

Grassley, Sessions Express Concern Over Cost of 9th Circuit Judicial Conference in Maui

Written by Grassley Press

Wednesday, 23 May 2012 07:44

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Monday, May 21, 2012

WASHINGTON — U.S. Sen. Chuck Grassley of Iowa, ranking member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, and U.S. Sen. Jeff Sessions of Alabama, ranking member of the Senate Budget Committee, released a letter today to Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals Chief Judge Alex Kozinski concerning a planned judicial conference in Maui, Hawaii. In their letter, the senators note that the taxpayer-funded conference, scheduled for Aug. 13 to Aug. 16, features opportunities for numerous recreational activities not related to any official judicial business, and that the expense of travel and accommodations will be significant. Grassley and Sessions requested a full reply to their questions no later than June 15.

To view the senators' letter, please [click here](#). Statements from Grassley and Sessions follow:

“Technology is so advanced that people are earning college degrees online and soldiers serving halfway across the world use Skype with their families at home,” Grassley said. “Likewise, a judicial circuit court should be capable of using technology to share information without requiring a trip to an island paradise. It’s especially tone-deaf to plan a pricey conference after the GSA debacle. The taxpayers can’t sustain this kind of spending, and they shouldn’t have to. The court should re-examine whether this is the best use of tax dollars.”

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“This conference is further evidence the federal government is in a state of financial chaos,” Sessions said. “How can anyone in Washington ask for more taxes when this culture of excess continues? Americans struggling to pay their bills are tired of watching the government throw lavish events on the taxpayer dime. They are tired of watching entire sectors of government behave in a fashion totally disconnected from the reality of our perilous financial state. At this time of fiscal crisis, America needs leadership that will restore accountability and ensure a disciplined budget is adopted at last.”

NOTE: As detailed in the senators’ letter, a previous Ninth Circuit conference, also held in Maui, cost taxpayers more than \$1.1 million in travel and accommodation expenses alone. To view information about activities scheduled at this year’s conference, including yoga, surfing lessons, and a Catamaran snorkel trip, please [click here](#) .

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