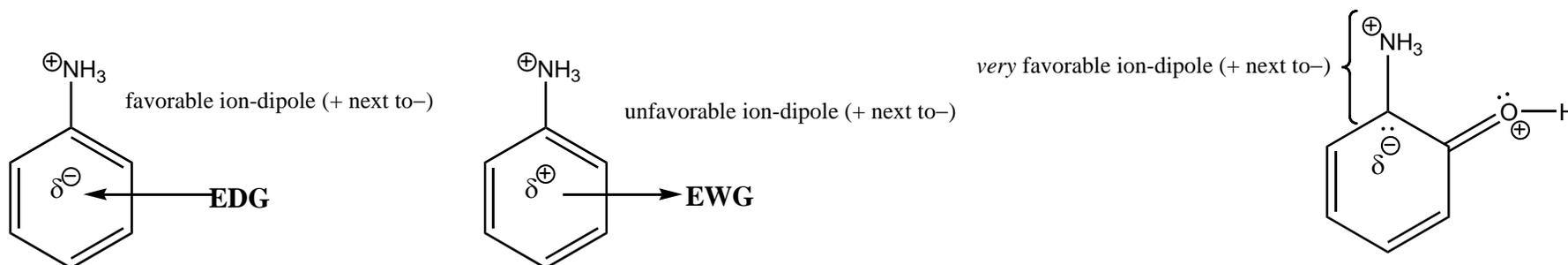


Basic rationale: electron-donating groups (EDG) should stabilize the conjugate acid via favorable ion-dipole interaction, thus causing the parent base to be stronger. Conversely, electron-withdrawing groups (EWG) should de-stabilize the conjugate acids, thus causing the parent bases to be weaker.



CH_3 is EDG by inductive effect, whereas Cl and F are EWG by inductive effect. Since inductive effects drop off with distance, and since F is a stronger EWG than Cl, the order **B**>**D**>**C**>**E** makes sense. The reason for elevating **A** to most basic stems from the powerful electron-releasing power of OH via resonance, especially when located *ortho* or *para* to the amino group (see above). The +R effect of OH greatly outweighs the -I effect.

Another thought: could it be that A forms a zwitter ion, and that the anilium ion is stabilized via favorable intramolecular ion-ion interaction via five-membered ring?

