

United States Senate
Committee on Finance



Sen. Chuck Grassley · Iowa
Ranking Member

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Contact: Jill Kozeny, 202/224-1308
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MEMORANDUM

To: Reporters and Editors
Fr: Jill Gerber for Sen. Grassley, 202/224-6522
Re: Finance Committee vetting of nominees
Da: Wednesday, Jan. 13, 2010

A new report from a group called the Partnership for Public Service says the Finance Committee is among the reasons for delays in the approval of President Obama's nominees. The report says, "A number of reasons have been cited for the hold-up of nominees. In some instances, the Senate Finance Committee demanded extensive tax records going back many years and audits that ended up sidetracking some nominees and delaying others for Treasury posts." Sen. Chuck Grassley, ranking member, has been chairman or ranking member of the Finance Committee since January 2001. He's always worked closely with the current chairman and former ranking member, Sen. Max Baucus, in the vetting process. Grassley made the following comment on the committee vetting process.

"The vetting process has been the same since January 2001 and maybe even before that. We ask for the same materials for every nominee. We ask for follow-up materials from some nominees, depending on what comes up. We don't do tax audits. The committee questionnaire includes a few questions about nominees' tax practices over the prior decade, but the main focus is on the last three tax returns that have been filed, which we review. The reason for the tax review is to try to be sure the people enforcing the tax code for the whole country have an appreciation for being in compliance themselves. The vast majority of nominees do. Occasionally a nominee delays giving responses to the committee's questions, or gives responses that generate more questions. That stretches out the vetting process. But it's a myth that the committee is asking harder questions of Obama nominees than prior administration nominees over the last nine years. The fact is, we've seen more and bigger tax-related problems associated with the current administration nominees than we've seen in the past."

The Finance Committee's questionnaire is attached for reference.