

Grassley Launches Inquiry Into Orlando Attack

Tuesday morning, Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) sent letters to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the FBI, seeking details on what federal officials knew about the Islamist shooter at an Orlando, Florida, nightclub who killed 49 and left 53 injured.

Omar Mateen was an American-born citizen whose parents immigrated to the U.S. from Afghanistan. He not only reportedly pledged allegiance to ISIS during the attack, he also was investigated twice by the FBI for allegedly espousing support for terrorist organizations. In his letters, Grassley requested the following information about Mateen:

- his criminal history,
- whether and when he was on terrorist watch lists, and
- whether he was allowed to work as a government contractor, in light of his alleged support for terrorist organizations.

Grassley also asked for records of Mateen's and his family's travel history, as well as the immigration status of his family members. In particular, he asked if any of the murderer's family members had ever sought refugee status in the U.S.

"Orlando Police claimed the attack was 'well-organized and well-prepared,' and reports claim that Omar Mateen pledged allegiance to ISIS in a call to 911," Grassley wrote. "Media reports also allege that Omar Mateen had been a 'person of interest' after making statements supporting several terrorist organizations before, was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in 2013 and 2014, and was additionally on the radar of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

“Omar Mateen’s father, Seddique Mir Mateen, allegedly hosts a program on a California-based satellite Afghan TV station with a pro-Taliban slant. According to reports, he often appears on Facebook wearing a military uniform and declaring himself the leader of a revolutionary sect of the Afghan government.

“For a more thorough understanding of Omar Mateen’s connections to ISIS and what motivated this act of terror, please provide numbered written responses to the following questions no later than, June 17, 2016, and provide knowledgeable staff to brief the Committee no later than the same.”