

## Grassley Office comments on Attorney General Holder's Response to Fast and Furious Controversy

Written by Grassley Press

Tuesday, 11 October 2011 13:28

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Following is a comment from Beth Levine, spokesperson for Ranking Member Grassley, in response to the letter sent to Senators Grassley and Leahy and Congressmen Issa, Smith, Cummings and Conyers from Attorney General Holder.

“The goals of Senator Grassley’s investigation, from the first time whistleblowers brought him the allegations of wrongdoing, has been to find out who approved a stupid program and to make sure it never happened again. He believed he owed those answers to the family of slain Border Patrol Agent Brian Terry, especially since the family wasn’t getting answers from the executive branch. Instead of helping get to the bottom of the disastrous program, the Justice Department stonewalled Senator Grassley’s investigation and denied him access to documents and key personnel. If the Attorney General had come clean with Congress from the beginning instead of having his staff [send false](#) and [misleading responses](#) to Senator Grassley’s letters ( [Jan. 27th letter](#) and [January 31st letter](#) ), then the public discussion of these issues could have been more productive.

“Now, eight months after Senator Grassley personally raised the issue with him, Attorney General Holder has officially admitted that this case involved ‘weapons that should have been interdicted but were not.’ That’s quite a reversal from the Department’s initial denial, which claimed the whistleblower allegations were false and that ‘ATF makes every effort to interdict weapons that have been purchased illegally.’

“Documents provided last week make clear that (1) senior officials discussed whether it would be wise for the head of the Department’s Criminal Division to attend press events given the number of guns that were walked, (2) the Attorney General’s current chief of staff took notes regarding operational details during a presentation on Operation Fast and Furious in March 2010, and (3) the connection between the guns found at Agent Terry’s murder scene and Operation Fast and Furious was immediately briefed up to the Attorney General’s current chief of staff just two days after Agent Terry’s death.

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“These documents raise as many questions as they answer about which senior Department officials knew what about Operation Fast and Furious. In addition to these documents, getting at the truth also requires taking testimony from the key officials involved. The Attorney General’s denials of any personal knowledge will have to be tested against all the evidence as the investigation continues, just as the Department’s initial denials were.”