
Wednesday, February 16, 2011

Sen. Grassley: Investigate FBI's Botched Anthrax Investigation

U.S. Sen. Grassley: Response to National Academy of Sciences Amerithrax report
2/16/2011

MEMORANDUM

TO: Reporters and Editors RE: Grassley response to National Academy of Sciences Amerithrax report
DA: Tuesday, February 15, 2011

Senator Chuck Grassley released the following statement after a new report from the National Academy of Sciences raises questions about some of the science used to close the Amerithrax investigation. Grassley has conducted oversight of the FBI's handling of the case since 2002.

"For years the FBI has claimed scientific evidence for its conclusion that that anthrax spores found in the letters were linked to the anthrax bacteria found in Dr. Ivins' lab. The National Academy of Sciences report released today shows that the science is not necessarily a slam dunk. There are no more excuses for avoiding an independent review and assessment of how the FBI handled its investigation in the anthrax case."

Background: During a September 17, 2008 Senate Judiciary Committee oversight hearing with FBI Director Robert Mueller, Grassley brought up the need for an independent review of both the science and the investigative work. Here is the text of that portion of the hearing transcript.

"...This is one of the longest and most expensive investigations in FBI history, and there will probably never be a trial. Congress and the American people deserve a complete accounting of the FBI's evidence, not just as selective release of a few documents and a briefing or two. There are many unanswered questions the FBI must address before the public can have confidence in the outcome of the case, and a thorough congressional investigation is needed to ensure that those questions are answered. And I appreciate the Director referring to the National Academy, BUT I would like to also suggest that the National Academy would not be reviewing FBI interview summaries, grand jury testimony, internal investigative memos, other investigative documents. The Academy would only be reviewing the science, not the detective work. And, of course, I believe we need an independent review of both..."