

Grassley Requests Audio, Video Coverage of Landmark Health Care Case in Supreme Court

Written by Sen Chuck Grassley
Monday, 21 November 2011 15:35

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WASHINGTON – Senator Chuck Grassley has asked Chief Justice John Roberts to provide audio and video coverage of the landmark Supreme Court proceedings of the federal health care reform law. Grassley is the author of legislation that would allow cameras in federal courts. The bipartisan legislation has passed the Senate Judiciary Committee.

“Cameras in federal courtrooms are at the very heart of an open and transparent government. Broadcasting the health care reform law proceedings would not only contribute to the public’s understanding of America’s judicial system, but provide an excellent educational opportunity on a case that has the potential to have a far reaching impact on every American,” Grassley said. “This law is massive in size and scope. Its effect is reverberating throughout America’s economy. The constitutional questions are landmark. The public has a right to hear and see the legal arguments.”

Grassley first introduced the Cameras in the Courtroom legislation in 1999. Since then, the Chief Justice has immediately released audio of oral arguments of compelling cases. The first release came when, at the request of Grassley and others, then Chief Justice William Rehnquist allowed for the release of audio immediately following oral arguments in the Florida election matter in 2000. Since then, Chief Justice John Roberts has released audio recordings the same day of the oral arguments for more than 20 cases, including *Grutter v. Bollinger*, *D.C. v. Heller*, the Guantanamo Cases and the Citizens United Case.

Here is a copy of the text of Grassley’s letter. A copy of the signed letter can be [found here](#) .

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November 15, 2011

The Chief Justice

The Supreme Court of the United States

Washington, DC 20543

Dear Chief Justice Roberts:

I am writing to request that the Supreme Court exercise its discretion to permit television coverage of Supreme Court proceedings when the Court hears arguments in the case of the federal health care reform law. It is my understanding oral arguments will take place in March of next year.

The decision in this case has the potential to reach every American. The law is massive in size and scope. The effect of the law, and the Court's decision, will reverberate throughout the American economy.

The constitutional questions presented in the case are momentous. The public has a right to witness the legal arguments likely to be presented in the case: (1) the constitutionality of the individual mandate; (2) the severability of the individual mandate and whether or not the remainder of the law is valid without the mandate; and (3) the authority of Congress to impose mandatory Medicaid coverage thresholds on states. Given the nature of the topic, everyone in the country would benefit from following the proceedings in this landmark case.

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Modern technology makes televising the proceedings before the Court simple and unobtrusive. A minimal number of cameras in the courtroom, which could be placed to be barely noticeable to all participants, would provide live coverage of what may be one of the most historic and important arguments of our time. Letting the world watch would bolster public confidence in our judicial system and in the decisions of the Court.

Providing live audio and video coverage of the oral arguments will be of great benefit to the Court and to the public. Letting the world watch these historic and important proceedings will bolster confidence in our judicial system and the decisions of the Court.

Sincerely,

Charles E. Grassley

United States Senator