

**Prepared Statement by Senator Chuck Grassley of Iowa  
Chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee  
Judicial Nominations Hearing  
December 13, 2017**

Welcome everyone, especially the nominees and their families, to today's nominations hearing.

Today, we'll hear from two panels. On the first panel we'll hear from Georgia Court of Appeals Judge Elizabeth Branch, nominated to serve as a Circuit Court Judge on the 11th Circuit.

On the second panel, we'll hear from 5 nominees to District Courts including Magistrate Judge Charles Goodwin, who has been nominated to the Western District of Oklahoma. I mention him specifically because a majority of the American Bar Association's Standing Committee on the Federal Judiciary has rated Judge Goodwin "not qualified." The ABA sent us a letter—characteristically lacking in any detail—that suggests they have questions about Judge Goodwin's work ethic and accessibility.

I reached out to Chief Judge Joe Heaton, who is chief judge of the Western District of Oklahoma and oversees Judge Goodwin, to see if there is any merit to the ABA's claims. Chief Judge Heaton expressed that his "surprise was considerable" when he learned about the ABA's rating. He wrote:

"I have reviewed various indicators of Judge Goodwin's productivity, such as the number of reports and recommendations generated by him and the complexity of the matters assigned to him. I believe his productivity to be fully comparable with that of the other magistrate judges of this court. As a result, I do not think there is a basis for concern with his professional competence. In sum, I disagree with the Standing Committee's conclusion. Based on his service here and his experience as a partner and practicing lawyer with one of Oklahoma's largest law firms, I believe Judge Goodwin is plainly qualified to be a U. S. District Judge."

I would like to enter this letter into the record. I, for one, credit the views of the chief judge of the district court who oversees Judge Goodwin over the ABA's unsourced and unsupported accusations. I look forward to hearing Judge Goodwin's testimony today.