

PRESS RELEASE

Senate Committee Should Reject Alito, NCJW Says

January 13, 2006, Washington, DC -- The National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) has called on the Senate Judiciary Committee to reject the nomination of Judge Samuel A. Alito, Jr., to succeed retiring Justice Sandra Day O'Connor on the Supreme Court. NCJW President Phyllis Snyder released the following statement:

"It has been deeply troubling to watch the confirmation hearings of Judge Samuel A. Alito, Jr. to the Supreme Court. These proceedings have been little more than an exercise in how to erect a smokescreen around Judge Alito's true views and record.

"Judge Alito attempted to obscure his known record, claiming that he had not advocated that Roe be overruled when in fact he made that very case while working for the Department of Justice. He did not disavow his decision as a judge that would have required a woman to notify her husband before seeking an abortion. And most disturbingly, time and time again he refused to acknowledge Roe v. Wade as settled law. It is no wonder that media reports conclude he left the door open to overturning Roe.

"But it is not just reproductive freedom that is at stake. Judge Alito said nothing that would lessen our fear that he would chip away at essential freedoms such as separation of religion and state, civil rights, and civil liberties.

"Perhaps the most troubling statement made by Judge Alito during the hearings was this: '[I]f I'm confirmed, I'll be myself. I'll be the same person that I was on the Court of Appeals.' In light of his record, that is hardly reassuring.

"On January 16, we celebrate the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., a federal holiday set aside to honor this distinguished champion of racial justice. And on January 22, we celebrate the anniversary of Roe v. Wade, the Supreme Court's affirmation of every woman's right to reproductive freedom. Given these reminders of our hard-won advances toward full equality and liberty, it is doubly disturbing to contemplate the retreat on these rights posed by the possible confirmation of Judge Alito.

"NCJW urges the Senate Judiciary Committee to vote against Judge Alito's confirmation, and to send a powerful message to the entire Senate that this nomination is indeed an extraordinary matter with extraordinary implications for our nation's future."

NCJW is a volunteer organization, inspired by Jewish values, that works to improve the quality of life for women, children, and families and to ensure individual rights and freedoms for all through its network of 90,000 members, supporters, and volunteers nationwide. It has launched BenchMark: NCJW's Campaign to Save Roe, a national effort to educate and mobilize NCJW members, the Jewish community, and friends and allies everywhere to promote a federal bench with judges that support fundamental freedoms, including a woman's right to choose.