

November 16, 2011

Senator Chuck Grassley
135 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Grassley:

After we survived the Tucson shooting in January, where some of us were wounded and some of us lost loved ones, and all of us witnessed a massacre, we decided to do what we can to make sure that kind of tragedy doesn't befall others.

That is why eleven of us traveled from Tucson to Washington this week to meet with members of Congress about how to improve the gun background check system. One of our group, Patricia Maisch -- who helped disarm the shooter in Tucson -- gave heartfelt testimony on this subject before the Senate Subcommittee on Crime and Terrorism. As you know, the room was also filled with more than 50 survivors of gun violence from other states across the nation, including survivors of the Virginia Tech tragedy.

We write to express our profound disappointment with your dismissive and political response to Patricia's testimony, your obvious disregard for the gun violence survivors in the room, and your apparent ignorance of the deadly serious issue we came to discuss with you.

Senator, we think it was inappropriate of you to immediately turn yesterday's hearing into a reason to ask questions about an unrelated inquiry on the controversy known as "Fast & Furious." We were not there to discuss Fast & Furious. The other witnesses were not there to discuss Fast and Furious. Our experiences have nothing to do with Fast and Furious. But you did not seem to care.

Rather than dealing with the subject of the hearing -- how the background check system can be improved to spare other families the pain that we have suffered -- you chose to employ a tactic of callous, cold and calculated distraction.

Senator, were you listening when Patricia told you about Dorothy Morris, Dorwan Stoddard, Phyllis Schneck, the Honorable John Roll of the United States District Court of Arizona, Gabe Zimmerman or Christina-Taylor Green? Nothing you had to say indicated you were. The fact that you were focused on your Blackberry during much of Patricia's testimony suggests you weren't.

It seemed as if, rather than engaging with us, you acted as if we weren't even there.


We hope your fellow senators will give more consideration to Patricia's testimony and our presence -- if not out of respect for our experience, then out of respect for your colleague, Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords who was nearly murdered in January.

We ask that you apologize to the members of our group who lost loved ones in Tucson, and made the effort to come to Washington yesterday, but heard nothing of use from you.

Sincerely,

Colonel (r) Bill Badger 

Nancy Bowman 

Carol Dorushka 

Kenneth Dorushka 

Randy Gardner 

John Maisch 

Patricia Maisch 

Angela Robinson 

Faith Salzgeber 

Roger Salzgeber 

Mavy Stoddard 