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Letter to the Editor/Op-Ed Piece: What's Wrong with Chuck Grassley
Independent Candidate Michael Luick-Thrams critiques the Senator's "Desperate Tricks"

CEDAR RAPIDS, IA — Last Tuesday I announced that I'm running for the US Senate from Iowa. Ironically, the Cedar Rapids *Gazette* placed the article about my bid next to a larger piece covering Senator Charles Grassley's closed-door breakfast with the ill-fated nominee for the US Supreme Court, Merrick Garland. As I read that article, it reminded me of some of the driving reasons I'm running to unseat Grassley.

First, I don't like being snowed by smoke-and-mirror tactics meant to placate the folks back home—such as a pro-forma meeting with President Obama's political-hot-potato-on-legs. I can only conclude that Chuck agreed to hold a hollow chat solely in response to the grassfire that has ignited back home on the prairie among even Republican supporters who object to the senator's obstructionist role in this farce.

Second, I don't like Grassley's indelible loyalties. Coming to the Senate on the coattails of the "Reagan Revolution" when I was still in high school, Chuck has marched in lockstep with his fellow partisans ever since. Now, instead of representing the majority opinion of not only Americans in general but his Iowa constituents in specific, Grassley proves again that his priority is to a dying party rather than the wishes of the people he was elected to serve. I doubt that the man is as blinded by ideology as some others in the Grand Ol' Party, but he acts the part anyway. If this is so, then his insincerity pall his real sentiment.

Third, Iowa's senior senator is blocking desperately needed consideration of a replacement to break a tie-vote-prone Supreme Court. Those who crafted our government established a Supreme Court with nine justices and empowered the US Senate to assess the President's nominees, then either confirm or reject said nominees. Grassley's intransience embodies how he and his party are blocking forward movement in this country generally. Simply put, Senator Grassley's "number one job" has morphed into him actively finding ways to avoid doing that job—one the people of Iowa chose him to execute.

The GOP's mirror-image party, the Democratic, is scarcely better. In the process of continued, cultivated "gridlock" both parties inhibit rather than offer solutions and a way forward. Their driving motivations remain their partisan self-serving interests and doing anything to preserve power for power's sake, even as the nation continues to drift, unhinged and in slow-motion freefall. This slide must be stopped, now.

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