

**From:** Schmalzer, Tracy (SMO)  
**To:** Reich, Steven (ODAG); Axelrod, Matthew (ODAG); Weich, Ron (SMO); Burton, Faith (SMO); Colborn, Paul P (SMO); Wilkinson, Monty (OAG); Ramirez, Monica (ODAG)  
**Sent:** 7/18/2011 4:21:07 PM  
**Subject:** Media Response to Grassley/Issa letter - URGENT

How do folks feel about the below statement from me in response to this:

**DP**

**From:** Ranking Member Grassley (Judiciary-Rep) [mailto:RankingMemberGrassley@judiciary-rep.senate.gov]  
**Sent:** Monday, July 18, 2011 3:36 PM  
**To:** Ranking Member Grassley (Judiciary-Rep)  
**Subject:** Issa, Grassley Press Attorney General Holder with Key Melson Interview Excerpts

July 18, 2011  
202-225-0037

Contact: Becca Watkins (Issa)

Beth Levine (Grassley)

202-224-6197

## **ATF Director: DOJ Response to Fast and Furious Investigation Intended to Protect Political Appointees**

*Chairman Issa and Senator Grassley Press Attorney General Holder with Key Testimony*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Oversight and Government Reform Committee Chairman Darrell Issa and Senate Judiciary Committee Ranking Member Chuck Grassley today pressed Attorney General Eric Holder about the Justice Department’s unsatisfactory responses and lack of cooperation with an investigation into the highly controversial Operation Fast and Furious. A letter sent by the two lead investigators highlighted testimony indicating internal disputes within the Justice Department and a statement from the Director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) that the Justice Department is attempting to protect its political appointees.

“It was very frustrating to all of us, and it appears thoroughly to us that the Department is really trying to figure out a way to push the information away from their political appointees at the Department,” ATF Acting Director Kenneth Melson said of his frustration with the Justice Department’s response to the investigation in a transcribed interview.

“The Department should not be withholding what Mr. Melson described as the ‘smoking gun’ report of investigation or Mr. Melson’s emails regarding the wiretap applications,” wrote Issa and Grassley. “Mr. Melson said he reviewed the affidavits in support of the wiretap applications for the first time after the controversy became public and immediately contacted the Deputy Attorney General’s office to raise concerns about information in them that was inconsistent with the Department’s public denials. The Department should also address the serious questions raised by Mr. Melson’s testimony regarding potential informants for other agencies.”

[Click here for Rep. Issa and Sen. Grassley's letter to Attorney General Holder.](#)

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