



U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON

Finance

SENATOR CHUCK GRASSLEY, OF IOWA - CHAIRMAN

<http://finance.senate.gov>

MEMORANDUM

TO: Reporters and Editors
FR: Jill Kozeny, for Sen. Grassley, 4-1308
RE: a new GAO report on immigration courts
DA: Tuesday, Sept. 12, 2006

Sen. Chuck Grassley today commented on a new Government Accountability Office (GAO) report on the caseloads of the 53 immigration courts nationwide. Sen. Grassley requested the report as part of ongoing oversight of the immigration system. He is a senior member of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

The independent review by the GAO found that from fiscal years 2002 to 2005 the number of new cases filed in immigration courts outpaced the number of cases completed, despite an increase in the number of judges. The number of court judges grew by 3 percent, cases completed grew by 37 percent, while overall caseload grew by 39 percent. Additionally, during the same period, newly filed cases grew by 44 percent.

The GAO also found inconsistencies in the data used to assess performance in meeting case completion goals and could not verify the validity of explanations for the data inconsistencies because procedures for compiling performance reports have changed over time and only documentation on current procedures is maintained.

The report – GAO-06-771 – will be posted today at www.gao.gov.

Grassley comment:

“It’s obvious that immigration judges are working hard to increase the number of adjudicated cases. It’s important that their efforts are accounted for in an accurate and reliable way. The Justice Department officials who manage the immigration courts need to adopt the recommendations of the Government Accountability Office so that the continued important work of the immigration courts can be assessed in a meaningful way.”