

UNITED STATES SENATOR • IOWA
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Grassley Seeks Data on Any Missing Guns, Computers at Treasury Department

WASHINGTON – Sen. Chuck Grassley, a leader of the Committee on Finance, today asked the Treasury Department for data on any missing weapons, computers or other items that might compromise public safety.

Grassley's request to the Treasury Department's Inspector General came after disclosures that the Federal Bureau of Investigation is missing hundreds of weapons and laptop computers, including one handgun used in a homicide and at least one laptop that contains classified information. Nearly 450 firearms are missing -- including semiautomatic pistols, revolvers, assault rifles and shotguns. Of that total, 184 weapons had been stolen from agents' cars and homes, one of which was used in a slaying in the South, officials said.

The Treasury Department houses several law enforcement agencies, including the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms; the Customs Service; and the Secret Service.

"I hope the Treasury Department has airtight controls over its weapons and computers," Grassley said. "If not, we need to close any loopholes that would endanger public safety."

The text of Grassley's letter follows.

July 18, 2001

Via Regular Mail and Facsimile: 202-622-2151

The Honorable Jeffrey Rush Jr.
Inspector General
United States Department of the Treasury
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20220

Re: Treasury Loss of Federal Property

Dear Inspector General Rush:

As Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Finance (Committee), I share your commitment to overseeing the Department of the Treasury (Treasury) to ensure that it effectively performs its mission to include managing the government's finances; safeguarding our financial systems, protecting our nation's leaders, and securing a safe America; and continuing to build a strong institution. Recent reports of lost or stolen firearms and computers at the Federal Bureau of Investigation necessitate my asking the Office of Inspector General (OIG) to conduct an assessment of the Treasury's inventory practices regarding its stock of firearms, computers, and other items that might compromise the public's safety, national security or ongoing investigations (collectively referred to as "inventory").

Accordingly, I request that the OIG include in its assessment the following elements:

1. Evaluate whether Treasury's inventory regulations are sufficient to prevent loss or theft of its inventory.
2. Determine what Treasury bureaus are most susceptible to inventory loss or theft and why.
3. Identify any missing or stolen item of Treasury inventory for the past three (3) years, to include that item's description and a brief explanation of the loss.
4. Evaluate Treasury's plan to recoup inventory that cannot be located for the past three (3) years.
5. Recommend methods to improve Treasury's inventory regulations and accounting methods to prevent future loss.

I appreciate your written responses by September 21, 2001.

Sincerely,

Charles E. Grassley

cc (via facsimile: 202-622-0534):
The Honorable Paul H. O'Neill, Secretary, United States Department of the Treasury