlawful use of parole authority to grant parole to broad classes of people. In my view, this is a clear violation of the Immigration and Nationality Act's requirement that parole be granted "only on a case-by-case basis."

In my exchange with Ms. Jaddou during her confirmation hearing and in her responses to my questions for the record, she did not appear to share that view. She also refused to rule out the

use of executive authority to bypass Congress and grant parole-in-place to broad classes of people who meet eligibility criteria in bills Congress has either rejected or refused to pass.

As an example, in my questions for the record, I specifically asked Ms. Jaddou if she supported a plan put forward by then-presidential candidate Kamala Harris to bypass Congress and grant parole-in-place to potentially millions of Dreamers who have not been granted a path to legal status by Congress. She refused to answer.

Given ongoing debates in Congress about offering a path to legal status to various groups of people living in the United States illegally, her refusal to endorse any real limits on the executive branch's use of parole authority greatly concerns me.

Lastly, we have David Chipman to be head of the ATF. Ever since Mr. Chipman's nomination was announced I have been hearing from law-abiding gun owners in Iowa who are concerned about his nomination. He hasn't dispelled these concerns during his confirmation process.

Mr. Chipman wants to ban assault weapons but can't seem to explain what an assault weapon is. Mr. Chipman has repeatedly mocked gun owners as rubes and klutzes. Mr. Chipman has been described by CNN as "a fierce advocate for gun control." Indeed there isn't a prominent gun controller he hasn't worked for. This nomination is like a Republican putting the NRA in charge of ATF.

Aside from Mr. Chipman, ATF has also failed to fully respond to my and Senator Johnson's oversight requests regarding the October 2018 Hunter Biden firearm incident. That's when Hunter Biden's gun was discarded near a school. In response, ATF used the Freedom of Information Act as a shield to not produce records. That position shows an incompetent agency in need of reform. But instead of getting a reformer, it's getting an activist.

I will be opposing his nomination.