

**Prepared Remarks of U.S. Senator Chuck Grassley of Iowa
Chairman, Committee on Finance
Roundtable of Paid Family Leave Working Group
Thursday, June 18, 2020**

Just over a year ago, I announced the formation of a bipartisan Finance Committee working group, with Senator Wyden, to consider the issue of federal family leave policy. This is such an important issue, with so many American couples working outside the home today. The COVID-19 pandemic has only highlighted attention to the issue of family leave.

Before we begin, I want to take this opportunity to thank Senators Bill Cassidy and Maggie Hassan, the group's co-chairs, for their willingness to tackle this issue. I also thank our other four working group members for their contributions to the family leave discussion: Senators Tim Scott, Catherine Cortez Masto, Mike Crapo, Bob Casey, Todd Young, and Sherrod Brown.

Our Committee's working group has a challenging task: to devise a list of family leave principles on which our Committee members can reach bipartisan consensus. My hope is that today's roundtable will help the working group reach agreement on several important threshold questions.

First, to what extent is parental or family leave already available to American workers in the competitive marketplace? Where do gaps in coverage exist, and what can we learn from jurisdictions that already have expanded their family leave policies to close such gaps? Second, if Congress is to legislate further in this area, what eligibility criteria and wage replacement rate should we use, given budget constraints? How expansive should such coverage be? And again, what can we learn from the example of States that already have adopted paid family leave proposals? Finally, is it time for Congress to update the Family and Medical Leave Act to add more worker protections? If so, what might those protections be?

Today, we'll hear not just from our Senate colleagues, but also from several outside presenters on these key issues. I welcome all of our presenters to today's roundtable and thank them for sharing their expertise with us. I also want to welcome the members of our chamber who have agreed to discuss the competing proposals they've championed to make paid family leave more widely available. I look forward to a spirited discussion.

With that, I'll turn to my ranking member for his comments. Thank you.