

of Lincoln and our veterans when he visited 50 capitals in 50 days.

In 2012, between September 4 and October 17, Mayor Straub drove nearly 15,000 miles to 48 state capitols and flew to two others—Hawaii and Alaska. His momentous journey began in Pennsylvania, and after a small ceremony in Gettysburg outside the home where Lincoln finished writing the Address, he traveled to the state capitol in Harrisburg. Forty-three days later, he concluded his capitol journey in Springfield, Illinois in front of the Lincoln Tomb.

The historic and record breaking trip was no easy task. The trip cost over \$20,000 and added a great many miles to his Lincoln Town Car, homage to the 16th President. Nevertheless, Mayor Straub remained steadfast in his belief that the journey was a great success due to God and the American people saying, “I launched the trip on behalf of God and country, but it was actually God and country that pulled me through. It started more about principles and patriotism, but it was the people who kept me going.”

Mayor Straub has represented his community well and has been a strong voice for the Village of Burr Ridge throughout his time in office. His service to the people of Burr Ridge and to Illinois is truly commendable. It is our hope that the public will continue to benefit from his involvement as a valued member of the community and Mayor of Burr Ridge.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating Mayor Mickey Straub on his historic journey across the United States, and also taking his lead in remembering the spirit of the Gettysburg Address and President Lincoln.

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THE PASSING OF VAINO HASSAN SPENCER

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HON. KAREN BASS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 9, 2017

Ms. BASS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to honor the life and memory of California Appeals Court Justice Vaino Hassan Spencer.

A month after Vaino was born in 1920, women gained the right to vote. She grew up during the Great Depression, started her professional career as a real estate broker, and married fellow broker Lorenzo Spencer in the late 1940s. She embarked on a legal career after graduating from Southwestern Law School in 1952, and practiced for nine years before then-governor Pat Brown appointed her to the Municipal Court bench in 1961, the first African American woman to hold a judgeship in California. She was elevated to the Superior Court in 1976 by then-Governor Jerry Brown, who went on to name her as presiding justice of Division One of the Second Appellate District Court of Appeal in 1980, making her the first Black woman to sit on a California appeals court.

Justice Spencer believed in the concept of “lift as you climb” and worked to create opportunities for women and people of color, especially in the legal profession. She founded the Black Women Lawyers Association of Los Angeles in 1974 to provide support to those already in the profession, and to assist others with scholarships, mentoring and guidance. The very next year, she joined with another

Appeals Court Justice to coordinate efforts in support of women nominated to federal and state supreme courts. That collaboration grew into the National Association of Women Judges, which aimed to increase the number of women in the judiciary and to address the gender bias problems experienced by the few women who were on the bench. President Jimmy Carter met with NAWJ in 1980, having appointed nearly four times the women to the federal bench (38) than had ever been appointed by all of his predecessors.

In remarks later, she said: “We have been warmly greeted [everywhere], and we’ve gotten tremendous support, even from local judges who were openly resentful of our organizing initially. They have come around to be quite supportive. . . .”

She served one of the longest tenures on the bench in California history, retiring in 2007. I salute the life and legacy of Justice Spencer, a legacy of service to the legal profession, to the state of California and to the nation.

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RECOGNIZING THE EXPANSION OF CYPRESS BAPTIST CHURCH

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HON. MIKE JOHNSON

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 9, 2017

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor for me to rise and recognize the Cypress Baptist Church of Benton, Louisiana. For over thirty years, Cypress Baptist has blessed the lives of many in our region. Most recently, God has blessed Cypress Baptist Church with the means to expand their sanctuary to grow their ministry.

Their mission, “to help people come to know Christ and to grow in Christ,” has been modeled by the church’s faithful congregation and their commitment to the Lord is unwavering. Because of their continued stewardship, more and more people are answering the call of God by being baptized and carrying out critical mission work.

Over the past two years the communities of Benton and Bossier City and surrounding areas have come together to help Cypress Baptist in its mission. This church has touched the lives of so many, and is growing exponentially, and it is only fitting that God rewards them with the blessing of more space to carry out their service.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, I am privileged to recognize Cypress Baptist Church and congratulate this pillar of our community on its continued dedication to the Kingdom. Their new sanctuary will be a true blessing to the people of our community. My wife, Kelly and I pray that the Spirit of the Lord continue to bless the congregation of Cypress Baptist Church.

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URGING SENATE TO REJECT NOMINATION OF SEN. JEFF SESSIONS FOR ATTORNEY GENERAL

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HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 9, 2017

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD the text of an op-ed that was

published yesterday in *The Hill*, entitled “When It Comes to Leading the Justice Department, the Senate Should Just Say No To Sen. Sessions,” whose headquarters building is named after Robert F. Kennedy, by Congresswoman SHEILA JACKSON LEE.

[From The Hill, Feb. 8, 2017]

WHEN IT COMES TO LEADING THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT, THE SENATE SHOULD JUST SAY NO TO SESSIONS

(By Sheila Jackson Lee)

Many people think the role of the U.S. Attorney General is simply to be the nation’s chief prosecutor. This seriously understates the responsibility, power, and moral authority of the office. The attorney general is the lawyer for the American people. He is not the president’s lawyer. The Attorney General leads the Department of Justice and justice is his client and his mission. As a member of the President’s Cabinet, it is important that the Attorney General have the trust of the President, but as the “People’s Lawyer,” it is essential that he or she have the trust and confidence of the American people.

The nomination of U.S. Sen. Jefferson Beauregard “Jeff” Sessions III of Alabama to be the next Attorney General of the United States does not inspire the required trust and confidence.

Many of the senator’s supporters, ranging from his Republican colleagues in the Senate to current and former staffers to home state friends and constituents, praise the senator for his modesty and courtesy and manners. The four-term senator and former state and federal prosecutor is, we are told, learned in the law, a person of deep faith, a good man who loves his family, his state, and his country.

We can, as the lawyers say, stipulate that these assertions are true. But that does not make him an appropriate and deserving candidate to be Attorney General of the United States. And that is because the office of Attorney General and the Department of Justice he or she leads is different in a very fundamental way from every other Cabinet department.

Unlike, say, the secretary of Transportation or Commerce or Education, or even the secretary of Defense or State, the Attorney General leads a department that is charged with administering the laws and enforcing the Constitutional guarantees and protections that directly affect every American, all 320 million of us.

Sen. Sessions may be a courtly and courteous Southern gentleman but those qualities, charming and desirable as they may be in a senator, simply are not nearly enough to make one fit to serve as Attorney General of the United States of America.

The position of Attorney General is unique because he or she is the only Cabinet officer who owes a stronger allegiance to the American people than to the president who nominated him or her. This is not true even for the secretaries of State, of Defense, or of the Treasury because while they are all charged with upholding the Constitution, their views regarding the fundamental rights and civil liberties of the American people are not essential to the execution of their governmental duties.

One of the major reasons why the nomination of a sitting four-term senator to be Attorney General is unprecedented is that the role of a senator is to be a partisan advocate for specific legislative outcomes while the role of the Attorney General is to enforce the law. It is dangerous to combine this partisan zeal with the power and discretion vested in the Attorney General to shape legal policy in the federal judiciary. As Attorney General, Sen. Sessions will have an

outsized role in determining which cases will be brought and what position the United States will take in cases decided by the Supreme Court.

An alarming case in point is the Executive Order issued by the president banning Muslims from predominately Muslim countries from entering the United States, which has been denounced by leading national security and foreign policy experts, deemed unconstitutional by scores of law professors and other scholars, sparked peaceful mass demonstrations across the nation, and is opposed by a majority of the American public. The president's ban on Muslims entering the United States was deemed such a clear and egregious violation of the Constitution that then Acting Attorney General Sally Yates announced that she could not, consistent with her oath, defend the order in court.

Sen. Sessions, however, appears not be troubled in the slightest by the cavalier rejection of the principle of religious liberty implicit in the executive order. This is hardly surprising since Sen. Sessions was one of the earliest, most influential, and enthusiastic backers of the Trump presidential campaign and its unconscionable and unconstitutional immigration policies, including the "total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States" announced by candidate Trump in December 2015. As Sen. Sessions told ABC News in May 2016: "I don't think Trump has gone too far, . . . we should have a temporary ban on entry of people into the country from the Muslim world, but that's because we have an ineffective screening process . . . so I think we're moving in the right direction."

As noted by the more than 1,000 State Department employees who have registered their dissent to the executive order, because there has been a virtual absence of terror attacks committed in recent years by Syrian, Iraqi, Irani, Libyan, Somalia, Sudanese, and Yemeni nationals living in the United States, the president's Muslim ban will have little practical effect in improving public safety.

What it will do, however, is despoil our relations with these countries, and much of the Muslim world, which sees the ban, rightly, as religiously-motivated. So instead of strengthening relations with countries that should be our allies and partners in the fight against terrorism, we alienate them, inflame sentiment against the United States among their citizens, and deprive ourselves of vital intelligence and resources needed to fight the root causes of terror.

Adoption of this wrong-headed policy appears to mean to Sen. Sessions that "we're moving in the right direction." That any member of the President's Cabinet could hold these views is very troubling. That such views are held by the person who could be the Attorney General is frightening and disqualifying.

After all, the U.S. Attorney General and Justice Department is not only the instrument of justice but also the living symbol of the Constitution's promise of equal justice under law. The nation's greatest Attorney Generals conveyed this commitment to equal justice by their prior experience, their words and deeds, and their character.

Think Herbert Brownell, Attorney General for Republican President Eisenhower, who oversaw the integration of Little Rock's Central High School. Think Robert Jackson, Attorney General for Democratic President Franklin Roosevelt, who led the prosecution team at the Nazi War Crimes trial in Nuremberg, Germany. Think Robert F. Kennedy, for whom the Main Justice Building is named, bringing to bear the instruments of federal power to protect Mississippi Freedom Riders and to stare down Gov. George Wal-

lace in the successful effort to integrate the University of Alabama. Think Elliott Richardson, Attorney General under Republican President Richard Nixon, who stood for fidelity to the U.S. Constitution and the rule of law in the infamous "Saturday Night Massacre" during the Watergate scandal.

Those who argue the Sessions' nomination is no different than those of Eric Holder and Loretta Lynch are simply wrong. The difference is stark—Eric Holder and Loretta Lynch came to the office of Attorney General as career professionals with no history or record of partisan political advocacy. Unlike Sen. Sessions, neither of them ever served in a legislative body or voted to pass or defeat the legislation the Department of Justice is charged with administering.

Nothing in Sen. Sessions' 70 years inspires any confidence that he possesses the qualities of any of our distinguished former Attorneys General and there is less reason for optimism that he will grow in office.

As a U.S. senator from Alabama, the state from which the infamous Supreme Court decision in *Shelby County v. Holder* originated, Sen. Sessions has failed to play a constructive role in repairing the damage to the Voting Rights Act caused by that decision. He was one of the leading opponents of the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act. Sen. Sessions's record in support of efforts to bring needed reform to the nation's criminal justice system is virtually non-existent. And his Senate voting record and rhetoric has endeared him to white nationalist websites and organizations like Breitbart and Stormfront.

Sen. Sessions was the first federal prosecutor in the country to bring charges against civil rights activists for voter fraud and has called the landmark Voting Rights Act "a piece of intrusive legislation." He is one of the Senate's most hostile opponents of comprehensive immigration reform and was a principal architect of the draconian and incendiary immigration policy advocated by the current president during the 2016 campaign. When it comes to the effort to diversify the federal judiciary in his home state of Alabama and the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals, Sen. Sessions has at best been missing in action.

As Attorney General of the state of Alabama, Sen. Sessions fought to continue practices that harmed schools predominantly attended by African-American students, including leading the fight to uphold the state of Alabama's inequitable school funding mechanism after it had been deemed unconstitutional by the Alabama circuit court. Although Sen. Sessions has publicly taken credit for desegregation efforts in the state of Alabama, there is no evidence of his participation in the desegregation of Alabama schools or any school desegregation lawsuits filed by then-Attorney General Sessions.

Sen. Session's lengthy public record makes it difficult to place much faith in his testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee. After staunchly opposing the Violence Against Women Act, the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," the expansion of anti-hate legislation to include sexual orientation, and fighting the removal of the Confederate flag from public buildings, the long-time opponent of voluntary desegregation in Alabama now claims to be committed to the cause of equal opportunity for all Americans. The proponent of overruling *Roe v. Wade* now presents himself as a defender and protector of a woman's right to choose. The outspoken advocate of unfettered Second Amendment rights now says he can be trusted to enforce the nation's gun violence prevention laws.

Actions speak louder than words, and in the case of Sen. Sessions his 30-year record

of intense opposition on so many critical issues involving civil rights, women's rights, voting rights, criminal justice and immigration reform, and equal educational opportunity is the most compelling and powerful evidence that he should not be confirmed by the Senate to be the nation's 84th Attorney General.

## RECOGNIZING THE POLISH LEGION MOTORCYCLE RIDING CLUB

### HON. BRIAN K. FITZPATRICK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 9, 2017

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Polish Legion Motorcycle Riding Club. Since 2011 this organization has brought together members of our community of all ages who share a passion for riding motorcycles. I would like to give special recognition to the group's President, Szymon Moskal. Millions of citizens in the United States own and ride motorcycles, making ridership an American tradition. The Polish Legion Motorcycle Riding Club continues the proud tradition of motorcycle ridership and enthusiasm found in my district, and across our great nation. It is my privilege to assist them during their trip to our nation's capital.

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

### HON. LUIS V. GUTIÉRREZ

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 9, 2017

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent in the House chamber for roll call vote 85 Tuesday, February 7, 2017. Had I been present, I would have voted "Nay" on roll call vote 85.

## PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL OF RULE SUBMITTED BY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RELATING TO ACCOUNTABILITY AND STATE PLANS

### SPEECH OF

### HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 7, 2017

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to H.J. Res. 57, the CRA Resolution for Disapproval of the Rule Submitted by the Department of Education Relating to Accountability and State Plans under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA).

I oppose this legislation because the regulation Republicans seek to rescind is intended to reduce educational opportunities in student achievement, quality of instruction, college readiness and other important outcomes.

ESEA, the national education law, represents a longstanding commitment to equal opportunity for all students.

ESEA authorizes state-run programs for eligible schools and districts eager to raise the