



Iowa senators on Mollie Tibbetts death: ‘We cannot allow these tragedies to continue’

John Bowden

August 22, 2018

Iowa's two U.S. senators issued a joint statement on Tuesday offering condolences for the death of Mollie Tibbetts, a University of Iowa student, after police said that a man living illegally in the U.S. had been charged with her murder.

Sens. [Chuck Grassley](#) (R) and [Joni Ernst](#) (R) said in [the statement](#) that they were "deeply saddened" by an announcement from law enforcement that Tibbetts was found dead after a search that lasted more than a month.

The two senators pointed at U.S. immigration laws as being culpable in the death.

“We are deeply saddened that this bright, young woman’s life was cut short. Our heart goes out to the family and friends of Mollie Tibbetts. No family should ever have to endure such a tragedy, especially one that could have been prevented," the two Republicans wrote.

"As [Iowa Gov. Kim] Reynolds said, ‘our immigration system allowed a predator like this to live in our community.’ Too many Iowans have been lost at the hands of criminals who broke our immigration laws. We cannot allow these tragedies to continue,” they added.

Police said Tuesday that Cristhian Bahena Rivera, 24, had been charged with Tibbetts' murder after authorities discovered her remains.

Rivera, who [The Washington Post](#) reported led investigators to the body, could face life in prison if convicted.

The statement from the two senators condemning violence from undocumented immigrants comes despite two studies last year showing that immigrants on average commit less crime than U.S.-born citizens.

One, from the libertarian-leaning Cato Institute, found that "all immigrants are less likely to be incarcerated than natives relative to their shares of the population."

Despite this, President Trump and Republicans have frequently pointed to anecdotal evidence of murders committed by undocumented immigrants to justify tougher border security measures, including Trump's signature call for a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border.