

S 643

Sunshine in the Courtroom Act of 2017

Congress: 115 (2017–2019, Ended)

Chamber: Senate

Policy Area: Law

Introduced: Mar 15, 2017

Current Status: Read twice and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary. (Sponsor introductory remarks on measure:

Latest Action: Read twice and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary. (Sponsor introductory remarks on measure: CR S1845) (Mar 15, 2017)

Official Text: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/senate-bill/643>

Sponsor

Name: Sen. Grassley, Chuck [R-IA]

Party: Republican • **State:** IA • **Chamber:** Senate

Cosponsors (8 total)

Cosponsor	Party / State	Role	Date Joined
Sen. Blumenthal, Richard [D-CT]	D · CT		Mar 15, 2017
Sen. Cornyn, John [R-TX]	R · TX		Mar 15, 2017
Sen. Durbin, Richard J. [D-IL]	D · IL		Mar 15, 2017
Sen. Franken, Al [D-MN]	D · MN		Mar 15, 2017
Sen. Graham, Lindsey [R-SC]	R · SC		Mar 15, 2017
Sen. Klobuchar, Amy [D-MN]	D · MN		Mar 15, 2017
Sen. Leahy, Patrick J. [D-VT]	D · VT		Mar 15, 2017
Sen. Markey, Edward J. [D-MA]	D · MA		Mar 15, 2017

Committee Activity

Committee	Chamber	Activity	Date
Judiciary Committee	Senate	Referred To	Mar 15, 2017

Subjects & Policy Tags

Policy Area:

Law

Related Bills

No related bills are listed.

Sunshine in the Courtroom Act of 2017

This bill authorizes the presiding judge of a U.S. appellate court or U.S. district court to permit the photographing, electronic recording, broadcasting, or televising to the public of court proceedings over which that judge presides, except when it would constitute a violation of the due process rights of any party.

Upon the request of any witness in a trial proceeding other than a party, a district court must order the face and voice of the witness to be disguised or otherwise obscured to render the witness unrecognizable to the broadcast audience of the trial proceeding. The presiding judge in a trial proceeding must inform each witness who is not a party of the right to make such request.

A presiding judge may obscure the face and voice of an individual if good cause is shown that photographing, electronic recording, broadcasting, or televising such features would threaten the individual's safety, the court's security, the integrity of future or ongoing law enforcement operations, or the interest of justice.

The bill prohibits a presiding judge from permitting the photographing, electronic recording, broadcasting, or televising of any juror in a trial proceeding, or of the jury selection process.

The bill terminates a district court's authority under this bill three years after its enactment.

The Judicial Conference of the United States must promulgate mandatory guidelines that a presiding judge must follow for obscuring certain vulnerable witnesses.

The bill prohibits any audio pickup or broadcast of conferences which occur in a court proceeding between attorneys and their clients, co-counsel of a client, adverse counsel, or counsel and the presiding judge, if the conferences are not part of the official record of the proceedings.

Actions Timeline

- **Mar 15, 2017:** Introduced in Senate
- **Mar 15, 2017:** Read twice and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary. (Sponsor introductory remarks on measure: CR S1845)