



## INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared by the American Civil Liberties Union, in preparation for the confirmation hearing of Senator Jefferson Sessions as United States Attorney General on January 10-11, 2017. As a matter of organizational policy, the ACLU does not support or oppose nominees but does provide background information to the relevant government bodies and to the American people. This report provides detailed analysis of Sessions' statements, voting record and policy positions.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sessions was born in Hybart, Alabama, in 1946 and later attended public schools. He graduated from Huntingdon College in 1969 and from the Alabama School of Law in 1973. In addition, he served in the Army Reserves from 1973-1977. Sessions would go on to become a U.S. Attorney in Alabama before entering politics, running for state Attorney General in 1994.

Key findings:

**Political and Judicial Philosophy.** Jeff Sessions is a strident conservative and consistently opposes progressive policies and nominees. As a freshman, Sessions made clear that he supported “weeding out activist judicial nominees” and was critical of President Clinton’s use of pardons. Sessions cheered for the appointment of Chief Justice John Roberts, called out Democrats for “imposing a new political and ideological standard on [judicial] nominees,” and led the case against Sotomayor’s Supreme Court confirmation.

**Abortion.** Sessions has been consistently anti-choice throughout his career. Notably, he defended anti-abortion Judge William Pryor when he was nominated to the Federal Court of Appeals. Moreover, he voted to ban partial birth abortion, maintain the “Mexico City” policy, make it more difficult for women to obtain an abortion, and defund Planned Parenthood.

**Immigration.** Senator Sessions consistently voted to limit immigration, increase funding for border patrol, and expand border barriers. In 2010, he supported legal changes to the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment to insure birthright citizenship was not guaranteed to the children of undocumented immigrants. He even called the notion of birthright citizenship “clearly absurd.” Sessions also defended Trump’s views on birthright citizenship, saying Trump did not advocate for “an extreme position.” The Senator opposed major attempts at comprehensive immigration reform in his Senate career and adamantly opposed President Obama’s executive action on immigration. He called Obama’s executive measures “exceedingly dangerous” and argued that those Senators who supported the president would “stain ... the senate ... [and] constitutional order.” A 2006 comment best sums up Sessions’ view of immigrants, specifically Hispanic immigrants: “It’s true that most of our immigrants, particularly that come from Hispanic countries, are traditional, faithful, and conservative good people . . . The question is how much can the country absorb, what are our needs as a nation . . . It shouldn’t be a political question. It’s what is a good policy for the United States.” He has also supported legislation that would require local officials to “report...any undocumented immigrants to the Department of Homeland Security” and has insisted that it is “a violation of the criminal code to enter our country illegally.”

**Racially Hostile Remarks.** Sessions was denied a federal judgeship in the 1980s in part due to his use of racially insensitive language, his statement that the KKK was “an acceptable” organization, and discriminatory prosecutorial actions taken against voting rights advocates. During his 1986 confirmation hearing, “Sessions called the Voting Right Act a ‘piece of intrusive legislation.’” Session called police bias “just life,” but according to ABC, “Sessions also welcomed ... ‘heightened attention’ on racial profiling, saying more discussions had already ‘improved some of the things that have happened.’” The Senator has been critical of Black Lives Matter, saying the group made “really radical ... absolutely false” statements. ABC also wrote that “Sessions said an ‘experienced law enforcement officer’ in Alabama told him ‘the kinds of problems we’re seeing and the legal actions that have been taken and the marches in protest about police do have the tendency to cause [police]...to stay under the shade tree, and not walk the streets.’” The Senator has also been reluctant to expand the definition of hate crimes. He opposed countless measures that insured equal protection for members of the LGBTQ community. He voted for a constitutional ban on same-sex marriage, against workplace protections for LGBTQ persons, for leaving “don’t ask, don’t tell” in place, and twice against expanding hate crimes to include sexual orientation and gender identity. Despite this opposition, in 2009, he supported an amendment that would expand hate-crimes protections to members of the military.

**Civil Liberties.** Since its inception in 2001, Sessions has supported nearly every iteration of the USA Patriot Act. Sessions has long supported government surveillance efforts including bulk meta data collection. According to Politico, “During the last major surveillance debate in 2015, Sessions warned against anything that could weaken the NSA’s spying capability ... The senator wrote that the USA Freedom Act, which aimed to stop the bulk collection of phone records, ‘would make it vastly more difficult for the NSA to stop a terrorist than it is to stop a tax cheat. Why make it much harder to investigate terrorists than common criminals?’” In 2009, Sessions told then-Attorney General Eric “Holder in one committee hearing on warrantless wiretapping that ‘we’ve exaggerated the extent to which this is somehow violative of our constitution.’” Sessions has also fervently denied allegations of prisoner abuse on the part the U.S. government. In 2005, the Senator said: “This country is not systematically abusing prisoners. We have no policy to do so. And it’s wrong to suggest that. And it puts our soldiers at risk who are in this battle because we sent them there ... [Referring to detainees] Some of them need to be executed.” The Senator also said that he “considered anyone who joined al-Qaeda to be ‘illegal combatants’ involved in a conspiracy to kill Americans, not soldiers who would be recognized prisoners of war under the Geneva Conventions.”

**Criminal Justice.** According to Business Insider, “[t]he choice of Mr. Sessions is seen by some analysts as a signal that conservative social values could now take precedence over states’ rights – especially since recreational pot dispensaries are in mostly ‘blue’ Democratic states . . . Ethan Nadelmann, the executive director of the pro-legalization Drug Policy Alliance, critiqued Sessions as a relic of failed tough-on-crime policies of decades past, calling him ‘a drug war dinosaur.’” Mr. Sessions has also voted against sentencing reform, supported mandatory minimums, and was in favor of trying juveniles as adults. Sessions also supports the death penalty. In 2004, he claimed that grants applied to post-conviction capital offense cases were merely allocated for “anti-death penalty groups for the defense of murderers and terrorists.”

**Sessions and Hate Groups.** Senator Sessions has praised and been praised by hate groups and organizations who openly advocate for discriminatory policies. According to Southern Poverty Law Center, “Alabama Senator Jeff Sessions ... has longstanding and extensive ties to both anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim extremist groups.” For instance, the Family Research Council recently praised Sessions’ nomination in a statement that read: “If there’s one thing we know about Senator Sessions, it’s

that he understands the importance of all of our God-given rights, respects the law, and will be a vital part of restoring our nation to greatness.” Former KKK Grand Wizard David Duke also praised Sessions’ nomination saying: “I really believe that we are on the way ... [Jeff] Sessions as attorney general, I believe, [is one of] the first steps in taking America back. [Trump’s] appointed men who are going to start this process of taking our country back and I tell you, for the first time in years, our side is empowered.” Moreover, Sessions lauded NumbersUSA, an anti-immigrant group, on the Senate floor to celebrate the group’s 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2015.

## **BACKGROUND**

**United States Congress Biographical Directly: Sessions Was “Born In Hybart, Ala., December 24, 1946.”** [United States Congress Biographical Directly, Accessed [11/21/16](#)]

**United States Congress Biographical Directly: Sessions “Attended The Public Schools; Graduated From Huntingdon College, Montgomery 1969.”** [United States Congress Biographical Directly, Accessed [11/21/16](#)]

**United States Congress Biographical Directly: Sessions “Graduated From University Of Alabama School Of Law, Tuscaloosa 1973.”** [United States Congress Biographical Directly, Accessed [11/21/16](#)]

**Sessions “Served In The U.S. Army Reserves, Attaining The Rank Of Captain 1973-1977.”** [United States Congress Biographical Directly, Accessed [11/21/16](#)]

## PRIVATE SECTOR EXPERIENCE

**United States Congress Biographical Directly: Sessions “Engaged In The Practice Of Law In Russellville 1973-1975.”** [United States Congress Biographical Directly, Accessed [11/21/16](#)]

**Sessions “Practiced Law In Mobile 1977-1981.”** [United States Congress Biographical Directly, Accessed [11/21/16](#)]

## POLITICAL EXPERIENCE

**United States Congress Biographical Directly: Sessions Was The “United States Attorney For The Southern District Of Alabama 1981-1993.”** [United States Congress Biographical Directly, Accessed [11/21/16](#)]

**United States Congress Biographical Directly: Sessions Was “Alabama Attorney General 1994-1996.”** [United States Congress Biographical Directly, Accessed [11/21/16](#)]

**United States Congress Biographical Directly: Sessions Was “Elected As A Republican To The United States Senate In 1996; Reelected In 2002, 2008, And Again In 2014 For The Term Ending January 3, 2021.”** [United States Congress Biographical Directly, Accessed [11/21/16](#)]

**2009: Sessions Named Ranking Member Of The Senate Judiciary Committee.** According to The Washington Post, “Senate Republicans yesterday took the first steps in preparing to challenge President Obama’s eventual nominee for the Supreme Court, selecting as their point man for confirmation hearings a backbench Alabama conservative whose own 1986 nomination to the federal courts turned into a racially tinged firestorm. Sen. Jeff Sessions was named the ranking Republican on the Senate Judiciary Committee, a key perch that was left vacant last week after Sen. Arlen Specter (Pa.) switched to the Democratic Party. Sessions will take center stage in efforts to test Obama’s choice to succeed retiring Justice David H. Souter at a time when Republicans have seen their ranks in the Senate decimated and the party lacks an obvious spokesman on legal matters. ‘The nominee needs to be given a fair evaluation. . . . I don’t mind tough questioning of a nominee. I support that,’ Sessions told reporters yesterday.” [The Washington Post, 5/5/09]

**May 2015: Sessions Listed As Possible Trump VP Pick.** According to Orlando Sentinel, “Alabama Sen. Jeff Sessions: Sessions is in lockstep with Trump on an issue that’s become the core of his campaign: immigrants in the country illegally. Sessions, who has spent nearly two decades in Washington, advises Trump on foreign policy. He has told reporters on several occasions that he’s willing to undergo the vetting process, should Trump consider him.” [Orlando Sentinel, 5/15/16]

## SESSIONS ELECTORAL HISTORY

**1994: Sessions Was Elected Alabama Attorney General With 56.9 Percent Of The Vote.** [US Election Atlas, Accessed [11/21/16](#)]

**1996: Sessions Won 52 Percent Of The Vote To Win His U.S. Senate Race.** According to The Miami Herald, “ALABAMA 82 % OF VOTE COUNTED Bedford (D) 619,894 46 % \* Sessions (R) 689,669 52 % Jeff Sessions succeeded in capturing a Democratic seat by holding off Roger Bedford to replace retiring Howell Heflin.” [The Miami Herald, 11/6/96]

**2002: Unofficial Results Showed Sessions Reelected With Close To 58 Percent Of The Vote.** [The Associated Press State & Local Wire, 11/6/02]

**2008: Sessions Reelected With Close To 64 Percent Of The Vote.** [The Columbus Dispatch, 11/5/08]

**2014: Sessions Ran Unopposed; Was Reelected With 97.3 Percent Of The Vote.** [Encyclopedia of American Politics, Accessed [11/21/16](#)]

### Alabama Demographics

**2015: 4,858,979 People Lived In Alabama.** [U.S. Census Bureau, Accessed [6/15/16](#)]

**2015: Alabama Was 69.5 Percent Caucasian.** [U.S. Census Bureau, Accessed [6/15/16](#)]

**2015: Alabama Was 26.8 Percent African American.** [U.S. Census Bureau, Accessed [6/15/16](#)]

**2015: Alabama Was 4.2 Percent Was Hispanic** [U.S. Census Bureau, Accessed [6/15/16](#)]

## POLICY ISSUES OF NOTE

### POLITICAL & JUDICIAL PHILOSOPHY

Jeff Sessions is a strident conservative and consistently opposes progressive policies and nominees. As a freshman, Sessions made clear that he supported “weeding out activist judicial nominees” and was critical of President Clinton’s use of pardons. Sessions cheered for the appointment of Chief Justice John Roberts, called out Democrats for “imposing a new political and ideological standard on [judicial] nominees,” and led the case against Sotomayor’s Supreme Court confirmation.

*Please note that this section includes a limited review of key votes. Additional information on Sessions’ Senate votes will be added as research continues.*

**1997: Sessions Supported “Weeding Out Activist Judicial Nominees.”** According to The New York Times, “At a time of increasing attention to how politicians raise campaign donations, a conservative lobbying group has stirred criticism for its effort to raise money for itself by offering large donors private meetings with lawmakers. The group, the Free Congress Foundation, based in Washington, has been trying to raise \$1.4 million to oppose what it calls a flood of ‘liberal activist judges’ being put on the bench by President Clinton. It has sent out thousands of packets that include a videotape featuring four Republican Senators complaining about Mr. Clinton’s judicial choices. Accompanying the tape is a letter asking for donations to the Judicial Selection Monitoring Project, an arm of the foundation. For a contribution of \$10,000 or more, the mailing says, a donor will receive ‘invitations to attend periodic private briefings and intimate dinners in Washington with Paul Weyrich, JSMP director Tom Jipping and leading conservative elected and public figures closely involved with the judicial confirmation process.’ Mr. Weyrich is the head of the Free Congress Foundation ... John Cox, a spokesman for Senator Jeff Sessions of Alabama, said Mr. Sessions agreed with the lobbying group’s ‘narrow goal’ of weeding out activist judicial nominees. But Mr. Cox said the Senator had not assented to having his remarks used as part of a fund-raising effort.” [The New York Times, 11/14/97]

**1998: The Washington Post: “Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.), Has Led The Opposition To Other Clinton Judicial Nominees. Sessions Complained Yesterday That Clinton's Nominees To The 9th Circuit Bench, Presumably Including Fletcher, Are Preserving The "Liberal" Tilt Of The Court.”** According to The Washington Post, “Exasperated at foot-dragging within his own party, Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Orrin G. Hatch (R-Utah) vowed yesterday to clear the way for prompt Senate action on a hotly contested West Coast judicial nomination that has also become entangled in a controversial back-channel deal with the White House. The nomination of University of California-Berkeley law professor William A. Fletcher to the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals will ‘come out of this committee’ no later than its next meeting, presumably in a week, a clearly irritated Hatch said. His comments came after conservatives on the committee held up the vote again. ‘Frankly, this has been held up far too long,’ said Hatch, referring to delays that have blocked Fletcher’s nomination since it was sent to the Senate by President Clinton three years ago. Hatch did not name the objector, but it was apparently Sen. John D. Ashcroft (R-Mo.), who did not attend the session and who, along with Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.), has led the opposition to other Clinton judicial nominees. Sessions complained yesterday that Clinton’s nominees to the 9th Circuit bench, presumably including Fletcher, are preserving the ‘liberal’ tilt of the court.” [The Washington Post, 5/08/98]

**2001: Sessions Was Critical Of Bill Clinton Over Rich Pardon, Said It Seemed To Be Bribery.** According to The New York Times, “The United States attorney in New York has started a preliminary criminal investigation into the circumstances of President Bill Clinton’s pardon of Marc Rich, the fugitive commodities trader, senior government officials said today. The inquiry will include issuing grand jury subpoenas for bank records and other documents, the officials said. They said the investigation would try to determine whether anyone acting on behalf of Mr. Rich in effect sought to buy his pardon or obtain it by fraudulent misrepresentation ... The inquiry by prosecutors in Ms. White’s office is being coordinated with senior officials at the Justice Department. Several Republicans at today’s hearing said that a criminal investigation was warranted. Senator Jeff Sessions of Alabama, said, ‘From what I’ve seen, based on the law of bribery in the United States, if a person takes a thing of value for himself or for another person that influences their decision in a matter of their official capacity, then that could be a criminal offense.’ ‘And I think at this point,’ Mr. Sessions said, ‘from what I see, the F.B.I. and the United States attorney’s office in New York ought to be looking at this matter.’” [The New York Times, 2/15/01]

**Sessions Cheered John Roberts' Nomination To The Supreme Court.** According to The Philadelphia Inquirer, "Even to some in the Senate, the President's pick for the Supreme Court was a mystery man. One Democrat, Sen. Tom Harkin of Iowa, wore a befuddled look as he walked through the Capitol, scanning his BlackBerry for e-mailed insights and wondering aloud: 'I don't know who he is. Do you know who he is?' It was enough for some to suggest that Judge John G. Roberts Jr. was a 'stealth nominee' whose real views on issues such as abortion were unknown ... Majority Leader Bill Frist (R., Tenn.) called Roberts 'the kind of outstanding nominee that will make America proud' and said, 'I look forward to welcoming Judge Roberts to the Senate tomorrow.' 'I think Roberts is a fabulous nominee,' said Sen. Jeff Sessions (R., Ala.), a member of the Judiciary Committee. Sessions called him 'the best witness I've seen testify at Judiciary' and said, 'He is a judge who will fairly construe the Constitution and be faithful to it.'" [The Philadelphia Inquirer, 7/20/05]

**2006: Sessions On Alito Nomination: "Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.) Said Democrats Are Imposing A New Political And Ideological Standard On Nominees, And Want Only Judges Who Will Follow Their Liberal Agenda. He Said That Includes Allowing Same-Sex Marriages And Partial Birth Abortion, And Rejecting Christmas Displays In Public Spaces."** According to The Star-Ledger, "The Senate opened debate on Supreme Court nominee Samuel A. Alito Jr. yesterday with the Republican leader accusing Democratic opponents of 'smearing' the conservative New Jersey federal judge and distorting his record ... Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.) said Democrats are imposing a new political and ideological standard on nominees, and want only judges who will follow their liberal agenda. He said that includes allowing same-sex marriages and partial birth abortion, and rejecting Christmas displays in public spaces. 'They want judges who will impose their own views, their personal views,' said Sessions. Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) said Democrats have tried to portray Alito as an 'out of control' judge who would roll over people's rights, and have unfairly cast him as 'a radical extremist.' 'This picture of an activist judge who will remake precedents is patently wrong,' Hatch said." [The Star-Ledger, 1/26/06]

**2009: The Washington Post: "Sessions Framed The Conservative Case Against Sotomayor And His GOP Colleagues Filled Out The Bill Of Particulars They Will Pursue This Week."** According to The Washington Post, "Sessions used his opening statement to pointedly express his reservations about Sotomayor's fitness for the high court. His doubts, shared by others in his party, include his concern over her assertion that a 'wise Latina woman' would reach a better legal judgment than a white man, and disagreements over her views on affirmative action as shown in the New Haven, Conn., firefighters' case in which she and her peers on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 2nd Circuit were recently overturned by the high court. Sessions framed the conservative case against Sotomayor and his GOP colleagues filled out the bill of particulars they will pursue this week. They object not only to some things Sotomayor has said, but to Obama's assertion that one of the attributes he wants in a Supreme Court justice is empathy. Does that, they asked, inevitably lead to a biased rendering of the law that unfairly favors one group over another?" [The Washington Post, 7/14/09]

- **2009: Miami Herald: Sessions: Judges Showing Empathy "Is A Dangerous Departure From The Most Fundamental Pillar Of Our Judicial System, Judicial Impartiality."** According to The Miami Herald, "The top Republican on the committee is Sen. Jeff Sessions of Alabama. Sessions' ascension to that spot earlier this year completed a political comeback of sorts. In 1986, the same judiciary committee, then controlled by Republicans, rejected Sessions' nomination for a federal judgeship after he was accused of making racially insensitive comments. Sessions is expected to quiz Sotomayor on the president's desire for judges who show 'empathy' on the bench. 'I think this is a dangerous departure from the most fundamental pillar of our judicial system, judicial impartiality,' Sessions said. 'That's why judges are given

lifetime appointments -- they're supposed to be unbiased. Whatever this new empathy standard is, it is not law.” [The Miami Herald, 7/12/09]

- **Sessions Op-Ed: “When A Judge Shows Empathy Toward One Party, Do They Not Show Prejudice Against The Other?”** “President Obama says that when ‘constitutional text will not be directly on point,’ the critical ingredient for a judge is the ‘depth and breadth of one’s empathy,’ as well as ‘their broader vision of what America should be.’ But when a judge shows empathy toward one party, do they not show prejudice against the other?” [Charlotte Observer, 7/15/09]
- **Sessions Op-Ed: “Empathy-Based Rulings, No Matter How Well-Intentioned, Do Not Help Society, But Imperil The Legal System That Has Been So Essential To Our Liberties And So Fundamental To Our Way Of Life.”** “For years, Judge Sotomayor was a leader at the Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund while it fought aggressively to pursue racial quotas for city hiring. Is Judge Sotomayor’s ruling against the firefighters an example of her failure to set aside her biases and rule impartially? Contrast the philosophy President Obama and Sotomayor have advocated with the plain words of the Judicial Oath: ‘I do solemnly swear that I will administer justice without respect to persons, and do equal right to the poor and to the rich, and that I will faithfully and impartially discharge and perform all the duties incumbent upon me under the Constitution and laws of the United States. So help me God.’ Every day that Americans enjoy the extraordinary blessings of freedom, they do so in part because of the words and principles in that oath. Empathy-based rulings, no matter how well-intentioned, do not help society, but imperil the legal system that has been so essential to our liberties and so fundamental to our way of life.” [Charlotte Observer, 7/15/09]

**2016: “Sessions Has Spent His Time In Washington Largely On The Edges Of Republican Politics. Although He Has Been A Reliably Conservative Vote, Sessions Has Not Been A Leader In The Senate.”** According to Plain Dealer, “Sessions has spent his time in Washington largely on the edges of Republican politics. Although he has been a reliably conservative vote, Sessions has not been a leader in the Senate. His following comes not from soaring remarks on the Senate floor, but from coverage of his positions on conservative websites and appearances at policy conferences giving voice to an older and less diverse segment of the GOP than party leaders have recently attempted to court. As the GOP brass pushed for immigration reforms designed to make their party more appealing to Hispanics, Sessions championed the opposition.” [Plain Dealer, 7/19/16]

**2007: Jeff Sessions Voted In Favor Of Confirmation Of Michael B. Mukasey For United States Attorney General.** On November 8, 2007, the United States Senate voted on the nomination confirmation of Michael B. Mukasey to be Attourney General. The motion passed 53-40. Senator Sessions voted in favor of the motion. [United States Senate, Vote 407, [11/8/07](#)]

## ABORTION

Sessions has been consistently pro-life throughout his career. Notably, he defended anti-abortion Judge William Pryor when he was nominated to the Federal Court of Appeals. Moreover, he voted to ban partial birth abortion, maintain the “Mexico City” policy, make it more difficult for women to obtain an abortion, and defund Planned Parenthood.

*Please note that this section includes a limited review of key votes. Additional information on Sessions’ Senate votes will be added as research continues.*



**2003: Sessions Defended Controversial Judge William Pryor's Views On Abortion; He Was Pro-Life.** According to The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, "Republicans rammed the federal appeals court nomination of William Pryor through a bitterly divided Senate Judiciary Committee on Wednesday. But the Alabama attorney general, who has been outspoken in his opposition to abortion and homosexuality, probably faces a Democratic filibuster on the Senate floor. Over Democratic objections, Chairman Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) forced a vote on Pryor after more than two hours of contentious debate. President Bush's nominee to the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Atlanta was sent to the full Senate with the committee's nine Democrats voting 'no, under protest' and all 10 Republicans voting 'yes.' Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.) said that while Pryor's views on abortion follow Catholic doctrine, he would not let them interfere with applying the law as it exists. Sessions said he has been made 'sick to my stomach' by the campaign against Pryor. 'He does have political views, but his commitment to the law is extraordinary,' said Sessions." [The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, 7/24/03]

- **The Atlanta Journal-Constitution: "He Has Never Abused His Position To Advance His Views About Abortion Or Any Other Issue,' Said Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.), A Staunch Pryor Supporter."** [The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, 8/1/03]
- **The Washington Post: "Sessions Also Denounced What He Called A 'Radical Secularization Trend In America That's Gone Too Far.'"** According to The Washington Post, "Senate Democrats yesterday blocked President Bush's nomination of Alabama Attorney General William H. Pryor Jr. to a federal appeals court amid angry recriminations over allegations of anti-Catholic bias against the nominee because of his strong opposition to abortion ... Hatch said he is 'not happy' with the ads run by the Committee for Justice, a conservative group that was created to lobby for Bush's judicial nominees, but Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.), spoke favorably of the ads' message. Sessions also denounced what he called a 'radical secularization trend in America that's gone too far.' Santorum said the issue was whether 'anybody who believes in church and faith' will be disqualified from public life." [The Washington Post, 8/1/03]

#### Votes

**2003: Sessions Voted To Ban "Partial-Birth" Abortion.** According to CQ, Sessions voted for the "Passage of a bill that would ban a medical procedure opponents refer to as 'partial-birth' abortion. Those who performed the procedure would face fines and up to two years in prison." There were other votes related to final passage of S 3 that were not included in this report. [CQ; Senate Vote 51, [3/13/03](#)]

**2003: Sessions Voted Against The "Murray, D-Wash., Amendment That Would Allow Overseas Military Facilities To Provide Privately-Funded Abortions For Women Who Are In The Military Or Are Military Dependents."** [CQ; Senate Vote 192, [5/22/03](#)]

**2003: Sessions Voted To Keep The Mexico City Policy In Place.** According to CQ, Sessions voted for the "Lugar, R-Ind., motion to table (kill) the Boxer, D-Calif., amendment to the Lugar substitute amendment. The Boxer amendment would repeal the "Mexico City" policy, which forbids foreign organizations that receive U.S. aid from providing abortions or abortion counseling. The substitute would authorize \$27 billion for State Department operations and foreign assistance programs." [CQ; Senate Vote 267, [7/9/03](#)]

**2003: Sessions Voted For The “Partial Birth” Abortion Ban Conference Report.** According to CQ, Sessions voted for the “Adoption of the conference report on the bill that would ban a medical procedure opponents refer to as “partial-birth” abortion. The procedure would only be allowed when it is necessary to save a woman's life. Those who unlawfully performed the procedure would face fines and up to two years in prison.” The death penalty could not be imposed under this bill.” There were other votes related to final passage of S 3 that were not included in this report. [CQ; Senate Vote 402, [10/21/03](#)]

**2004: Sessions Voted For “Passage Of The Bill That Would Make It A Criminal Offense To Injure Or Kill A Fetus During The Commission Of A Violent Crime.”** According to CQ, Sessions voted for “Passage of the bill that would make it a criminal offense to injure or kill a fetus during the commission of a violent crime. The measure would establish criminal penalties, equal to those that would apply if the pregnant woman were injured or killed, for those who harm a fetus, regardless of the perpetrator's knowledge of the pregnancy or intent to harm the fetus. The bill states that its provisions should not be interpreted to apply to consensual abortion or to a woman's actions with respect to her pregnancy. The death penalty could not be imposed under this bill.” There were other votes related to final passage of HR 1997 that were not included in this report.” [CQ; Senate Vote 63, HR 1997, 3/25/04]

**2004: Sessions Supported The Unborn Victims of Violence Act.** According to Newsday, “Fulfilling a pledge to the social conservatives who are among his most loyal supporters, President George W. Bush yesterday signed into law a measure making it a federal crime to harm a fetus in the course of an attack on a pregnant woman. Just before signing the bill in an elaborate East Room ceremony, Bush met privately with several victims of such crimes, including the mother and stepfather of Laci Peterson. The California woman was eight months pregnant when she disappeared in December 2002, and was later found dead. The measure, formally known as the Unborn Victims of Violence Act, is often referred to by supporters as the ‘Laci and Conner’ law after Peterson and her unborn son, Conner ... One congressional supporter of the measure, Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.), said the new law would influence the ongoing abortion debate. ‘It certainly demonstrates that there is more concern over the unborn today in America,’ he said.” [Newsday, 4/2/04]

**2005: Sessions: By Passing Abortion Restrictions And Bills Opposed By The Pro-Choice Lobby, “Congress Is Getting More In Synch With The American People, Who Are Less And Less Enamored With Abortion On Demand.”** According to The Boston Globe, “WASHINGTON The Senate yesterday defeated an effort to stop those who commit abortion-clinic violence from ducking legal judgments through bankruptcy, a setback for abortion rights groups and a display of the increased might of the Republican majority after last year’s elections. A similar measure was part of a bankruptcy bill the Senate passed in 2003, and opposition from House Republican leaders was the only thing that kept it from becoming law then. But Republicans picked up four Senate seats in November and the amendment failed in the Senate, 53-46, in a vote that advocates on both sides consider a harbinger for the prospects of other abortion-related matters in Congress. ‘The culture of the Senate probably has changed somewhat to the right on that issue,’ said Senator John Thune, a South Dakota Republican who used the abortion issue to help defeat Tom Daschle, the Democratic leader, last year. ‘Clearly, with the freshman class that came in this year, you gained a number of prolife votes’ ... In recent years, the House has been more active than the Senate in pushing abortion restrictions. But Republicans now have a 55-45 Senate majority, and yesterday’s vote while complicated by other factors was an early marker in the current term’s abortion fight, said Senator Jeff Sessions, Republican of Alabama. ‘It shows that the Congress is getting more in synch with the American people, who are less and less enamored with abortion on demand,’ he said.” [The Boston Globe, 3/9/05]

**2006: Sessions Voted For An Amendment That Would “Prohibit Fathers Or Family Members Who Have Committed Rape Or Incest Against A Minor From Transporting Her Across State Lines To Have An Abortion.”** According to CQ, Sessions voted for the “Boxer, D-Calif., amendment no. 4694 that would prohibit fathers or family members who have committed rape or incest against a minor from transporting her across state lines to have an abortion. It also would bar a father who has committed incest from filing a lawsuit under the bill against an individual who transported his daughter across state lines for an abortion.” [CQ; Senate Vote 215, S 403, 7/25/06]

**2006: Sessions Voted To Make It A Federal Crime To Take A Minor Across State Lines To Obtain An Abortion In Order To Circumvent State Parental Notification And Consent Laws.** According to CQ, Sessions voted for “Passage of the bill that would make it a federal crime to take a minor across state lines to obtain an abortion in order to circumvent state parental notification and consent laws. It would provide an exception for cases in which an abortion is necessary to save the life of the minor and prohibit prosecution or fines if the minor is transported by her parents. As amended, it also would prohibit fathers or family members who have committed rape or incest against a minor from transporting her across state lines to have an abortion.” [CQ; Senate Vote 216, [7/25/06](#)]

**2006: Sessions Voted To “Make It A Federal Crime To Take A Minor Across State Lines To Obtain An Abortion In Order To Circumvent State Parental Notification And Consent Laws.”** According to CQ, Sessions voted for a “Motion to invoke cloture (thus limiting debate) on the motion to concur in the House amendment on the bill that would make it a federal crime to take a minor across state lines to obtain an abortion in order to circumvent state parental notification and consent laws.” [CQ; Senate Vote 263, [9/29/06](#)]

**2008: Sessions Voted To “Bar The Use Of Funds Or Facilities Of The Indian Health Service To Provide Any Abortion Or To Pay The Administrative Cost Of Any Health Benefits Plan That Includes Coverage Of An Abortion, Except In The Case Of Rape, Incest Or Danger To The Life Of The Woman.”** According to CQ, Sessions voted for the “Vitter, R-La., amendment no. 3896 to the Dorgan, D-N.D., substitute amendment no. 3899. The Vitter amendment would bar the use of funds or facilities of the Indian Health Service to provide any abortion or to pay the administrative cost of any health benefits plan that includes coverage of an abortion, except in the case of rape, incest or danger to the life of the woman. The substitute would revise and extend through fiscal 2017 the central law directing federal delivery of health services to American Indians and Alaska Natives.” [CQ; Senate Vote 30, [2/26/08](#)]

**2009: “Sessions Voted For The “Martinez, R-Fla., Amendment No. 65 That Would Reinstate The So-Called Mexico City Policy, Which Bars U.S. Aid To International Family Planning Organizations That Perform Or Promote Abortions, Even If They Use Their Own Funds To Do So.”** According to CQ, Sessions voted for the “Martinez, R-Fla., amendment no. 65 that would reinstate the so-called Mexico City policy, which bars U.S. aid to international family planning organizations that perform or promote abortions, even if they use their own funds to do so.” [CQ; Senate Vote 19, [1/28/09](#)]

**2009: Sessions Missed A Vote Related To Abortion And The U.N. Population Fund.** According to CQ, Sessions missed the vote on the “Wicker, R-Miss., amendment no. 607 that would eliminate language in the bill that would allow the U.N. Population Fund to use funds from the bill for specific purposes, including providing contraceptives and reducing child marriage, even if those funds would otherwise be withheld from UNPFA under U.S. laws barring funds for groups that support or participate in coercive abortion programs.” [CQ; Senate Vote 81, [3/5/09](#)]

**2009: Sessions Voted For An Amendment To “Specify That The [ACA] ... Would Not Authorize Government Agencies To Define Abortion Services As Preventive.”** According to CQ, Sessions voted for the “Murkowski, R-Alaska, amendment no. 2836 to the Reid, D-Nev., substitute amendment no. 2786. The Murkowski amendment would prohibit the secretary of Human Services from using recommendations made by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force to deny individuals coverage of an item or service, and would strike language requiring health insurance issuers to provide coverage, without cost-sharing requirements, on items and services that receive a certain rating from the task force. It would specify that the bill would not authorize government agencies to define abortion services as preventive. The substitute would create marketplaces for purchasing health insurance, create a public health insurance option from which states could opt out, require most individuals to obtain insurance and impose requirements on insurance companies regarding the coverage that they offer.” [CQ; Senate Vote 356, [12/3/09](#)]

**2009: Sessions Voted Against Tabling An “Amendment [That] Would Bar The Use Of Funds Authorized In The Bill To Pay For An Abortion Or To Cover Any Part Of The Costs Of A Health Plan That Includes Abortion Coverage, Except Under Certain Circumstances.”** According to CQ, Sessions voted for against the “Boxer, D-Calif., motion to table (kill) the Nelson, D-Neb., amendment no. 2962 to the Reid, D-Nev., substitute amendment no. 2786. The Nelson amendment would bar the use of funds authorized in the bill to pay for an abortion or to cover any part of the costs of a health plan that includes abortion coverage, except under certain circumstances. Individuals with subsidized policies who also want abortion coverage would have to purchase it separately, using their own money, and insurance issuers would be allowed to offer separate supplemental coverage for abortions as long as it is not funded under the bill. Health benefit plans participating in the exchange created by the bill could not discriminate against providers or facilities for not covering or providing abortion services. The substitute would create marketplaces for purchasing health insurance, create a public health insurance option from which states could opt out, require most individuals to obtain insurance and impose requirements on insurance companies regarding the coverage that they offer.” [CQ; Senate Vote 369, [12/8/09](#)]

**2013: Sessions Voted To Allow A Vote To “Express The Sense Of The Senate That Federal Law Should Require Doctors Performing Or Inducing An Abortion On A Minor From Another State To Notify The Minor's Parents At Least 24 Hours In Advance, With Certain Exemptions.”** According to CQ, Sessions voted for the “Rubio, R-Fla., motion to waive the Budget Act with respect to the Boxer, D-Calif., point of order against the Rubio amendment no. 292 for not being germane. The Rubio amendment would express the sense of the Senate that federal law should require doctors performing or inducing an abortion on a minor from another state to notify the minor's parents at least 24 hours in advance, with certain exemptions. It also would express that a maximum prison sentence of up to one year should be imposed for individuals who commit incest and then transport the minor across state lines for an abortion.” [CQ; Senate Vote 64, [3/22/13](#)]

**2013: Sessions Voted Against The “Cruz, R-Texas, Amendment No. 702 That Would Create A 60-Vote Point Of Order Against Any Legislation That Would Provide Taxpayer Funds To The United Nations When Any Member Nation Compels Its Residents To Have Involuntary Abortions.”** According to CQ, Sessions voted against the “Cruz, R-Texas, amendment no. 702 that would create a 60-vote point of order against any legislation that would provide taxpayer funds to the United Nations when any member nation compels its residents to have involuntary abortions.” [CQ; Senate Vote 86, [3/23/13](#)]

**2014: Sessions Voted Against A “Motion To Proceed To The Bill That Would Prohibit Employers From Refusing To Cover Contraception Or Any Other Type Of Health Coverage Guaranteed**

**Under Federal Law For Their Employees And Dependents.”** According to CQ, Sessions against a “Motion to invoke cloture (thus limiting debate) on the Reid, D-Nev., motion to proceed to the bill that would prohibit employers from refusing to cover contraception or any other type of health coverage guaranteed under federal law for their employees and dependents. It includes language that would ensure that exemptions for places of worship and religiously-affiliated nonprofit organizations remain in place.” [CQ; Senate Vote 228, [7/16/14](#)]

**2015: Sessions Against “Removing A Provision In [A Human Trafficking] Bill That Would State That Amounts In The Domestic Trafficking Victims' Fund Would Be Subject To Limitations In The Fiscal 2014 Consolidated Appropriations Law Prohibiting Money Appropriated Under The Law From Being Spent On Abortions.”** According to CQ, Sessions voted against the “Leahy substitute amendment that would remove a provision in the bill that would state that amounts in the Domestic Trafficking Victims' Fund would be subject to limitations in the fiscal 2014 consolidated appropriations law prohibiting money appropriated under the law from being spent on abortions, except for cases of rape, incest or when the life of the mother is in danger, to the same extent as if the money from the fund was appropriated under that law. The substitute amendment also would add provisions related to runaway youth. It also would add provisions related to state treatment of minors engaged in commercial sex acts as trafficking victims and state discouragement of prosecuting them for prostitution.” [CQ; Senate Vote 268, [8/22/15](#)]

**2015: Sessions Voted To Defund Planned Parenthood.** According to CQ, Sessions voted for a “Motion to invoke cloture (thus limiting debate) on the McConnell, R-Ky., motion to proceed to the bill that would prohibit federal funding for the Planned Parenthood Federation of America or any of the organization's affiliates, subsidiaries, successors or clinics. The bill would state that it shall not be interpreted to reduce overall federal funding available for women's health or to affect abortion-related limitations in appropriations laws.” [CQ; Senate Vote 262, S. 1881, 8/3/15]

**2015: Sessions Voted To End Debate On A 20 Week Abortion Ban.** According to CQ, Sessions voted for a “Motion to invoke cloture (thus limiting debate) on the McConnell, R-Ky., motion to proceed to the bill that would prohibit abortions in cases where the probable age of the fetus is 20 weeks or later, except in cases of rape, incest against a minor or when the life of the pregnant woman is in danger. Specifically, it would provide an exemption for pregnancies that are the result of rape against adult women if the woman obtained counseling or medical treatment for the rape at least 48 hours before the abortion. Pregnancies resulting from rape or incest against a minor would also be exempt from the ban if the rape or incest had been reported before the abortion to law enforcement or another government agency authorized to act on reports of child abuse. The measure would impose criminal penalties on doctors who violate the ban. The measure also would require health care practitioners to give the same level of care to an infant born alive during a failed abortion as they would give to an infant born at the same gestational age through natural birth.” [CQ; Senate Vote 268, [9/22/15](#)]

**2015: Sessions Voted To Repeal The ACA, Block Planned Parenthood Funding For A Year.** According to CQ, Sessions voted for “Passage of the bill that would repeal portions of the 2010 health care law and block federal funding for Planned Parenthood for one year. As amended, the bill would zero-out the law's penalties for noncompliance with the law's requirements for most individuals to obtain health coverage and employers to offer health insurance. As amended, it also would scrap in 2018 the law's Medicaid expansion, as well as subsidies to help individuals buy coverage through the insurance exchanges. It also would scrap certain taxes included in the law, including the tax on certain high-value employer-sponsored health insurance plans.” There were other votes related to final passage of HR 3762 that are not included in this bullet. [CQ; Senate Vote 329, [12/3/15](#)]



## IMMIGRATION

Senator Sessions consistently voted to limit immigration, increase funding for border patrol, and expand border barriers. In 2010, he supported legal changes to the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment to insure birthright citizenship was not guaranteed to the children of undocumented immigrants. He even called the notion of birthright citizenship “clearly absurd.” Sessions also defended Trump’s views on birthright citizenship, saying Trump did not advocate for “an extreme position.” The Senator opposed major attempts at comprehensive immigration reform in his Senate career and adamantly opposed President Obama’s executive action on immigration. He called Obama’s executive measures “exceedingly dangerous” and argued that those Senators who supported the president would “stain ... the senate ... [and] constitutional order.” A 2006 comment best sums up Sessions’ view of immigrants, specifically Hispanic immigrants: “It’s true that most of our immigrants, particularly that come from Hispanic countries, are traditional, faithful, and conservative good people . . . The question is how much can the country absorb, what are our needs as a nation . . . It shouldn’t be a political question. It’s what is a good policy for the United States.” He has also supported legislation that would require local officials to “report...any undocumented immigrants to the Department of Homeland Security” and has insisted that it is “a violation of the criminal code to enter our country illegally.”

*Please note that this section includes a limited review of key votes. Additional information on Sessions’ Senate votes will be added as research continues.*

**2004: Sessions Supported Legislation That Would Call On Local Officials To “Report ... Any Undocumented Immigrants To The Department Of Homeland Security.”** According to The Arizona Republic, “Controversial legislation to encourage local police agencies to routinely enforce federal immigration laws and punish those that don’t is stalled in congressional committees amid rising opposition and new \$9 billion cost projections. Neither the House nor Senate Judiciary committees has held full committee hearings to even discuss bill language despite widespread attention given last year to the introduction of such measures ... Norwood’s bill also specifically would require reporting any undocumented immigrants to the Department of Homeland Security. Agencies refusing would not be able to seek federal funds to cover the costs of housing undocumented immigrants jailed for other crimes. Sens. Jeff Sessions, R-Ala., and Zell Miller, D-Ga., have introduced a similar bill in the Senate, which has so far attracted just three co-sponsors. The Clear Act is supported by the National Sheriff’s Association, the Southern States Police Benevolent Association and other groups. But among large police departments that oppose it are Phoenix, Los Angeles and Houston. Joining them are such groups as the National League of Cities and the National Association of Counties. ‘We’ve always been opposed to it,’ said Detective Tony Morales, a Phoenix police spokesman. He said it’s not only an issue of resources and manpower but also that the department has an outreach program encouraging Hispanics and other immigrant communities to cooperate and trust police.” [The Arizona Republic, 4/9/04]

**2006: Sessions Supported Putting Local Law Enforcement Agents On The Border To Quell Violence.** According to The Dallas Morning News, “Worried by the growing violence at the Southwest border against Border Patrol agents, the public and illegal immigrants, senators demanded more help Wednesday from the federal government - and better use of Texas sheriffs and other local law enforcement agencies. Appearing before a Senate Judiciary subcommittee, Texas and Arizona sheriffs and a South Texas rancher detailed a border in crisis: rising assaults and threats against U.S. officers; men in battle dress uniforms sneaking into the U.S. and snipers firing across the Rio Grande at Border Patrol agents; migrants found dead or dying in desolate regions; and increased crime against Texans living near the border ... Though the border is presenting unique challenges, Border Patrol Chief David

Aguilar and Marcy Forman, head of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's office of investigations, testified that their agencies are making gains against criminal organizations operating at the border. But Sens. Cornyn, Kyl and Jeff Sessions, R-Ala., challenged federal authorities to do more. Mr. Cornyn said Defense Department assets, including unmanned aerial vehicles, could be used in support of the Border Patrol and other Homeland Security Department agencies. And Mr. Sessions noted that the nation's 750,000 state and local law enforcement personnel could be a huge force multiplier for the fewer than 11,500 Border Patrol agents and 5,500 ICE agents. The federal government has agreements with only a handful of police departments to assist in enforcing immigration law, Ms. Forman conceded." [The Dallas Morning News, 3/2/06]

**2006: The Boston Globe: "It's True That Most Of Our Immigrants, Particularly That Come From Hispanic Countries, Are Traditional, Faithful, And Conservative Good People,' Sessions Said In A Senate Hallway Last Week. 'The Question Is How Much Can The Country Absorb, What Are Our Needs As A Nation. . . It Shouldn't Be A Political Question. It's What Is A Good Policy For The United States.'" According to The Boston Globe, "The Rev. Samuel Rodriguez Jr., president of a group he says represents 15 million Hispanic evangelical Christians, said his fellow social conservatives are making a historic mistake. By spurning proposals to give illegal immigrants a shot at citizenship instead of deportation, they are making it easier for supporters of abortion and same-sex marriage to win elections .... Last week, the Senate began work on its own immigration bill. Several lawmakers have filed versions that would allow the undocumented to stay legally as guest workers, but some lawmakers most opposed to abortion and same-sex marriage are urging their colleagues to focus only on deportation. One such conservative, Senator Jeff Sessions, Republican of Alabama, acknowledged that many undocumented immigrants are natural allies on abortion and gay marriage. He also noted that businesses generally back a guest worker program because they like cheap labor. But those advantages must yield to widespread demands for a crackdown on undocumented immigrants, he said. 'It's true that most of our immigrants, particularly that come from Hispanic countries, are traditional, faithful, and conservative good people,' Sessions said in a Senate hallway last week. 'The question is how much can the country absorb, what are our needs as a nation. . . .It shouldn't be a political question. It's what is a good policy for the United States.'" [The Boston Globe, 3/06/06]**

**2007: The San Francisco Chronicle: Sessions Sponsored A Bill That Would "Make Illegal Presence In The Country A Crime - Though Not A Felony - Mandating Jail Time For Those Who Overstay Their Visas."** According to The San Francisco Chronicle, "An anti-immigration backlash has taken hold among Republicans in the Capitol, led in some cases by the staunchest supporters - Sens. John McCain and Jon Kyl of Arizona and Lindsey Graham of South Carolina - of the failed Senate bill derided by many as amnesty .... The proposal, sponsored as well by one of the most anti-reform lawmakers, Sen. Jeff Sessions, R-Ala., would make illegal presence in the country a crime - though not a felony - mandating jail time for those who overstay their visas. An estimated 40 percent of the 12 million people in the country illegally are believed to overstay their visas. The proposal also would require an electronic verification system for all employers. Its sponsors conceded it has no chance to become law. The new enforcement bill is a marked change to the reform measure Graham backed earlier this year. That bill would have increased enforcement and provided a path to legal residence for those now living illegally in the country. It also would have dramatically changed the way the country allows immigrants to enter the United States." [The San Francisco Chronicle, 8/4/07]

**2009: The Arizona Republic: "Napolitano Raised More Eyebrows When She Told CNN That Crossing The U.S Border Without Papers Is A Civil Matter, 'Not A Crime, Per Se.' Sen. Jeff Sessions, R-Ala., Demanded A Retraction And Said, 'It Is Breathtaking That A Cabinet Secretary ... Could Be Ignorant Of The Undisputable Fact That It Is A Violation Of The Criminal Code To**

**Enter Our Country Illegally.”** According to The Arizona Republic, “Napolitano raised more eyebrows when she told CNN that crossing the U.S border without papers is a civil matter, ‘not a crime, per se.’ Sen. Jeff Sessions, R-Ala., demanded a retraction and said, ‘It is breathtaking that a Cabinet secretary ... could be ignorant of the undisputable fact that it is a violation of the criminal code to enter our country illegally.’ Smith said Napolitano has admitted some misstatements and issued apologies. In the meantime, he added, ‘She has remained focused on doing her job.’ According to a recent telephone survey from Rasmussen Reports, 45 percent of Americans have an unfavorable opinion of Napolitano while 30 percent view her favorably. A quarter of the respondents offered no opinion.” [The Arizona Republic, 4/25/09]

**2015: Sessions: “For Years The American People Have Suffered Under The Lawless, Dangerous, And Wage-Reducing Immigration Policies Of [The Obama] Administration.”** In a floor speech from December 16, 2015, Sessions said: “For years the American people have suffered under the lawless, dangerous, and wage-reducing immigration policies of this administration. They sent us here to Washington to protect their interests, to protect the people's interests, to ensure the defense of their families, and to advance the common good--the public interest. They did not send us here to bow down to the President's lawless immigration policies, nor to line the pockets of special interests in big business. That is not what we are here for.” [Congressional Record, [12/16/15](#)]

**2015: Sessions: The American People “Did Not Send Us Here To Bow Down To The President's Lawless Immigration Policies, Nor To Line The Pockets Of Special Interests In Big Business. That Is Not What We Are Here For.”** [Congressional Record, [12/16/15](#)]

**2015: “At A Time When Hundreds Of Thousands Of Criminal Aliens Are On Our Streets, Criminal Aliens Are Killing Innocent Americans, Numerous Foreign-Born Individuals Are Implicated In Terrorism, Tens Of Thousands Of Aliens From Central America Continue To Stream Across Our Southern Border.”** In a floor speech from December 16, 2015, Sessions said: “This legislation represents a further disenfranchisement of the American voter. What does a vote mean in this country? At a time when hundreds of thousands of criminal aliens are on our streets, criminal aliens are killing innocent Americans, numerous foreign-born individuals are implicated in terrorism, tens of thousands of aliens from Central America continue to stream across our southern border, countless Americans are being replaced by foreign workers and forced to train their replacements, and millions of Americans are just struggling to get by, this Congress has chosen to make things worse.” [Congressional Record, [12/16/15](#)]

**2016: Politifact Rated This Quote From Sessions As False “There Are About 350,000 People Who Succeed In Crossing Our Borders Illegally Each Year.”** According to Tampa Bay Times, “‘There are about 350,000 people who succeed in crossing our borders illegally each year.’ - Jeff Sessions on Monday, July 18th, 2016 in a speech at the Republican National Convention \* \* \* The Ruling: FALSE” [Tampa Bay Times, 7/18/16]

**2016: Los Angeles Times: “Jeff Sessions. The Alabama Senator And Early Trump Supporter Staunchly Opposes Any Path To Citizenship For Immigrants In The U.S. Illegally And Helped Blow Up A Bipartisan Immigration Deal In Congress, And Then Assisted Trump In Building His Campaign Around A Theme Of Nativism.”** [Los Angeles Times, 11/13/16]

**Vice News: “Anti-Immigration Senator Jeff Sessions Could Face A Tough Confirmation.”** [Vice News, [11/18/16](#)]



## Birthright Citizenship

### **Sessions Said Trump’s Position On Birthright Citizenship Was “Not An Extreme Position.”**

According to an interview from the Laura Ingram Show written up by the Daily Caller, INGRAHAM: The idea that you have to change the Constitution to get right on this birthright citizenship deal is ridiculous. Joining us now, Sen. Jeff Sessions from the great state of Alabama ... Is Trump right on the birthright citizenship issue? SESSIONS: Look, the matter is somewhat disputed, but Ed Meese — former Attorney General for Ronald Reagan — wrote a paper with some other scholars, a number of years ago, declaring that it does not mandate a person that is born here with parents who are illegal get citizenship in the United States. And it’s a persuasive paper. This absolutely is not an extreme position. [The Laura Ingraham Show via The Daily Caller, [8/19/16](#)]

**Sessions: Birthright Citizenship In The Modern Era Was “Clearly Absurd.”** “‘I don’t think the founders understood when they did the 14th amendment that they would create a circumstance where people could fly into America, all over the world and have a child and that child would have dual citizenship, fly back to their home countries,’ said Republican Sen. Jeff Sessions. ‘It has been clearly abused.’” [ABC, [8/3/10](#)]

**The Montgomery Advertiser: “Republicans Like Sen. Jeff Sessions Of Alabama, The Lead Republican On The Senate Judiciary Committee, Argue That Immigrants Are Abusing The Right To Gain Citizenship For Their Children.”** “The Republican proposals, by contrast, tend to be social and political statements, such as the growing movement to repeal the 14th Amendment’s birthright citizenship. Republicans like Sen. Jeff Sessions of Alabama, the lead Republican on the Senate Judiciary Committee, argue that immigrants are abusing the right to gain citizenship for their children, something he says the amendment’s authors didn’t intend. Sessions, who routinely accuses Democrats of trying to subvert the Constitution and calls for respecting the document’s ‘plain language,’ is taking a different approach with the 14th Amendment. ‘I’m not sure exactly what the drafters of the amendment had in mind,’ he said, ‘but I doubt it was that somebody could fly in from Brazil and have a child and fly back home with that child, and that child is forever an American citizen.’” [The Montgomery Advertiser, 8/23/10]

**2010: Sessions Called For Hearings “On Whether The 14th Amendment, Which Was Adopted In 1868, Needs To Be Rewritten To Curb Automatic ‘Birthright Citizenship.’”** According to St. Petersburg Times, “Several Republican senators, including Jon Kyl, R-Ariz., John McCain, R-Ariz., Jeff Sessions, R-Ala., and Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., have called for hearings on whether the 14th Amendment, which was adopted in 1868, needs to be rewritten to curb automatic ‘birthright citizenship.’” [St. Petersburg Times, 8/6/10]

## Immigration Reform Efforts

2006

**2006: Sessions Opposed Bush Immigration Bill.** According to USA Today, “Senate leaders neared a deal on a sweeping immigration bill that would give millions of people now living illegally in the USA a chance to become citizen ... Sen. Jeff Sessions, R-Ala., urged colleagues to oppose the bill because ‘it rewards bad behavior.’ But Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., praised it as a humane solution for ‘those who yearn to be Americans.’ Debate over the bill sparked demonstrations by thousands of immigrant rights advocates in cities from Los Angeles to New York. More are planned this weekend and Monday.” [USA Today, 4/7/06]

**2006: Sessions Added An Amendment To Expand The Border Fence.** According to San Antonio Express-News, “Supporters of a Senate immigration bill defeated attempts Wednesday to strip citizenship and guest worker provisions from the legislation, but voted overwhelmingly to build 370 miles of fence along the U.S.-Mexico border. The vote to construct fences and other barriers along urban stretches of the Southwest border represented a victory for conservatives who remain opposed to the bill because of the citizenship provisions. ‘It all comes down to whether you oppose or favor amnesty,’ said Sen. Saxby Chambliss, R-Ga. However, lawmakers also unanimously passed an amendment that once held up the bill, eliminating a stumbling block and giving momentum to supporters of the legislation that would reform immigration laws for the first time in a decade. The bill still faces an uphill battle from lawmakers who oppose provisions that would create a temporary worker program and create a path to citizenship for people living in the country illegally. Wednesday’s debate was contentious at times, including raw exchanges between senators trying to meet Majority Leader Bill Frist’s goal of voting on the bill by the Memorial Day recess. ‘This is not amnesty,’ said Sen. Chuck Hagel, R-Neb., a sponsor of the Senate bill. ‘The American people deserve an honest debate. Let’s stop the nonsense.’ The Senate voted 66-33 to kill an amendment by Sen. David Vitter, R-La., that would have stripped citizenship provisions from the bill and 50-48 to pass an amendment requiring U.S. employers to look for American workers before hiring foreigners under a guest worker plan. Lawmakers earlier voted 83-16 to build 370 miles of fence and 500 miles of vehicle barriers, bringing the legislation in line with the enforcement-only House version of the bill, which calls for building 700 miles of fence. ‘We are sending a signal that we are serious about stopping the flow of illegal immigrants over the border,’ said Sen. Jeff Sessions, R-Ala., who offered the amendment. Sessions’ proposal calls for the repair of existing fence in border states, replacing it with triple-layered construction, and building new fencing in densely populated areas as determined by the homeland security secretary.” [San Antonio Express-News, 5/18/06]

**2006: The New York Times: Sessions: “I’m Convinced That Physical Barriers At The Border, Fencing In Particular, Are Important.”** According to The New York Times, “Democratic critics said requiring government-issued identification would amount to a modern poll tax that would discourage minorities and older Americans from voting. The House and Senate have previously voted in favor of building barriers along the border with Mexico. The proposal calls for two strips of concrete separated by a road along with cameras and other surveillance equipment at five locations. ‘I’m convinced that physical barriers at the border, fencing in particular, are important,’ said Senator Jeff Sessions, Republican of Alabama. Mr. Sessions said he was worried that Congress might approve the fence but not provide the money to build it. The Senate had previously added \$1.8 billion to a Pentagon spending measure for the fence, a bill that is pending.” [The New York Times, 9/21/06]

**The Star-Ledger, “But Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.), Who Will Lead Debate Against The Senate Bill, Said He Would ‘Actively Oppose Immigration Legislation That Does Not Meet The Expectations Of The American People On Important Issues Such As . . . Citizenship.’”** [The Star-Ledger, 5/20/07]

2013

**2013: Sessions Opposed Gang Of Eight Bill.** According to Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, “Landmark immigration legislation passed by the Senate would remake the U.S. workforce from the highest rungs to the lowest and bring many more immigrants into the economy, from elite technology firms to restaurant kitchens and rural fields. In place of the unauthorized workers now commonly found laboring in lower-skilled jobs in the agriculture or service industries, many of these workers would be legal, some of them permanent-resident green card holders or even citizens. Illegal immigration across the Mexico

border would slow, but legal immigration would increase markedly ... Foes led by Sen. Jeff Sessions, R-Ala., have forecast dramatic immigration increases under the bill. Mr. Sessions warns that 57 million new permanent and temporary residents and newly legalized immigrants would flood the United States within the decade, robbing Americans of jobs. On the other side, supporters including Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., have played down the bill's impact. In reply to Mr. Sessions, Mr. Rubio's office argues that the Senate bill 'does not significantly increase long-term, annual migration to the United States.'" [Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, 7/9/13]

- **Sessions Stood With Cruz On Gang Of Eight Immigration Bill.** According to The Houston Chronicle, "Nearly three years after Ted Cruz pointedly sought to weaken or sink a controversial Senate immigration bill, his aggressive tactics as a freshman U.S. senator have come back to haunt his 2016 presidential campaign. Striking at the heart of Cruz's appeal as a consistent conservative fighting against 'amnesty,' rival GOP candidate Marco Rubio has raised new questions about an unsuccessful measure the Texas Republican proposed in 2013 that would have given legal status to immigrants in the country illegally. Cruz, put on the defensive in Tuesday night's GOP debate in Las Vegas, has denounced Rubio's claim as a 'false attack' that overlooks the true intent of his 2013 amendment: to kill Rubio-backed legislation known as the 'Gang of Eight' bill that would have provided a path to citizenship for immigrants in the U.S. illegally ... Now Cruz and his supporters say that language was a ruse. His campaign describes his 2013 amendment as a 'poison pill' - that is, a classic legislative maneuver intended to undermine the underlying legislation. There is little debate that had it been adopted, the Cruz amendment would have dried up Democratic support and blown up the fragile bipartisan coalition that got the bill through the Senate with 14 Republican votes, including Rubio's. 'Let's have a moment of simple clarity,' Cruz said in Nevada on Thursday, amid a withering array of punditry on both left and right suggesting that he had flip-flopped on immigration. 'I oppose amnesty. I oppose citizenship. I oppose legalization for illegal aliens. I always have and always will.' Cruz has received some support from Senate conservatives who were there. 'Senator Cruz stood with me,' said Alabama Sen. Jeff Sessions, a Republican who voted against the Gang of Eight bill. To Sessions, the Cruz amendment called the Democrats' bluff by offering immigration reform without citizenship. 'Oh no, they wouldn't do that,' Sessions said. 'It's humorous. ... Ted won that debate. He lost the vote, but he won the debate.'" [The Houston Chronicle, 12/19/15]

### Obama's Executive Action On Immigration

**2014: Sessions Opposed Obama's Executive Action On Immigration.** In a floor speech, Sessions said: "Mr. President, we are entering a momentous week as Congress must face the reality that President Obama is moving towards a decision whereby he would issue executive orders, in direct contravention of long-established American law, that would grant administrative amnesty and work permits for five to six million persons that are unlawfully in this country. This, after Congress has explicitly refused demands to change the law to his desire. Current law is plain. Those who enter this great nation by unlawful means or overstaying their visa are subject to removal and are ineligible to work. That is our law. Our law is right and it's just and it comports with the laws of civilized nations the world over, and if followed will serve the honorable and legitimate interests of this nation and her people." [Congressional Documents And Publications, 7/28/14]

**Sessions: "The President's Actions Are Astonishing, And Are Taking Our Nation Into Exceedingly Dangerous Waters, Colleagues."** According to Congressional Documents And Publications, "The President's actions are astonishing, and are taking our nation into exceedingly

dangerous waters, colleagues. Such calculated action strains the constitutional structure of our republic. Such unlawful and unconstitutional action, if taken, cannot stand. No Congress, Republican or Democrat, can allow such action to occur or to be maintained. The people will not stand for it. They must not stand for it.” [Congressional Documents And Publications, 7/28/14]

**2014: Sessions: “Senators Will Decide Whether Their Allegiance Is To President Obama And His Agenda, Majority Leader Reid And The Open Borders Lobby, Or Whether Their Allegiance Is To The American Worker, The Constitutional Order, The American People, And This Nation's Sovereign Laws.”** In a September 18, 2014 floor speech, Senator Sessions said: “Madam President, in a few moments Senators in this Chamber will cast one of the most important votes they will ever cast in the Senate. With this vote, Senators will make a simple but vital decision. It is a decision that will steer the future course of our country and our Congress--and particularly the Senate. With this vote, Senators will decide whether their allegiance is to President Obama and his agenda, Majority Leader Reid and the open borders lobby, or whether their allegiance is to the American worker, the constitutional order, the American people, and this Nation's sovereign laws. The choice could not be more clear. Do we as a Nation have the right to control our borders? Do we? That is the question every Senator will be answering today. [Congressional Record, [9/18/14](#)]

**2014: Sessions: “So I Have A Message Today For All The Special Interests, The Globalist Elites, The Activists, And The Cynical, Vote-Counting Political Plotters Who Are Meeting In Secret At The White House, And The Message Is This: You Don't Get To Sit In A Room And Rewrite The Laws Of The United States Of America.”** In a September 18, 2014 floor speech, Senator Sessions said: “So I have a message today for all the special interests, the globalist elites, the activists, and the cynical, vote-counting political plotters who are meeting in secret at the White House, and the message is this: You don't get to sit in a room and rewrite the laws of the United States of America. No, sir. Congress writes the laws. You may not be used to people telling you no, but I am telling you no today.” [Congressional Record, [9/18/14](#)]

**2014: Sessions: “If We Leave Town Without Having Passed A Bill To Block This Executive Amnesty, Then It Will Be A Permanent Stain On The Senate, The Constitutional Order, And This Entire Democratic Caucus.”** [Congressional Record, [9/18/14](#)]

### Votes

**2006: Sessions Voted To End Debate “On The Bill That Would Overhaul U.S. Immigration Policies And Direct The Secretary Of Homeland Security To Purchase Additional Technology To Aid In Border Security, Construct Additional Fencing Along The Mexican Border, And Develop A National Strategy For Border Security To All Ports Of Entry Into The United States And U.S. International Land And Maritime Borders.”** According to CQ, Sessions for a “Motion to invoke cloture (thus limiting debate) on the bill that would overhaul U.S. immigration policies and direct the secretary of Homeland Security to purchase additional technology to aid in border security, construct additional fencing along the Mexican border, and develop a national strategy for border security to all ports of entry into the United States and U.S. international land and maritime borders. It also would set up a mandatory electronic employment verification process that would be phased in for all businesses within five years.” [CQ; Senate Vote 90, [4/7/06](#)]

**2006: Sessions Voted Against An Immigration Overhaul Bill.** Sessions voted against “Passage of the bill that would overhaul U.S. immigration policies and offer a path to citizenship for most illegal immigrants in the country. It would subdivide illegal immigrants into three groups based on how long

they had been in the United States. Illegal immigrants in the country more than five years would be able to stay and earn citizenship; those here between two and five years would have three years to file paperwork for a temporary work visa, after which they would be eligible for permanent legal residency; and those here less than two years would have to return to their native country and go through normal channels if they want to return. It would create a guest worker program that could accommodate an additional 200,000 immigrants a year. It also would authorize increased border security and enforcement provisions, including a requirement for businesses to verify documents of all prospective employees through an electronic system managed by the Department of Homeland Security.” [CQ; Senate Vote 157, [5/25/06](#)]

**2006: Sessions Offered An Amendment That Would “Would Provide An Additional \$1.83 Billion To Construct 370 Miles Of Double-Layered Fencing And At Least 461 Miles Of Vehicle Barriers Along The U.S.-Mexico Border.”** [CQ; Senate Vote 200, [7/13/06](#)]

**2006: Sessions Voted To Construct A 700 Mile Boarder Wall.** According to CQ, Sessions voted for “Passage of the bill that would require the Homeland Security Department to authorize the construction of about 700 miles of fencing along the U.S.-Mexican border. The bill would require a study of implementing security systems along the U.S.-Canadian border and direct the agency to evaluate the ability of personnel to stop fleeing vehicles at the border.” [CQ; Senate Vote 262, [9/29/06](#)]

**2007: Sessions Proposed An Amendment That Would “Bar Companies Employing Illegal Immigrants From Receiving Government Contracts For Seven Years, Or 10 Years If That Company Was Receiving A Government Contract At The Time Of The Offense.”** “Sessions, R-Ala., amendment no. 148 to the Baucus, D-Mont., substitute amendment no. 100. The Sessions amendment would bar companies employing illegal immigrants from receiving government contracts for seven years, or 10 years if that company was receiving a government contract at the time of the offense. It also would exempt from the ban government contractors and companies that voluntarily use an automated electronic verification system. The substitute would raise the minimum wage to \$7.25 per hour over two years and provide \$8.3 billion in small-business tax incentives. The tax provisions would be offset with revenue increases, including a \$1 million cap on the amount of executive compensation that can be tax-deferred in any year and an extension of backward restrictions on certain sale-in-lease out deals.” [CQ; Senate Vote 31, [1/25/07](#)]

**2007: Sessions Voted Against A “Motion To Invoke Cloture (Thus Limiting Debate) On The Bill That Would Overhaul U.S. Immigration Policies And Offer A Path To Citizenship For Most Illegal Immigrants In The Country.”** According to CQ, Sessions [CQ; Senate Vote 204, [7/6/05](#)]

**2007: Sessions Voted Against Advancing An Immigration Overhaul Bill.** According to CQ, Sessions voted against a “Motion to invoke cloture (thus limiting debate) on the bill that would overhaul U.S. immigration policies, provide for a temporary guest worker program and institute new border security measures, including an electronic verification system.” Session cast a similar vote (Senate Vote 228, Vote 173) on June 26, 2007 and May 21, 2007 [CQ; Senate Vote 235, [7/28/07](#)]

**2007: Sessions Voted Against A “Motion To Invoke Cloture (Thus Limiting Debate) On The Reid, D-Nev., Motion To Proceed To The Bill That Would Allow Children Of Illegal Immigrants Who Entered The United States Before Age 16 And Who Have Lived Here At Least Five Years To Gain Conditional Legal Status And Eventual Citizenship If They Attend College Or Join The Military For At Least Two Years”** According to CQ, Sessions voted against a “Motion to invoke cloture (thus limiting debate) on the Reid, D-Nev., motion to proceed to the bill that would allow children of illegal

immigrants who entered the United States before age 16 and who have lived here at least five years to gain conditional legal status and eventual citizenship if they attend college or join the military for at least two years.” [CQ; Senate Vote 394, [10/24/07](#)]

**2008: Sessions Voted For The “Sessions, R-Ala., Amendment No. 4231 That Would Allow An Adjustment To The Resolution For Increased Border Security And Immigration Enforcement, Including Programs That Expand The Zero Tolerance Prosecution Policy For Illegal Entry.”**

According to CQ, Sessions voted for the “Sessions, R-Ala., amendment no. 4231 that would allow an adjustment to the resolution for increased border security and immigration enforcement, including programs that expand the zero tolerance prosecution policy for illegal entry, completion of 700 miles of border fencing and deployment of up to 6,000 National Guard members to the U.S. southern border, as long as the programs do not increase the deficit.” [CQ; Senate Vote 60, [3/13/08](#)]

**2010: Sessions Voted Against “[Allowing] The Homeland Security Department To Grant Conditional Non-Immigrant Status To The Undocumented Children Of Illegal Immigrants If They Meet Certain Requirements.”**

According to CQ, Sessions voted against a “Motion to invoke cloture (thus limiting debate) on the Reid, D-Nev., motion to concur in the House amendment to the third Senate amendment to the bill. The House amendment would allow the Homeland Security Department to grant conditional non-immigrant status to the undocumented children of illegal immigrants if they meet certain requirements, including having been in the United States continuously for more than five years, been younger than 16 when they entered the country and have been admitted to a U.S. college or university or enlisted in the military. The individual would have to pay a \$525 application surcharge and a subsequent fee and could be eligible to apply for legal permanent status after 10 years.” [CQ; Senate Vote 278, [12/18/10](#)]

**2013: Sessions Submitted An Amendment To The 2014 Budget Resolution That Would “Prohibit Illegal Immigrants Who Later Receive Legal Status From Qualifying For Medicaid Or Exchange Subsidies Under The 2010 Health Care Law.”**

According to CQ, Sessions voted for the “Sessions, R-Ala., amendment no. 614 that would create a deficit-reduction reserve fund to allow for legislation that would prohibit illegal immigrants who later receive legal status from qualifying for Medicaid or exchange subsidies under the 2010 health care law, as long as the legislation's costs are offset without raising new revenue.” [CQ; Senate Vote 77, [3/23/13](#)]

- **2013: Sessions Voted Against The Gang Of Eight Bill.** According to CQ, Sessions voted against “Passage of a bill that would overhaul U.S. immigration policies, create an incremental path to citizenship for most illegal immigrants in the country and institute new border security measures. It would require the Homeland Security Department to complete certain security measures, including 700 miles of fencing along the southern border, nationwide use of its E-Verify system and a biometric entry-exit system at all international airports and seaports, before illegal immigrants who receive provisional legal status can become permanent residents. It would make available \$42.5 billion for additional border control agents, the 700-mile fence and monitoring technology, such as cameras and drones. It would create visa programs for agricultural and low-skilled workers and qualified entrepreneurs, and increase temporary visas available for high-skilled workers from 65,000 to 115,000 annually. The bill would create a program to allocate green cards, up to 250,000 each year, on a merit-based system, with consideration given to family ties in the United States and the country's economic needs. It would require DHS to annually audit its E-Verify system and begin removal proceedings for at least 90 percent of people who stay beyond the duration of their visas. It also would prevent immigrants from claiming Social Security benefits for work they did while unauthorized and bar



non-citizens from receiving public assistance.” There were other votes related to final passage S 744 that were not included in this report. [CQ; Senate Vote 168, [6/27/13](#)]

**2015: Sessions Voted Against Funding The Department Of Homeland Security.** According to CQ, Sessions voted for “Passage of the bill that would provide \$47.8 billion in fiscal 2015 for the Homeland Security Department and related activities. The bill would include \$12.6 billion for Customs and Border Protection; \$6 billion for Immigration and Customs Enforcement; \$7.2 billion for the Transportation Security Administration, including fees; \$10 billion for the Coast Guard; \$1.7 billion for the Secret Service; and \$10.8 billion for the Federal Emergency Management Agency, including \$6.4 billion for emergency disaster relief.” There were other votes related to final passage HR 240 that were not included in this report. [CQ; Senate Vote 62, [2/27/15](#)]

**2015: Sessions Voted For A “Motion To Invoke Cloture ... On The McConnell, R-Ky., Motion To Proceed To The Bill That Would Prohibit The Use Of Funding To Implement, Administer, Enforce Or Carry Out Certain Executive Actions Related To Immigration.”** [CQ; Senate Vote 63, [2/27/15](#)]

**2015: Sessions Voted To “Deter The Attempted Migration Of Unaccompanied Children From El Salvador, Guatemala And Honduras Into The United States.”** [CQ; Senate Vote 124, [3/26/15](#)]

**2015: Jeff Sessions On Canadian Immigration System: I “Had [An] Occasion To Talk With The Canadian Official In Charge Of Their Immigration System,’ And [I] ‘Like What They Did.’”** According to Fort Worth Star-Telegram, “State Sen. Eddie Lucio, D-Brownsville, and Reps. Byron Cook, R-Corsicana, and Gilbert Peña, R-Pasadena, have all proposed bills to create a guest worker program for Texas. A Texas-based visa would allow the state to regulate migrant workers according to its own needs and cut out the feds. Regulators in D.C. don’t know what’s best for Texas ... Texas could learn from countries that have similar policies, like Canada and Australia. A recent Cato Institute written by Brandon Fuller and Sean Rust argues that these provincial and state-based migration systems are created and managed based on local economic conditions -- to great benefit. The main lesson of their research is that states can react better and more quickly while the feds are often flat-footed. Year-round migrant agricultural workers would help boost Texas agriculture. A Texas visa for construction workers would aid the expansion of fast-growing cities. There is an important role for the federal government in regulating migration, and that system could work alongside any new Texas-based guest worker visa. But federal governments everywhere are insensitive to local demands. States are better suited to manage guest worker programs in addition to the federal programs. Even immigration skeptics like Sen. Jeff Sessions, R-Ala., an immigration skeptic, acknowledge the benefits of the Canadian system. Sessions recently that he ‘had occasion to talk with the Canadian official in charge of their immigration system,’ and that he ‘like[d] what they did.’” [Fort Worth Star-Telegram, 4/24/15]

**2015: Sessions Voted To Cut Off Sanctuary Cities.** According to CQ, Sessions voted for a “Motion to invoke cloture (thus limiting debate) on the McConnell, R-Ky., motion to proceed to the bill that would make states and cities ineligible for certain federal grants if they place restrictions on sharing information about the immigration status of individuals with the federal government or on fulfilling Homeland Security Department (DHS) requests to comply with ‘detainers,’ or requests to keep an immigrant in custody. Under the bill, in legal proceedings that challenge the legality of the detention of individuals pursuant to detainers issued by DHS, cities and states would not be liable for actions taken to comply with the detainers and the federal government would instead be the defendant.” Sessions voted for a similar measure on October 20, 2015 – vote 280 on S2146. [CQ; Senate Vote 119, [7/6/16](#) ]

**2015: Sessions Voted “To Proceed To The Bill That Would Increase Maximum Criminal Penalties For Individuals Who Re-Enter The Country After Having Been Previously Deported;” The Bill Was Nicknamed Kate’s Law.** According to CQ, Sessions voted for a “Motion to invoke cloture (thus limiting debate) on the McConnell, R-Ky. motion to proceed to the bill that would increase maximum criminal penalties for individuals who re-enter the country after having been previously deported. The bill also would set a mandatory minimum penalty of five years imprisonment for such individuals if they were convicted of an aggravated felony before being deported or were convicted at least twice previously of illegal re-entry.” [CQ; Senate Vote 120, [7/6/16](#)]

**2015: “Back When President Barack Obama Was Deporting Large Numbers Of Undocumented Immigrants -- 409,849 Individuals In 2012 -- Conservatives Presented An Alternate Reality. ‘The Federal Government Has Reached A Point Now Where Virtually No One Is Being Deported, Except Those Convicted Of Serious Crimes.’”** According to Chicago Tribune, “Back when President Barack Obama was deporting large numbers of undocumented immigrants -- 409,849 individuals in 2012 -- conservatives presented an alternate reality. ‘The federal government has reached a point now where virtually no one is being deported, except those convicted of serious crimes,’ Sen. Jeff Sessions, R-Ala., an arch immigration foe, said in June 2013. The conservative nightmare extended beyond the administration’s allegedly cushy treatment of undocumented immigrants already settled in the U.S. Some conservatives, including Sessions, characterized Obama’s border control as a policy of ‘open borders.’ (The plural of border is always a curious usage; none of these critics seems the least bit concerned about the Canadian frontier.) The lawless brown hordes streaming unchecked over the border and settling into a life of ease have been a recurring source of angst for some conservatives.” [Chicago Tribune, 7/10/15]

## DISCRIMINATION

Sessions was denied a federal judgeship in the 1980s in part due to his use of racially insensitive language, his statement that the KKK was “an acceptable” organization, and discriminatory prosecutorial actions taken against voting rights advocates. During his 1986 confirmation hearing, “Sessions called the Voting Right Act a ‘piece of intrusive legislation.’” Session called police bias “just life,” but according to ABC, “Sessions also welcomed ... ‘heightened attention’ on racial profiling, saying more discussions had already ‘improved some of the things that have happened.’” The Senator has been critical of Black Lives Matter, saying the group made “really radical ... absolutely false” statements. ABC also wrote that “Sessions said an ‘experienced law enforcement officer’ in Alabama told him ‘the kinds of problems we’re seeing and the legal actions that have been taken and the marches in protest about police do have the tendency to cause [police]...to stay under the shade tree, and not walk the streets.’” The Senator has also been reluctant to expand the definition of hate crimes. He opposed countless measures that insured equal protection for members of the LGBTQ community. He voted for a constitutional ban on same-sex marriage, against workplace protections for LGBTQ persons, for leaving “don’t ask, don’t tell” in place, and twice against expanding hate crimes to include sexual orientation and gender identity. Despite this opposition, in 2009, he supported an amendment that would expand hate-crimes protections to members of the military.

*Please note that this section includes a limited review of key votes. Additional information on Sessions’ Senate votes will be added as research continues.*

**2009: Sessions Supported Expanding Hate-Crimes Protection To Soldiers.** From an July 20 floor speech: “Mr. SESSIONS. Madam President, I thank Senator Levin. It is always a pleasure to work with him and others who work with us to make sure that when we prosecute a hate crime that results in death,



that it is possible to have the death penalty in Federal court. I think that is appropriate in those instances where it may be appropriate for the Federal Government to proceed with such a death penalty prosecution. It would be odd that it would not be possible and a crime could have resulted--easily in multiple murders--by one of the most vicious criminals one can imagine. The next amendment I call the soldiers amendment. It is distinct from the hate crimes legislation we have been discussing. It expands the protections that the United States of America provides to its soldiers. Remember, we provide protections now to Federal officers, postmen--any Federal officer of the United States is protected, and so are soldiers in certain circumstances. This amendment would create a new Federal crime which puts members of the U.S. military on equal footing with other protected classes. It makes it a crime to knowingly assault, batter a serviceman or immediate family member or knowingly destroy or injure their property ``on account of the military service or status of that individual as a United States serviceman ..... “ It is not a total expansion of Federal law, but it says if you are attacked or assaulted, battered, or your family members are simply because you are a member of the U.S. military serving your country, then the Federal Government would obviously have the ability to prosecute because it is a high duty, and no higher responsibility, for the U.S. Government to protect its soldiers from assaults arising from their service to our country.” [Jeff Sessions Senate Website, [7/20/09](#)]

## Gender

### Votes

**2000: Sessions Voted Against An Amendment “That Would Broaden The Categories Covered By Hate Crimes To Include Gender, Sexual Orientation And Disability And Would Make It Easier For The Federal Government To Get Involved In The Investigation And Prosecution Of Hate Crimes.”** On November 4, 2013, the U.S. Senate voted on the “Kennedy, D-Mass., amendment that would broaden the categories covered by hate crimes to include gender, sexual orientation and disability and would make it easier for the federal government to get involved in the investigation and prosecution of hate crimes. It would authorize \$5 million per year for fiscal 2001 and 2002 to assist states and local authorities in investigating and prosecuting hate crimes. It also would require the Justice Department to certify before prosecution that hate was a motivating factor in the crime, and that the department has consulted with the state or local law enforcement officials regarding the prosecution of hate crimes.” The motion passed 57-42. Sessions voted against the amendment. [CQ; United States Senate, Vote 136, [7/20/00](#)]

**2002: Sessions Voted Against Cloture On A Hate Crimes Bill.** On November 4, 2013, the U.S. Senate voted on a “Motion to invoke cloture (thus limiting debate) on the bill that would broaden the definition of hate crimes to include acts committed because of the victim's sex, sexual orientation or disability and allow the federal government to help states prosecute hate crimes even if no federally protected activity was involved.” The motion failed 54-43. Sessions voted against the motion. [CQ; United States Senate, Vote 147, [6/11/02](#)]

**2007: Sessions Voted Against A Measure That Would “Make Violent Crimes That Cause Bodily Harm Based On The Victim's Race, Color, Religion Or National Origin Punishable By A Fine And Up To 10 Years In Prison, And Punishable By A Life Sentence If The Victim Dies, Is Kidnapped Or Subjected To Aggravated Sexual Abuse.”** Sessions voted against a “Motion to invoke cloture (thus limiting debate) on the Kennedy, D-Mass., amendment no. 3035 to the Levin, D-Mich., substitute amendment no. 2011. The Kennedy amendment would make violent crimes that cause bodily harm based on the victim's race, color, religion or national origin punishable by a fine and up to 10 years in prison, and punishable by a life sentence if the victim dies, is kidnapped or subjected to aggravated

sexual abuse. It also would create the same penalties for crimes motivated by gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability. The substitute would authorize \$648.3 billion for defense programs in fiscal 2008, including \$127.5 billion for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. It also would authorize \$143.5 billion for operations and maintenance; \$109.9 billion for procurement; \$122.9 billion for military personnel and \$74.7 billion for research development, testing and evaluation.” [CQ; United States Senate, Vote 350, [9/27/07](#)]

## LGBTQ

**1997: The Star-Ledger: “Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.) ... Indicated That He ‘Would Be Reluctant To Expand The Definition Of Hate Crimes.’** According to The Star-Ledger, “Now the White House is under pressure to add crimes motivated by bias against sexual orientation, gender and disability to federal criminal civil rights statutes ... A coalition includes the Anti-Defamation League, the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence and the Disability Rights Education Defense Fund. It has been working quietly for years on the issue, which members say has been hidden for too long, despite the fact that it cuts across a number of different groups. They will have an opportunity to make their case during today’s White House Conference on Hate Crimes, which is expected to receive considerable news media attention ... The coalition has so far avoided controversy because it has not yet publicized the proposal. However, Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) is planning to sponsor legislation adding the three categories, and the White House is considering throwing its support behind the bill when it is introduced. So far, however, the administration has not taken a public stand on the issue. When and if this happens, the issue may well become a lightning rod for religious conservatives and the right wing of the Republican Party in Congress. Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.), for instance, indicated that he ‘would be reluctant to expand the definition of hate crimes but will wait to see the actual legislation before making a final decision,’ according to his press secretary, John Cox.” [The Star-Ledger, 11/10/97]

**Huffington Post: “Sessions Voted In Support Of A Constitutional Ban On Same-Sex Marriage, Against Taking Up A Bill Providing Workplace Discrimination Protections For LGBTQ People, Against Repealing The Military’s ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell’ Policy, And — Two Times — Against Expanding The Definition Of Hate Crimes To Include Attacks On People Because Of Their Sexual Orientation And Gender Identity.”** He voted in support of a constitutional ban on same-sex marriage, against taking up a bill providing workplace discrimination protections for LGBTQ people, against repealing the military’s “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy, and — two times — against expanding the definition of hate crimes to include attacks on people because of their sexual orientation and gender identity. In 2014, a year after the Supreme Court struck down part of the now-defunct Defense of Marriage Act, Sessions co-sponsored a bill that would allow the state definition of marriage to supersede the federal definition. Sessions is currently co-sponsoring the First Amendment Defense Act, an extreme measure that would allow any taxpayer-funded organization to ignore laws that conflict with its religious beliefs about marriage. It opens the door to all kinds of discrimination against LGBTQ people. A state-contracted counselor, for example, could deny services to a lesbian mom. Taxpayer-funded adoption agencies could refuse to place children with same-sex married couples. Government employees could decline to file official forms for gay couples (see: Kim Davis, who went to jail for doing this). [Huffington Post, 11/22/16; S.2024, Introduced [2/12/14](#); S.1598, Introduced [6/17/16](#)]

The Matthew Shepard And James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act.

**Sessions Called The Matthew Shepard And James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act The “So-Called Hate Crimes Act.”** “Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I am very concerned about legislation that has been added to the Defense bill, the so-called Hate Crimes Act. Certainly, none of us has any

sympathy whatsoever for people who commit crimes of any kind, particularly those who would attack somebody because of their race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or any other reason. I wish to take a few moments to explain why this is important and why this legislation is not good and it ought not to be passed. Some of my remarks may appear to be technical, but they are very important, in my view, as a former Federal prosecutor for almost 15 years. I don't think it was ever appropriate that we bring this legislation to the floor and stick it on this Defense bill without having a markup in the committee without the ability to discuss it and improve it.” [Jeff Sessions Senate Website, [7/20/09](#)]

**Sessions Questioned The Need For Hate Crimes Legislation, Saying: “The Hate Crimes Amendment Is Unwarranted, Possibly Unconstitutional — Certainly, I Believe It Is Unconstitutional In Certain Parts — And It Violates The Basic Principle Of Equal Justice Under The Law.”** “Senator Sessions, who previously served fifteen years as a federal prosecutor, delivered a blistering attack in a floor statement on the legislation before the Senate on July 20, 2009. Among his stated grievances: ‘I think two questions should be asked initially. First, is this a crime that uniquely affects a Federal interest, and can it be addressed by an effective and enforceable statute? Second, have local police and sheriffs’ offices failed to protect and prosecute this vital interest?’ Ironically, Alabama, Mr. Session’s home state answers his second question quite well. It is among a handful of states with the worst record of hate crime recordation and enforcement by authorities of any in the Union. Despite having a hate crime law, in 2015, Alabama, with a population 4.9 million, recorded only 10 hate crimes, while neighboring Tennessee, with a population of 6.6 million counted 221 hate crimes. In 2009, Alabama counted only nine. According to the FBI few Alabama law enforcement agencies meaningfully participate in hate crime reporting. Despite the Supreme Court’s unanimous approval of both state hate crime laws in *Wisconsin v. Mitchell*, 508 US 476 (1993), and various other federal civil rights laws, Mr. Sessions railed against its passage. ‘The hate crimes amendment is unwarranted, possibly unconstitutional — certainly, I believe it is unconstitutional in certain parts — and it violates the basic principle of equal justice under the law. The hate crimes amendment to this bill has been said to cheapen the civil rights movement.’” [Huffington Post, [11/19/16](#); Jeff Sessions Senate Website, [7/20/09](#)]

Votes

**2000: Sessions Voted Against An Amendment “That Would Broaden The Categories Covered By Hate Crimes To Include Gender, Sexual Orientation And Disability And Would Make It Easier For The Federal Government To Get Involved In The Investigation And Prosecution Of Hate Crimes.”** On November 4, 2013, the U.S. Senate voted on the “Kennedy, D-Mass., amendment that would broaden the categories covered by hate crimes to include gender, sexual orientation and disability and would make it easier for the federal government to get involved in the investigation and prosecution of hate crimes. It would authorize \$5 million per year for fiscal 2001 and 2002 to assist states and local authorities in investigating and prosecuting hate crimes. It also would require the Justice Department to certify before prosecution that hate was a motivating factor in the crime, and that the department has consulted with the state or local law enforcement officials regarding the prosecution of hate crimes.” The motion passed 57-42. Sessions voted against the amendment. [CQ; United States Senate, Vote 136, [7/20/00](#)]

**2002: Sessions Voted Against Cloture On A Hate Crimes Bill.** On November 4, 2013, the U.S. Senate voted on a “Motion to invoke cloture (thus limiting debate) on the bill that would broaden the definition of hate crimes to include acts committed because of the victim's sex, sexual orientation or disability and allow the federal government to help states prosecute hate crimes even if no federally protected activity was involved.” The motion failed 54-43. Sessions voted against the motion. [CQ; United States Senate, Vote 147, [6/11/02](#)]

**2006: Sessions Voted For Cloture “To Proceed To The Joint Resolution To Propose A Constitutional Amendment That Would Define Marriage As Consisting Only Of The Union Of A Man And A Woman.”** On June 7, 2006, the U.S. Senate voted on a “Motion to invoke cloture (thus limiting debate) on the motion to proceed to the joint resolution to propose a constitutional amendment that would define marriage as consisting only of the union of a man and a woman. It would provide that neither the U.S. Constitution nor any state's constitution could be construed to require that marriage or any other constructs of marriage be conferred to any other union.” The motion failed 49-48. Sessions voted for the motion. [CQ; United States Senate, Vote 163, [6/7/06](#)]

**2007: Sessions Voted Against A Measure That Would “Make Violent Crimes That Cause Bodily Harm Based On The Victim's Race, Color, Religion Or National Origin Punishable By A Fine And Up To 10 Years In Prison, And Punishable By A Life Sentence If The Victim Dies, Is Kidnapped Or Subjected To Aggravated Sexual Abuse.”** Sessions voted against a “Motion to invoke cloture (thus limiting debate) on the Kennedy, D-Mass., amendment no. 3035 to the Levin, D-Mich., substitute amendment no. 2011. The Kennedy amendment would make violent crimes that cause bodily harm based on the victim's race, color, religion or national origin punishable by a fine and up to 10 years in prison, and punishable by a life sentence if the victim dies, is kidnapped or subjected to aggravated sexual abuse. It also would create the same penalties for crimes motivated by gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability. The substitute would authorize \$648.3 billion for defense programs in fiscal 2008, including \$127.5 billion for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. It also would authorize \$143.5 billion for operations and maintenance; \$109.9 billion for procurement; \$122.9 billion for military personnel and \$74.7 billion for research development, testing and evaluation.” [CQ; United States Senate, Vote 350, [9/27/07](#)]

**2009: Sessions Voted Against The Matthew Shepard And James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act.** “But the creation of stricter punishments for violent acts based on a victim's sexual orientation is a fairly recent development. It wasn't until 2009, when Congress passed and President Barack Obama signed the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act that this was the case. The law added perceived gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, and disabilities as protected classes under existing federal hate crimes law. Previously, the law only protected victims of violence based on race, nationality, ethnicity, and religion. The law, which was included as an amendment to a broader defense spending bill, was not passed easily. In the House and Senate, a majority of Republicans voted against the measure at different points. Here's a list of the Congress members who are still part of Congress and voted against the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act — through the cloture vote for the amendment to the defense spending bill (in the Senate) and when the act was voted on by itself (in the House) ... Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-AL).” [Vox, [6/13/16](#)]

**2010: Sessions Voted Against Repealing Don't Ask Don't Tell.** On December 18, 2010, the U.S. Senate voted on the “Reid, D-Nev., motion to concur in the Senate amendment to the bill with a House amendment that would allow for the repeal of the military's "don't ask, don't tell" policy, which prohibits military service by openly gay men and women, after certain requirements are met, including the submission of a written certification, signed by the president, the secretary of Defense, and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, that the repeal is consistent with military readiness and effectiveness and that they have considered the recommendations of the Comprehensive Review Working Group and prepared the necessary policies and regulations to implement the repeal.” The motion passed 65-31. Sessions voted against the motion. [CQ; United States Senate, Vote 281, [12/18/10](#)]

**2013: Sessions Voted Against Proceeding On A Bill That “Would Prohibit Employers, Employment Agencies And Labor Organizations From Discriminating Against An Employee, Applicant Or Member On The Basis Of His Or Her Perceived Or Actual Sexual Orientation Or Gender Identity.”** On November 4, 2013, the U.S. Senate voted on a “Motion to invoke cloture (thus limiting debate) on the Reid, D-Nev., motion to proceed to the bill that would prohibit employers, employment agencies and labor organizations from discriminating against an employee, applicant or member on the basis of his or her perceived or actual sexual orientation or gender identity.” The motion passed 61-30. Sessions voted against the motion. [CQ; United States Senate, Vote 229, [11/4/13](#)]

## Race

**1996: USA Today: “Sessions Argued As Early As 1996, Before He Ran For The U.S. Senate, That The Voting Rights Act Was Being Used To Engineer Certain Political Outcomes, Not Just Protect Access To The Ballot Box.”** According to USA Today, “Sessions argued as early as 1996, before he ran for the U.S. Senate, that the Voting Rights Act was being used to engineer certain political outcomes, not just protect access to the ballot box. As Alabama attorney general, Sessions opposed two legal actions — taken in the name of the Voting Rights Act — that civil rights advocates believed would have improved the chances for blacks to be elected as judges in Alabama. Sessions defeated both.” [USA Today, [11/24/16](#)]

**1997: The Star-Ledger: “Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.) ... Indicated That He ‘Would Be Reluctant To Expand The Definition Of Hate Crimes.’** According to The Star-Ledger, “Now the White House is under pressure to add crimes motivated by bias against sexual orientation, gender and disability to federal criminal civil rights statutes .... A coalition includes the Anti-Defamation League, the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence and the Disability Rights Education Defense Fund. It has been working quietly for years on the issue, which members say has been hidden for too long, despite the fact that it cuts across a number of different groups. They will have an opportunity to make their case during today’s White House Conference on Hate Crimes, which is expected to receive considerable news media attention ... The coalition has so far avoided controversy because it has not yet publicized the proposal. However, Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) is planning to sponsor legislation adding the three categories, and the White House is considering throwing its support behind the bill when it is introduced. So far, however, the administration has not taken a public stand on the issue. When and if this happens, the issue may well become a lightning rod for religious conservatives and the right wing of the Republican Party in Congress. Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.), for instance, indicated that he ‘would be reluctant to expand the definition of hate crimes but will wait to see the actual legislation before making a final decision,’ according to his press secretary, John Cox.” [The Star-Ledger, 11/10/97]

**1990’s: USA Today: “Sessions Opposed Two Legal Actions — Taken In The Name Of The Voting Rights Act — That Civil Rights Advocates Believed Would Have Improved The Chances For Blacks To Be Elected As Judges In Alabama. Sessions Defeated Both.”** According to USA Today, “Sessions argued as early as 1996, before he ran for the U.S. Senate, that the Voting Rights Act was being used to engineer certain political outcomes, not just protect access to the ballot box. As Alabama attorney general, Sessions opposed two legal actions — taken in the name of the Voting Rights Act — that civil rights advocates believed would have improved the chances for blacks to be elected as judges in Alabama. Sessions defeated both.” [USA Today, [11/24/16](#)]

**2001: Sessions: “I Think It Is Likely That Within Every Department There Are Some Officers Who Subtly, If Not Otherwise, Are Biased In The Way They Go About Enforcing The Law. I**



**Think That Is Just Life.**” “During an August 2001 hearing of the Senate Judiciary Committee, which was looking at legislation to penalize police departments that continue to make traffic and other stops based on race, Sessions acknowledged bias in policing. ‘I think it is likely that within every department there are some officers who subtly, if not otherwise, are biased in the way they go about enforcing the law. I think that is just life. We know that to be true,’ Sessions said. ‘It is not legitimate that an American citizen feels that they are more likely to be arrested or held to account or stopped and searched than someone else simply because of the color of their skin. ... Most people are not going to file a lawsuit if they have been mistreated. They are just going to nurse a grudge and feel like their country hasn’t treated them fairly. So that is why we need to deal with it and keep talking about it and see if we can come up with a policy that will work.’” [ABC, [11/18/16](#)]

- **2001: ABC: “Sessions Also Welcomed The ‘Heightened Attention’ On Racial Profiling, Saying More Discussions Had Already ‘Improved Some Of The Things That Have Happened.’”** [ABC, [11/18/16](#)]
- **2001: ABC: “The Senator Expressed Concern That Police ‘Might Be In A Catch-22’ -- Navigating The Prospect Of Disproportionate Policing And ‘Legitimate’ Concerns Of A Minority Community ‘Afraid For Their Lives And Their Children’s Lives.’”** According to ABC, “But the senator expressed concern that police ‘might be in a Catch-22’ -- navigating the prospect of disproportionate policing and ‘legitimate’ concerns of a minority community ‘afraid for their lives and their children’s lives.’ If police are ‘more aggressive in a neighborhood where the high crime rate is, which may be a minority neighborhood, [they] might be criticized statistically in some way under this,’ Sessions said. ‘It could cause an officer to be intimidated from doing the very things necessary to protect the African-American community if we misread the data, if we over-read the data.’” [ABC, [11/18/16](#)]

**2006: USA Today: ‘Sessions Was Among Those Who Questioned The Need For Section 5, Which Required State And Local Election Officials In Nine States To Submit Every Election-Related Change To A Federal Judge Or The Department Of Justice To Determine Whether It Was Unfair To Minority Voters.’** According to USA Today, ‘In 2006 when Congress started holding hearings about reauthorizing the Voting Rights Act, Sessions was among those who questioned the need for Section 5, which required state and local election officials in nine states to submit every election-related change to a federal judge or the Department of Justice to determine whether it was unfair to minority voters. Sessions said he wanted Congress to ‘see if there are other areas of the country that might ought to be covered by some of these provisions, see if there are some areas that are covered now that no longer need to be.’ In the end, Congress decided to renew the 1965 law without changing or repealing Section 5. Sessions went along, but with reservations. ‘I am worried because... (the extension) does little to acknowledge the tremendous progress made over the past 40 years in Alabama and other covered jurisdictions,’ Sessions said then. The Senate voted 98-0 to renew the Voting Rights Act.’ [USA Today, [11/24/16](#)]

**2006: Sessions On Voting Rights Extension: ‘I Am Worried Because... (The Extension) Does Little To Acknowledge The Tremendous Progress Made Over The Past 40 Years In Alabama And Other Covered Jurisdictions.’** According to USA Today, ‘In 2006 when Congress started holding hearings about reauthorizing the Voting Rights Act, Sessions was among those who questioned the need for Section 5, which required state and local election officials in nine states to submit every election-related change to a federal judge or the Department of Justice to determine whether it was unfair to minority voters. Sessions said he wanted Congress to ‘see if there are other areas of the country that might ought to be covered by some of these provisions, see if there are some areas that are covered now that no

longer need to be.’ In the end, Congress decided to renew the 1965 law without changing or repealing Section 5. Sessions went along, but with reservations. ‘I am worried because... (the extension) does little to acknowledge the tremendous progress made over the past 40 years in Alabama and other covered jurisdictions,’ Sessions said then. The Senate voted 98-0 to renew the Voting Rights Act.’ [USA Today, [11/24/16](#)]

**2015: Sessions Sponsored A Bill To Award A Congressional Gold Medal To The Foot Soldiers Who Participated In Bloody Sunday.** On February 12, 2015, Sessions introduced a bill that ‘directs the Speaker of the House and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate to arrange for the presentation, on behalf of Congress, of a gold medal to the Foot Soldiers who participated in Bloody Sunday, Turnaround Tuesday, or the final Selma to Montgomery Voting Rights March during March of 1965, which served as a catalyst for the Voting Rights Act of 1965. (Sec. 4) The medals struck pursuant to this Act are national medals.’ [United States Senate, S.527, 2/12/15]

**2015: Sessions On Confederate Flag: ‘What I Do Think Is That It Is Not Appropriate For Us To Erase History And Who We Are And Our Ancestors. I Had Ancestors – My Great Grandfather Was Killed At Antietam. I Don’t Think He Was An Evil Person.’** According to Breitbart, ‘ In an appearance on Birmingham, AL WAPI’s Matt Murphy Show last week, Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-AL) reacted to the controversy surrounding the Confederate flag and its place in public forums. Sessions was asked in particular to react to Gov. Robert Bentley (R-AL) and his decision to remove the flag from his state’s capitol grounds. The junior Alabama did not criticize Bentley directly, but insisted that despite the flag having been ‘commandeered’ by those opposing the civil rights movement, it is not appropriate to ‘erase history’ when it comes to the flag. ‘I’m not criticizing the governor,’ Sessions said. ‘You know the Confederate battle flag. I believe in history. We can’t erase history. But I do know that a lot of our good citizens feel like that was kind of commandeered as a symbol of anti-civil rights, and those kind of things. So I can be sensitive to that and working on that. What I do think is that it is not appropriate for us to erase history and who we are and our ancestors. I had ancestors – my great grandfather was killed at Antietam. I don’t think he was an evil person. He was called to serve his country as he knew it at that time and he did his duty leaving my grandfather, a baby, at home.’ ‘So this is a huge part of who we are and the left is continually seeking in a host of different ways it seems to me – you know, I don’t want to be too paranoid about this, but they seek to delegitimize the fabulous accomplishments of our country by finding all the problems and highlighting them continually and ignore the tremendous achievements we’ve obtained.’ [Breitbart, [6/29/15](#)]

**2015: ABC: “Sessions Said He Believes ‘Community-Based Policing Is A Great Thing,’ But, ‘It Is Clear That Police Officers All Over America Are Concerned’ About Legal Actions Taken By The Justice Department Against Police Officers And Police Departments.”** According to ABC, In A November 2015 “Senate Judiciary Committee hearing, Sessions said he believes ‘community-based policing is a great thing,’ but, ‘it is clear that police officers all over America are concerned’ about legal actions taken by the Justice Department against police officers and police departments.” [ABC, [11/18/16](#)]

**2015: ABC: Sessions Said Black Lives Matter Was Making Statements That Were “Really Radical” And “Absolutely False.”** According to ABC, “‘I do think it’s a real problem when we have Black Lives Matter making statements that are really radical, that are absolutely false,’ Sessions said during the November 2015 hearing. He expressed concern that, in his view, officials within the Justice Department’s Civil Rights Division had yet to criticize statements made by Black Lives Matter such as ‘Pigs in a Blanket, Fry ‘Em Like Bacon.’” [ABC, [11/18/16](#)]

- **2015: ABC: Sessions “Expressed Concern That, In His View, Officials Within The Justice Department’s Civil Rights Division Had Yet To Criticize Statements Made By Black Lives Matter Such As ‘Pigs In A Blanket, Fry ‘Em Like Bacon.’”** According to ABC, “‘I do think it’s a real problem when we have Black Lives Matter making statements that are really radical, that are absolutely false,’ Sessions said during the November 2015 hearing. He expressed concern that, in his view, officials within the Justice Department’s Civil Rights Division had yet to criticize statements made by Black Lives Matter such as ‘Pigs in a Blanket, Fry ‘Em Like Bacon.’” [ABC, [11/18/16](#)]
- **2015: ABC: “Sessions Said An ‘Experienced Law Enforcement Officer’ In Alabama Told Him ‘The Kinds Of Problems We’re Seeing And The Legal Actions That Have Been Taken And The Marches In Protest About Police Do Have The Tendency To Cause [Police]...To Stay Under The Shade Tree, And Not Walk The Streets.’”** According to ABC, “During the hearing, Sessions said an ‘experienced law enforcement officer’ in Alabama told him ‘the kinds of problems we’re seeing and the legal actions that have been taken and the marches in protest about police do have the tendency to cause [police]...to stay under the shade tree, and not walk the streets.’” [ABC, [11/18/16](#)]

**2015: Sessions Told Stanley-Becker: ‘Racism Is Totally Unacceptable In America. Everybody Needs To Be Treated Fairly And Objectively.’** [The Washington Post, [11/18/16](#)]

**2016: Sessions On Shelby Decision: ‘Now If You Go To Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, People Aren’t Being Denied The Vote Because Of The Color Of Their Skin.’** ‘Alabama Sen. Jeff Sessions was more talkative. The decision, after all, was rooted in a dispute in his state’s own Shelby County. ‘Shelby County is a majority-white county,’ he said. ‘I know they elected an African-American Republican county commissioner. I think they have a five-member county commission. You’ve got a city, and now you’ve gotta draw districts and gerrymander districts to try to get an African-American [representative], and you can have honest disagreements, and they can sue you.’ This, he said, was unfair. The decision was ‘was good news, I think, for the South, in that [there was] not sufficient evidence to justify treating them disproportionately than say Philadelphia or Boston or Los Angeles or Chicago ... Shelby County never had a history of denying the vote, certainly not now. There is racial discrimination in the country, but I don’t think in Shelby County, Alabama, anyone is being denied the right to vote because of the color of their skin. It would be much more likely to have those things occur in Philadelphia, Chicago, or Boston.’ It sounded like Sessions could support a pre-clearance law if it were applied more generally and didn’t just hit the South. But he was undecided. ‘I voted for the VRA extension,’ he explained. ‘I wanted to vote for it, but at the very last minute I was very uneasy, because all of a sudden they expanded it to 25 years, and that probably wasn’t justified. It would be an appropriate time for Congress to identify what we need in terms of the Voting Rights Act. It was passed in direct response to blatant voting rights denial based on the color of one’s skin. That’s how it was justified, correctly I think, in applying to states that had a real history of that. But now if you go to Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, people aren’t being denied the vote because of the color of their skin.’ [Slate, [6/25/16](#)]

**Daily Beast: “Donald Trump’s Pick For Attorney General, Sen. Jeff Sessions, Is The Human Embodiment Of The Phrase ‘All Lives Matter.’”** “Donald Trump’s pick for attorney general, Sen. Jeff Sessions, is the human embodiment of the phrase ‘all lives matter.’ And as head of the Justice Department, he will have the power to radically change how the federal government oversees law enforcement, prosecutes drug offenders, and handles voting issues. Changes are coming. And it’s safe to



assume that whatever the Black Lives Matter movement wants, Sessions wants the opposite.” [Daily Beast, [11/20/16](#)]

**Throughout His Career, Sessions Lambasted The Voting Rights Act And Claimed That In-Person Voter Fraud Was A Common Occurrence.** “While he voted for extending Voting Rights Act in 2006, Sessions has since praised the Supreme Court’s decision gutting the law. And early in his career he derided the law, calling it ‘intrusive legislation.’ And throughout his career he’s claimed, with scant evidence, that in-person voter fraud is a common occurrence and needs to be cracked down on.” [New York Daily News, [11/18/16](#)]

1986 Confirmation Hearings And Accusations Of Racial Slurs

**1986: Sessions Denied Federal Judgeship Due To Racially Insensitive Remarks.** According to Los Angeles Times, ‘The Senate Judiciary Committee, for the first time rejecting one of President Reagan’s choices for the federal bench, Thursday voted down the nomination of Jefferson B. Sessions III to a district court in Alabama. The 39-year old Sessions, now a U.S. attorney in Mobile, Ala., became only the second judicial nominee to be turned down by the committee in 49 years. Sessions had come under heavy attack for past remarks that his critics said reflected insensitivity to racial minorities. Sessions denied that he was insensitive and said his remarks were being distorted.’ [Los Angeles Times, 6/6/86]

**Los Angeles Times: ‘Critics Had Charged That Sessions Was Not Qualified And That Several Remarks He Had Made Showed A ‘Gross Insensitivity’ About Racial Issues.’** According to Los Angeles Times, ‘In his radio talk, Reagan did not mention the Judiciary Committee’s bipartisan rejection June 5 of the nomination of Jefferson B. Sessions III to be a federal District Court judge. Critics had charged that Sessions was not qualified and that several remarks he had made showed a ‘gross insensitivity’ about racial issues.’ [Los Angeles Times, 6/22/86]

**1985: The New York Times: ‘Mr. Sessions Supervised The Prosecution Of Three Blacks Who ... Were Acquitted Of Voting Fraud Charges.’** According to The New York Times, ‘A major fight is developing in Congress over President Reagan’s nomination of Jefferson Beauregard Sessions 3d, the United States Attorney in Mobile, Ala., to be a Federal district judge. Mr. Sessions supervised the prosecution of three blacks who in July were acquitted of voting fraud charges. The Republican Senator from Alabama, Jeremiah Denton, has praised Mr. Sessions as an outstanding lawyer. But civil rights groups are organizing opposition to him on the ground that he has shown insensitivity to blacks in his four years as United States Attorney ... In the voting fraud case, the Government charged that the three black defendants had collected and altered absentee ballots in a conspiracy to elect certain black Democratic candidates to local offices in Perry County, Ala., last year. The defendants, as leaders of the Perry County Civic League, helped many of the county’s older black residents mark their ballots. Over the past 20 years, defense lawyers said, many blacks in southwestern Alabama who were previously excluded from the political process gained voting rights and won some elections, in part as the result of efforts by the Perry County Civic League. Albert Turner, one of the defendants, along with his wife, Evelyn, said their prosecution was part of a politically inspired “witch hunt” designed to chill the political participation of blacks. “The Federal Government came in here for the sole purpose of intimidating black voters who were trying to elect black officials,” Mr. Turner asserted in an interview.’ [The New York Times, 12/1/85]

**The New York Times: ‘Executive Director Of The Leadership Conference On Civil Rights, A Coalition Of More Than 160 Organizations, Said ‘Civil Rights Groups Will Be Actively Opposing’ The Nomination.’** ‘The hearing was scheduled for last week, but Democrats on the panel asked for time

to investigate Mr. Sessions's record. The Reagan Administration said there was no reason for a delay and urged senators to confirm the nomination quickly. Ralph G. Neas, executive director of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, a coalition of more than 160 organizations, said 'civil rights groups will be actively opposing' the nomination. In the voting fraud case, the Government charged that the three black defendants had collected and altered absentee ballots in a conspiracy to elect certain black Democratic candidates to local offices in Perry County, Ala., last year. The defendants, as leaders of the Perry County Civic League, helped many of the county's older black residents mark their ballots. Over the past 20 years, defense lawyers said, many blacks in southwestern Alabama who were previously excluded from the political process gained voting rights and won some elections, in part as the result of efforts by the Perry County Civic League.' [The New York Times, 12/1/85]

**New York Times: 'Mr. Sessions Denied The Charge. He Said He Had Run The United States Attorney's Office "Without Any Racial Bias Whatsoever." He And Other Federal Officials Said The Investigation Of Mr. Turner Was Started In Response To Allegations By Other Blacks And A Request From The Local District Attorney.** According to The New York Times, Albert Turner, one of the defendants, along with his wife, Evelyn, said their prosecution was part of a politically inspired 'witch hunt' designed to chill the political participation of blacks. 'The Federal Government came in here for the sole purpose of intimidating black voters who were trying to elect black officials,' Mr. Turner asserted in an interview. 'Without Racial Bias' Mr. Sessions denied the charge. He said he had run the United States Attorney's office 'without any racial bias whatsoever.' He and other Federal officials said the investigation of Mr. Turner was started in response to allegations by other blacks and a request from the local District Attorney. Mr. Turner was an aide to the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., head of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and from 1965 to 1972 he was the Alabama director of the conference. Mr. Turner was one of the leaders of the voting rights march who were clubbed down by the police in Selma, Ala., in 1965. While investigating the voting fraud case, Federal agents monitored a meeting held by Mr. Turner and other leaders of the Perry County Civic League on Sept. 3, 1984, the night before the state's primary election. At the trial, witnesses testified that Mr. Turner and another defendant, Spencer Hogue Jr., went from that meeting to the local post office in Marion, Ala., where they mailed about 500 absentee ballots that had been marked.' [The New York Times, 12/1/85]

**The New York Times: 'I'm Often Loose With My Tongue. I May Have Said Something About The N.A.A.C.P. Being Un-American Or Communist, But I Meant No Harm By It.'** According to The New York Times, 'The nomination of a United States Attorney in Mobile, Ala., to be a Federal district judge became entangled today in a fierce debate over the nominee's attitudes toward black people. In hearings before the Senate Judiciary Committee, the nominee, Jefferson B. Sessions 3d, was questioned about his prosecution last year of three blacks in Perry County, Alabama, who were acquitted of voting fraud, and about a number of statements attributed to him by witnesses. Senator Joseph R. Biden Jr. of Delaware, the ranking Democrat on the committee, asked Mr. Sessions whether he had ever referred to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the American Civil Liberties Union, as 'un-American' organizations and 'Communists.' 'I don't recall saying that,' Mr. Sessions said. 'I'm often loose with my tongue. I may have said something about the N.A.A.C.P. being un-American or Communist, but I meant no harm by it.'" [The New York Times, 3/14/86]

**The New York Times: 'Mr. Sessions Purportedly Said He Had Considered The Ku Klux Klan An Acceptable Organization.'** According to The New York Times, 'In the statement, Mr. Figures also provided new details of a conversation in which Mr. Sessions purportedly said he had considered the Ku Klux Klan an acceptable organization until he learned that its members used marijuana. Mr. Figures said he overheard Mr. Sessions make the comment 'and I certainly took it as a serious statement.' Another

Justice Department lawyer, Barry Kowalski, testified today, however, that he also heard the statement and believed that Mr. Sessions had meant it as a joke.’ On another occasion, Mr. Figures said, Mr. Sessions ‘stated that he believed the N.A.A.C.P., the Southern Christian Leadership Conference Operation PUSH, and the National Council of Churches were all un-American organizations teaching Anti-American values.’ At the committee session last week, Mr. Sessions indicated that he had been quoted out of context. He said he had great respect for the N.A.A.C.P. and viewed the Klan as ‘a force for hatred and bigotry.’ [The New York Times, 3/20/86]

**Chicago Tribune: ‘A Black Lawyer Testified Thursday That His Former Boss, A U.S. Attorney Whom President Reagan Has Nominated To The Federal Bench, Regularly Called Him ‘Boy’ And Warned Him ‘To Be Careful What You Say To White Folks.’** According to Chicago Tribune, ‘A black lawyer testified Thursday that his former boss, a U.S. attorney whom President Reagan has nominated to the federal bench, regularly called him ‘boy’ and warned him ‘to be careful what you say to white folks.’ A former assistant U.S. attorney in Mobile, Ala., Thomas Figures told the Senate Judiciary Committee that Jefferson B. Sessions lacks ‘sufficient respect and integrity’ to be a U.S. District Court judge there. Sessions has become one of the administration’s most controversial court nominations. In his testimony, Figures, a Carter appointee, said Sessions and ‘one or two of the others’ in the U.S. attorney’s office called him ‘boy.’ But an assistant U.S. attorney and another staffer denied this and said in sworn statements they had never heard Figures called ‘by anything but his given name.’ [Chicago Tribune, 3/21/86]

**Sessions: ‘I Am Not A Racist. I Am Not Insensitive To Blacks.’** According to Plain Dealer, ‘By the time Jeff Sessions appeared before the Senate to answer questions about his nomination to the federal bench, his reputation was in tatters. Former colleagues had accused him of frequently making racist comments, such as accusing the NAACP of teaching ‘anti-American values’ and agreeing with a comment that a white civil rights lawyer litigating voting rights cases was a ‘disgrace to his race.’ With his nomination all but doomed, Sessions pleaded for a chance to salvage his reputation. ‘I am not the Jeff Sessions my detractors have tried to create,’ said Sessions, then a 39-year-old U.S. attorney from Alabama. ‘I am not a racist. I am not insensitive to blacks.’ Sessions’s defense didn’t work at the time. But, undeterred, he forged a career as a politician, becoming Alabama’s attorney general, a U.S. senator and, now, a key player in Donald Trump’s presidential campaign.’ [Plain Dealer, 7/19/16]

**Sessions Called NAACP A ‘Commie Pinko Organization.’** According to Plain Dealer, ‘J. Gerald Hebert, then a Justice Department lawyer based in Washington, recalled visiting the Mobile office while working on voting rights cases and listening as Sessions sounded off on his view of black civil rights groups, at one point calling the NAACP a ‘commie pinko organization,’ as Hebert recalled in a recent interview.’ [Plain Dealer, 7/19/16]

**Plain Dealer: ‘Thomas H. Figures, A Black Assistant U.S. Attorney Who Worked Under Sessions, Told The Committee That Sessions Said He Thought The Ku Klux Klan Was Okay Until He Learned Its Members Smoked Marijuana.’** [Plain Dealer, 7/19/16]

**Plain Dealer: Sessions ‘Said The Statement Was Not Intended To Signal Support For The Klan. When Pressed On An Allegation That He Had Used The N-Word To Refer To A Black County Commissioner, Sessions Said It Was ‘The First I Ever Heard That.’** [Plain Dealer, 7/19/16]

**Witnesses Testified That Sessions ‘Referred To A White Attorney Who Took On Voting-Rights Cases As A ‘Traitor To His Race.’** [Atlantic, [11/18/16](#)]

**Atlantic: ‘Sessions Also Faced Allegations That He Referred To A Democratic Official In Alabama As A Nigger.’** [Atlantic, [11/18/16](#)]

**During His 1986 Confirmation Hearing, ‘Sessions Called The Voting Right Act A ‘Piece Of Intrusive Legislation.’** [Slate, [11/18/16](#); Ari Berman Op-Ed, The New York Times, [11/19/16](#)]

Votes

**2007: Sessions Voted Against A Measure That Would ‘Make Violent Crimes That Cause Bodily Harm Based On The Victim’s Race, Color, Religion Or National Origin Punishable By A Fine And Up To 10 Years In Prison, And Punishable By A Life Sentence If The Victim Dies, Is Kidnapped Or Subjected To Aggravated Sexual Abuse.’** Sessions voted against a ‘Motion to invoke cloture (thus limiting debate) on the Kennedy, D-Mass., amendment no. 3035 to the Levin, D-Mich., substitute amendment no. 2011. The Kennedy amendment would make violent crimes that cause bodily harm based on the victim’s race, color, religion or national origin punishable by a fine and up to 10 years in prison, and punishable by a life sentence if the victim dies, is kidnapped or subjected to aggravated sexual abuse. It also would create the same penalties for crimes motivated by gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability. The substitute would authorize \$648.3 billion for defense programs in fiscal 2008, including \$127.5 billion for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. It also would authorize \$143.5 billion for operations and maintenance; \$109.9 billion for procurement; \$122.9 billion for military personnel and \$74.7 billion for research development, testing and evaluation.’ [CQ; United States Senate, Vote 163, [9/27/07](#)]

Religion

Votes

**2007: Sessions Voted Against A Measure That Would ‘Make Violent Crimes That Cause Bodily Harm Based On The Victim’s Race, Color, Religion Or National Origin Punishable By A Fine And Up To 10 Years In Prison, And Punishable By A Life Sentence If The Victim Dies, Is Kidnapped Or Subjected To Aggravated Sexual Abuse.’** Sessions voted against a ‘Motion to invoke cloture (thus limiting debate) on the Kennedy, D-Mass., amendment no. 3035 to the Levin, D-Mich., substitute amendment no. 2011. The Kennedy amendment would make violent crimes that cause bodily harm based on the victim’s race, color, religion or national origin punishable by a fine and up to 10 years in prison, and punishable by a life sentence if the victim dies, is kidnapped or subjected to aggravated sexual abuse. It also would create the same penalties for crimes motivated by gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability. The substitute would authorize \$648.3 billion for defense programs in fiscal 2008, including \$127.5 billion for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. It also would authorize \$143.5 billion for operations and maintenance; \$109.9 billion for procurement; \$122.9 billion for military personnel and \$74.7 billion for research development, testing and evaluation.’ [CQ; United States Senate, Vote 350, [9/27/07](#)]

CIVIL LIBERTIES

Since its inception in 2001, Sessions has supported nearly every iteration of the USA Patriot Act. Sessions has long supported government surveillance efforts including bulk meta data collection. According to Politico, “During the last major surveillance debate in 2015, Sessions warned against anything that could weaken the NSA’s spying capability ... The senator wrote that the USA Freedom Act, which aimed to stop the bulk collection of phone records, ‘would make it vastly more difficult for

the NSA to stop a terrorist than it is to stop a tax cheat. Why make it much harder to investigate terrorists than common criminals?” In 2009, Sessions told then-Attorney General Eric “Holder in one committee hearing on warrantless wiretapping that ‘we’ve exaggerated the extent to which this is somehow violative of our constitution.’” Sessions has also fervently denied allegations of prisoner abuse on the part the U.S. government. In 2005, the Senator said: “This country is not systematically abusing prisoners. We have no policy to do so. And it’s wrong to suggest that. And it puts our soldiers at risk who are in this battle because we sent them there ... [Referring to detainees] Some of them need to be executed.” The Senator also said that he “considered anyone who joined al-Qaeda to be ‘illegal combatants’ involved in a conspiracy to kill Americans, not soldiers who would be recognized prisoners of war under the Geneva Conventions.”

*Please note that this section includes a limited review of key votes. Additional information on Sessions’ Senate votes will be added as research continues.*

## Privacy

**Wired: ‘In His Nearly Two Decades As A Senator, Sessions Has Pushed For Spying Powers Beyond Even Those Supported By His Republican Congressional Colleagues And Intelligence Agents.’** According to Wired, ‘In his nearly two decades as a senator, Sessions has pushed for spying powers beyond even those supported by his Republican congressional colleagues and intelligence agents. He fought reform of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act in 2012 and against the USA Freedom Act that in 2015 placed new limits the NSA’s spying powers after the revelations of Edward Snowden—a law that passed a Republican House and Senate and was even endorsed by NSA director Michael Rogers.’ [Wired, 11/18/16]

**2006: Sessions Supported President Bush’s Terrorist Surveillance Program.** ‘Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-AL) was joined by five of his Senate colleagues today in announcing their support for the administration’s Terrorist Surveillance Program. Sessions headlined a U.S. Capitol news conference and was joined by Sens. Jon Kyl (AZ), Mike Crapo (ID), Saxby Chambliss (GA), John Cornyn (TX) and Mel Martinez (FL). The senators’ announcement comes on the eve of next Monday’s Senate Judiciary Committee hearing on the surveillance program. Sessions is a member of the committee.’ [Senator Jeff Sessions Official Website, [2/2/06](#)]

**2006: Sessions: “If The Call Is Into The United States From Al-Qaida, We Can’t Intercept That Call, We Can’t Use That Capability To Defend Americans. I Believe That Is Not Logical.”** The question we have is whether the authorization of force and the inherent power of the President allows warrantless surveillance of an international call that is connected to the group we are at war with, al-Qaida, that calls into the United States. To say we can’t do that will lead to this weird result. We intercept an international phone call that has not been connected to the United States and we discover information that they are planning an attack on France, we can call France and tell them. If they have a plan that we discover that they are going to attack Canada, we can call them and warn them--or New Zealand or Mexico or any other of our allies and friends around the world. But if the call is into the United States from al-Qaida, we can’t intercept that call, we can’t use that capability to defend Americans. I believe that is not logical. The American people don’t agree with it. They support and expect our military to carry on these activities. I hope and I believe they will be continued. Why do I believe they will be continued? Because despite the fact that we have told the world of this capability and severely damaged our capability, not one Member of this Congress that I know of has said we should stop it. If it is so evil and bad, why do they say it does not need to be stopped? I thank the Chair and yield the floor.” [Senator Jeff Sessions Official Website, [2/9/06](#)]



**2006:Sessions On Bush Spying Program: “To Hear The News Articles, Of Course, It Was Domestic Spying. That Is Far From The Reality Of This Situation.”** Sessions said the following in a February 10, 2006 speech: “The Church Committee came out with this wall, a wall of separation between the CIA and the FBI, and many believed that wall was responsible for the lack of sharing of information between the FBI and CIA. They thought they were doing it for constitutional reasons. They thought they were doing a good thing. But we realized that was a disaster and we tore that wall down many years later, 20 years later, as a result of the experience we had with 9/11. So I would express my concern about statutes dealing with treatment of prisoners or surveillance, that we need to be careful about how we do that. I think the American people believe there should be some flexibility for the President in matters that could relate to our national security and the lives of our own citizens. We need to be careful as we go forward with that. But to date, we can say a couple of things with certainty: that the leaders of the House and the Senate were informed fully of what the President was doing. They did not object. And the Attorney General has made a compelling case, I believe, that he was authorized to do these national security intercepts, both by the authorization to use force and by the inherent powers given to the President. I would note, also, that the President's narrow use of a power is something that should be appreciated by the critics. He said it can only involve a phone call that is international and a phone call from al-Qaida, in which one member of the call was al-Qaida. If we do those two things, the average American can be sure they are not getting caught up in it. To hear the news articles, of course, it was domestic spying. That is far from the reality of this situation.” [Senator Jeff Sessions Official Website, [2/10/06](#)]

**Sessions On 2006 Patriot Act Reauthorization: “The Act Itself Provides Quite A Number Of Provisions That Simply Allow Investigators To Use The Same Tactics To Investigate Terrorists ... That They Use To Investigate Wage-And-Hour Disputes, To Investigate Your Taxes, To Investigate Drug Dealers And Pharmacists And Drug Dispensers And Doctors.”** According to a floor speech, Sessions said: “Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I am sorry we are now facing another filibuster and delay of efforts to reauthorize the PATRIOT Act ... If you look around, you will see that people are not engaging the issue. The complaints--Senator Kyl talked about some of them--are insubstantial. They are not the kind of serious concerns people have portrayed them to be. The act itself provides quite a number of provisions that simply allow investigators to use the same tactics to investigate terrorists, people who want to kill us, that they use to investigate wage-and-hour disputes, to investigate your taxes, to investigate drug dealers and pharmacists and drug dispensers and doctors. It is important that investigators continue to have these tools at their disposal. It is unfortunate we have had this obstruction. We have seen a pattern of it, frankly.” [Senator Jeff Sessions Official Website, [2/16/06](#)]

**2007: Sessions Lauded The Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, Said It Did Not Violate Americans Civil Liberties.** According to a floor speech, Sessions said: “So what happened? Congress went through an intense study, and we passed the Protect America Act this past summer. Some people said: This is a rush, though we spent weeks on it. Congress spent a lot of time working on it. But we said: OK, it will come back up for reauthorization in February. As of this date, there has been no example of abuse of that act. Senator Feingold says these intelligence procedures were illegal wiretapping. I think that is really not a fair thing to say. A court ruled that these procedures we had been using for some time, must, according to statutes we passed, go through a certain number of procedural hoops that, as a practical matter, would have eliminated the possibility of us continuing these surveillance techniques. That is what they ruled. I don't think we ever intended this to be the effect, but the court probably ruled fairly on the law. I am not sure. We are stuck with the ruling regardless. I don't think it is fair to say the program was illegal. But certainly the procedures were not unconstitutional because this summer, when we passed the Protect America Act, we effectively concluded the program

was good and constitutional. We affirmed the program. I want to say, if we have any humor left on this subject, perhaps we ought to write President Bush a letter and tell him: Thank you. We are sorry we accused you of violating our Constitution and basic civil liberties. After the Congress spent weeks studying this, we passed a law that basically allowed the program to continue as it was. I urge that we do the right thing on this legislation and move forward to the Intelligence bill, not the Judiciary bill.” [Senator Jeff Sessions Official Website, [12/17/07](#)]

**2007: Sessions: “The Suggestions That Have Been Made By Some That [The NSA Is] Sitting Out There Trying To Listen In On Somebody’s Private Conversation About Christmas From Paris Or Afghanistan Is Beyond Reality.”** According to a floor speech, Sessions said: “I went out a few weeks ago to the National Security Agency and got a full briefing, as a number of Senators have, on what is being done there. I was so proud of our personnel. These are fabulous Americans. The suggestions that have been made by some that they are sitting out there trying to listen in on somebody’s private conversation about Christmas from Paris or Afghanistan is beyond reality. They are out there trying to protect America. They are looking to see if they have any information that they can legally pick up that would indicate an attack may be imminent or that people are plotting to attack the United States. So I thank the Chair. I hope we will move forward with this legislation based on the Intel bill and that we will reject efforts to deny liability protection to Americans who serve our country. Also, I hope we will reject the Wyden language in the Intel bill because I think it goes far too far in constricting the ability of our intelligence personnel to do their job, and it is not legally or constitutionally required.” [Senator Jeff Sessions Official Website, [12/17/07](#)]

**2008: Sessions: “I Am Frustrated, Forgive Me, That We Are So Timid About Allowing The Full Historical Surveillance Capabilities Our Nation Is Used To Having At This Time When We Have Unique Threats From Terrorists Who Have Proven They Have The Ability To Inflict Thousands Of Deaths On Americans.”** According to a floor speech, Sessions said: “I am frustrated, forgive me, that we are so timid about allowing the full historical surveillance capabilities our Nation is used to having at this time when we have unique threats from terrorists who have proven they have the ability to inflict thousands of deaths on Americans. Our good people are working their hearts out. Let’s don’t make it more difficult for them. Let’s affirm what they are doing. We will continue to monitor it so it is never abused. I thank the chairman and the Intelligence Committee for their bipartisan work to serve our country by producing a bill we all can be proud of.” [Senator Jeff Sessions Official Website, [1/30/08](#)]

**2008: Sessions Urged The Senate To Pass The Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act.**

According to a floor speech, Sessions said: “Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I would like to share some thoughts on the FISA legislation. It is critically important, and we need to pass the Intelligence Committee bill. I will first say, in response to my able colleague from Illinois, that General Hayden’s comments in which he indicated three people had been subjected to waterboard torture are something we ought to think about. First, I am glad, as he said and has been repeated, waterboarding was only used three times early on after 9/11 against some of the most dangerous people we have ever dealt with. As a result of the debate and discussion about that, we had an amendment on the floor of the Senate, which Senator Kennedy offered to the Military Commissions Act in 2006, to prohibit waterboarding. It failed 46 to 53. We have a statute that does prohibit torture--Congress passed it overwhelmingly and it was supported by Senators KENNEDY, LEAHY, BIDEN, and others--that defined torture as infliction of severe physical or mental pain or suffering. I am glad we are no longer utilizing waterboarding. I hope we never have to do it again. I just want to say to my colleagues, be careful how you portray the United States around the world.” [Senator Jeff Sessions Official Website, [2/6/08](#)]

**2009: PBS: Sessions Told “Holder In One Committee Hearing On Warrantless Wiretapping That ‘We’ve Exaggerated The Extent To Which This Is Somehow Violative Of Our Constitution.’”** The following is a conversation between Senator Jeff Sessions and then-Attorney General Eric Holder, “SEN. SESSIONS: Previously, you've heard reference to warrantless wiretapping, and suggesting this was a great violation of constitutional rights. But for the most part, as I understand these difficulties, they arise from a lawful intercept, maybe in a foreign country, maybe of a satellite phone or something in Afghanistan. And those are legally intercepted -- I think e-mails could be too -- as part of an intelligence-gathering operation. What happens is -- and that's lawful. It's lawful with regard to that individual. Now, if they, all of a sudden, make a phone call to some terrorist cell in the United States, someone could argue that's illegally wiretapping an American citizen. But isn't it, in truth, the intercept is of a person identified as part of an intel operation outside the United States, and that has never been considered something that's controlled by warrants? ATTY GEN. HOLDER: So you're saying that you actually have existing authority on somebody who's overseas who happens to place a call into the United States. SEN. SESSIONS: That's correct. ATTY GEN. HOLDER: It would - SEN. SESSIONS: That's what we've been arguing over, frankly. It's been -- if you wiretap a Mafia leader and he calls somebody who the court does not have an approval of, you can listen in on that conversation. Isn't that right? Isn't that part of the approval? So if you have a lawful tap on a foreign person, I think the principle is the same. That's all I'm saying. And I think we've exaggerated the extent to which this is somehow violative of our Constitution. That's just my personal view of it.” [PBS, [11/18/16](#); Project VoteSmart, [6/17/09](#)]

**Sessions Railed Against The USA Freedom Act In 2015 Op-Ed.** Sessions wrote in a 2015 op-ed: “But legislation known as the USA Freedom Act would prevent our intelligence officers from obtaining information in this manner at all. As former federal judge and attorney general Michael Mukasey said: The bill’s imposition of the warrant requirement on the NSA would be more burdensome than what any assistant U.S. attorney must do to get metadata in a routine criminal case, which is simply to aver that the information is needed in connection with a criminal investigation — period. The bill would also eliminate entirely the database through which the NSA is able to quickly access information to ‘connect the dots’ in order to prevent terror attacks. This is significant because, as the National Academy of Sciences explained, in contrast to domestic law enforcement . . . the world of intelligence analysis has many fewer tools available for investigation. In hostile foreign environments, personal interviews and observations and records review are much more limited. Accordingly, the role of bulk data as a way to understand the significance of past events is important, and the loss of this tool becomes more serious.” [National Review, [5/20/15](#)]

- **Jeff Sessions National Review Op-Ed Headline: “Why Should Terrorists Be Harder To Investigate Than Routine Criminals?”** [National Review, [5/20/15](#)]
- **Sessions Op-Ed: “It Should Not Be More Difficult To Investigate A Terrorist Plot Than Check Fraud.”** Sessions wrote in a 2015 op-ed: “[I]t should not be more difficult to investigate a terrorist plot than check fraud. As the National Academy of Sciences noted in its recent report, Section 215 of the Patriot Act simply ‘allow[s] the [Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court] to require production of documents and other tangible things determined relevant to national security investigations, much like other courts do in criminal and grand jury investigations.’ But unlike in the criminal context, Section 215 is subject to extraordinary oversight by the Executive and Judicial branches, as well as minimization procedures to protect Americans’ civil liberties. Moreover, information acquired under Section 215 can be accessed by only a limited number of trained intelligence professionals and only after the government has demonstrated to the court that there is a reasonable, articulable suspicion that a number or identifier is associated with a specific foreign-terrorist organization.” [National Review, [5/20/15](#)]



**Politico: ‘During The Last Major Surveillance Debate In 2015, Sessions Warned Against Anything That Could Weaken The NSA’s Spying Capability.’** According to Politico, ‘During the last major surveillance debate in 2015, Sessions warned against anything that could weaken the NSA’s spying capability — a stance that put him at odds with Silicon Valley, which sought to scale back digital snooping in the wake of Edward Snowden’s leaks. The senator wrote that the USA Freedom Act, which aimed to stop the bulk collection of phone records, ‘would make it vastly more difficult for the NSA to stop a terrorist than it is to stop a tax cheat. Why make it much harder to investigate terrorists than common criminals?’ The legislation ultimately passed, despite his vote against it.’ [Politico, 11/18/16]

**2015: Politico: ‘The Senator Wrote That The USA Freedom Act, Which Aimed To Stop The Bulk Collection Of Phone Records, ‘Would Make It Vastly More Difficult For The NSA To Stop A Terrorist Than It Is To Stop A Tax Cheat.’** According to Politico, ‘The senator wrote that the USA Freedom Act, which aimed to stop the bulk collection of phone records, ‘would make it vastly more difficult for the NSA to stop a terrorist than it is to stop a tax cheat. Why make it much harder to investigate terrorists than common criminals?’” [Politico, [11/18/16](#)]

**2016: Politico: ‘In June, Sessions Put Forward An Amendment That Would Have Essentially Allowed Investigators To Obtain A Host Of Online Data — From Web Browsing Histories To Emails — Without A Warrant In The Cases Of An Emergency.’** According to Politico, ‘For years, tech giants like Apple, Facebook and Google have also sought to update decades-old rules that allow law enforcement to access digital records, like emails, without a warrant. When the Senate this year considered an update to the Electronic Communications Privacy Act, Sessions was again on the opposite side of Silicon Valley. In June, Sessions put forward an amendment that would have essentially allowed investigators to obtain a host of online data — from web browsing histories to emails — without a warrant in the cases of an emergency. Privacy groups like the Electronic Frontier Foundation blasted the idea, saying it would ‘weaken the privacy protections’ in the bill. The update never advanced.’ [Politico, [11/18/16](#); USA Today, [6/9/16](#)]

## Votes

**2001: Jeff Sessions Voted In Favor Of - HR 3162 - Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism (USA Patriot Act).** On October 25, 2001, the United States Senate voted on “The bill that would expand law enforcement’s power to investigate suspected terrorists. The bill would allow disclosure of wiretap information among certain government officials, authorize limited disclosure of secret grand jury information to certain government officials, and allow the detention of foreigners suspected of having ties to terrorism. It also would make it easier for law enforcement to track voice and Internet communications using surveillance techniques and would strengthen laws to combat money laundering. Most of the bill’s intelligence-gathering provisions would sunset after four years.” The motion passed 98-1. Senator Sessions voted in favor of the motion. [CQ; United States Senate, Vote 313, [10/25/01](#)]

**2001: Sessions Voted For A Bill That Expanded Surveillance Tracking Capabilities.** According CQ, Sessions voted in favor of “Passage of the bill that would expand law enforcement’s power to investigate suspected terrorists. The bill would allow disclosure of wiretap information among certain government officials, authorize limited disclosure of secret grand jury information to certain government officials, and authorize the attorney general to detain foreigners he suspects are tied to terrorism. It also would make it easier for law enforcement to track Internet communications using surveillance techniques.” The measure passed 96-1. [CQ; United States Senate, Vote 302, [10/11/01](#)]

- **2001: Sessions Voted To Kill An Amendment That “Would Provide That In Order To Conduct Roving Surveillance, The Person Implementing The Order Must Ascertain That The Target Of The Surveillance Is Present In The House Or Is Using The Phone That Has Been Tapped.”** According CQ, Sessions voted in favor of “Daschle, D-S.D., motion to table (kill) the Feingold, D-Wis., amendment that would provide that in order to conduct roving surveillance, the person implementing the order must ascertain that the target of the surveillance is present in the house or is using the phone that has been tapped.” The motion passed 90-7. [CQ; United States Senate, Vote 300, [10/11/01](#)]

**2006: Jeff Sessions Voted In Favor Of The Conference Report Vote Intended To Reauthorize The Patriot Act.** According to CQ, Sessions voted in favor of the “Adoption of the conference report on the bill that would reauthorize the 2001 anti-terrorism law known as the Patriot Act, and make permanent 14 of the 16 provisions of the act set to expire March 10, and extend for four years the two provisions on access to business and other records and "roving" wiretaps. The measure would allow recipients of "national security letters" demanding information to consult with a lawyer and to challenge the letter in court.” [CQ; Senate Vote 29, [3/2/06](#)]

**2011: Jeff Sessions Voted In Favor Of Extending The Patriot Act.** According to CQ, Sessions voted in favor of “the patriot act extensions – motion to table (kill) the Reid motion to proceed to the bill that would extend through June 1, 2015, three provisions of the anti-terrorism law known as the Patriot Act.” [CQ; Senate Vote 76, [5/23/11](#)]

**2014: Sessions Voted Against Cloture On The USA Freedom Act.** On November 18, 2014, the United States Senate voted on a “Motion to invoke cloture (thus limiting debate) on Reid, D-Nev., motion to proceed to the bill that would prohibit the bulk collection of domestic telephone and Internet metadata by intelligence agencies. It would allow intelligence agencies to query data held by telephone companies if the government can demonstrate the search is needed to fight terrorism. Under the bill, the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court would be required to authorize data collection, except in defined emergencies, and appoint a special panel to oversee individual privacy and civil liberties. It also would increase the amount of information service providers can report to the public.” The motion failed 58-42. Senator Sessions voted against the motion. [CQ, United States Senate Vote 282, [11/18/14](#)]

**2015: Sessions Voted To Reauthorize Expiring Provisions Of The FISA Court.** On May 23, 2015, Sessions voted in favor of a ‘Motion to invoke cloture (thus limiting debate) on the McConnell, R-Ky., motion to proceed to the bill that would amend the USA Patriot Improvement and Reauthorization Act of 2005 and the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 to extend until July 31, 2015, expiring provisions of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978.’ The motion failed 45-54. [CQ; United States Senate, Vote 195, [5/23/15](#)]

**2015: Sessions Voted Against The Patriot Act Reauthorization, The Bill Modified ‘Domestic Surveillance Authorities By Prohibiting The National Security Agency’s Bulk Collection And Storage Of Telephone Metadata And Limiting Collection Of Other Bulk Data.’** Sessions voted nay on ‘Passage of the bill that would modify domestic surveillance authorities by prohibiting the National Security Agency’s bulk collection and storage of telephone metadata and limiting collection of other bulk data. The measure would require the NSA to obtain approval from the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court to examine the calling records of individual target telephone numbers on a case-by-case basis, before the request for information is made to a phone company, and limit the associated

calling records of a telephone number that may be examined to two ‘hops’ from the suspect’s number - essentially codifying proposals made by the president in 2014. The bill also would redefine the type of information that may be subject to a search query under surveillance programs, impose additional surveillance oversight requirements, and extend until December 2019 the Patriot Act Section 215, roving wiretap and ‘Lone Wolf’ surveillance authorities.’ The bill passed 67-32. [CQ; United States Senate, Vote 201, [6/2/15](#)]

### Enemy Combatants

**2002: Orlando Sentinel: Sessions ‘Said He Considered Anyone Who Joined Al-Qaeda To Be ‘Illegal Combatants’ Involved In A Conspiracy To Kill Americans, Not Soldiers Who Would Be Recognized Prisoners Of War Under The Geneva Conventions.’** According to Orlando Sentinel, ‘But U.S. Sen. Jeff Sessions, R-Ala., a former federal prosecutor, said he considered anyone who joined al-Qaeda to be ‘illegal combatants’ involved in a conspiracy to kill Americans, not soldiers who would be recognized prisoners of war under the Geneva Conventions. Al-Qaeda men should be subject to military tribunals, not criminal trials, he said.’ [Orlando Sentinel, 1/26/02]

**2002: Sessions: ‘We Certainly Do Not Need To Create A Federal Court Spectacle For All These Cases.’** According to St. Louis Post-Dispatch, ‘Some of the Afghan war detainees now held at Guantanamo Bay could be sent home after interrogations to be tried by military tribunals there, a senator said Friday. The 158 detainees come from 25 countries, Marine Brig. Gen. Mike Lehnert told reporters. He did not identify the nations. Sen. James Inhofe, R-Okla., said he did not think more than 15 percent were from Afghanistan. Previously, officials said detainees at this U.S. military base were from 10 countries. ‘I believe after the interrogation process there’s going to be a distinction made as to whether, No. 1, these people should be sent to their country and, No. 2, be subjected to a military tribunal (at home) and, No. 3, whether there should be U.S. military justice or, in some rare occasions, the same as in what John Walker (Lindh) is receiving,’ Inhofe said. Lindh, who fought with the Taliban, is facing federal charges in a U.S. civilian court because he is an American. Inhofe said he would recommend that Congress release money to start building a more permanent prison at Guantanamo, which could house up to 2,500 inmates. Sen. Jeff Sessions, R-Ala., said upon his return that he favored military tribunals to handle the prisoners’ cases. ‘We certainly do not need to create a federal court spectacle for all these cases,’ he said.’ [St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 1/26/02]

**2005: Sessions On Gitmo: ‘This Country Is Not Systematically Abusing Prisoners. We Have No Policy To Do So. And It’s Wrong To Suggest That. And It Puts Our Soldiers At Risk Who Are In This Battle Because We Sent Them There ... [Referring To Detainees] Some Of Them Need To Be Executed.’** According to Newsday, ‘Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.): ‘This country is not systematically abusing prisoners. We have no policy to do so. And it’s wrong to suggest that. And it puts our soldiers at risk who are in this battle because we sent them there ... [Referring to detainees] Some of them need to be executed.’ [Newsday, 6/16/05]

**Sessions On Interrogation Of Terror Suspects: ‘I Reject The Idea That This Defense Department And Our Army And Our Military Is Out Of Control, Is Confused About What Their Powers And Duties And Responsibilities Are.’** According to Philadelphia Inquirer, ‘Senate Republicans pushed ahead yesterday with legislation that would set rules for the treatment and interrogation of terrorism suspects in U.S. custody, despite a White House veto threat. The Bush administration, led by Vice President Cheney, is working to kill the amendments that Sens. John McCain (R., Ariz.) and Lindsey Graham (R., S.C.) want to tack onto a bill setting Defense Department policy for next year. McCain, a former prisoner of war in Vietnam, and Graham, who spent 20 years as an Air Force lawyer, introduced

the legislation yesterday. Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman John W. Warner (R., Va.) has endorsed the effort. McCain said on the Senate floor: ‘What we’re trying to do here is make sure there are clear and exact standards set for interrogation of prisoners.’ Sen. Jeff Sessions (R., Ala.) countered, ‘I reject the idea that this Defense Department and our Army and our military is out of control, is confused about what their powers and duties and responsibilities are.’ [Philadelphia Inquirer, 7/26/05]

**2005: Buffalo News: Sessions Supported Vice-President Cheney’s Call To Exempt The CIA From A Torture ban.** According to Buffalo News, ‘Vice President Cheney made an unusual personal appeal to Republican senators this week to exempt the CIA from a proposed ban on torturing terror suspects in U.S. custody, according to participants in the closed-door session. Cheney told his audience the United States doesn’t engage in torture, these participants said, even though he said the administration needed an exemption from any legislation banning ‘cruel, inhuman or degrading’ treatment in case the president decided such treatment was necessary to prevent a terrorist attack. The vice president made his comments at a regular weekly private meeting of Senate Republicans, according to several lawmakers who attended. Cheney often attends the meetings, a chance for the rank-and-file to discuss legislative strategy, but he rarely speaks. In this case, the room was cleared of aides before the vice president began his remarks, which one senator said included a reference to classified material. The officials who disclosed the events spoke on condition of anonymity, citing the confidential nature of the discussion. ‘The vice president’s office doesn’t have any comment on a private meeting with members of the Senate,’ said Steve Schmidt, a Cheney spokesman. During the session, Cheney drew support from at least one lawmaker, Sen. Jeff Sessions of Alabama, while Sen. John McCain of Arizona dissented, officials said.’ [Buffalo News, 11/5/05]

Votes

**2012: Jeff Sessions Voted In Favor Of The Senate Amendment To Prohibit The Use of Funds for The Transfer or Release of Individuals Detained at Guantanamo Bay.** On November 29, 2012, the United States Senate voted on the amendment to “prohibit the use of funds for the transfer or release of certain individuals from United States Naval Station, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.” The motion passed 54-41. Senator Sessions voted in favor of the motion. [United States Senate, Vote 212, [11/29/12](#)]

**2013: Jeff Sessions Voted Against The Senate Amendment To Authorize The Use Of Funds For The Transfer Or Release Of Guantanamo Detainees To The United States.** On November 19, 2013, the United States Senate voted “On the Amendment S.Amdt. 2175: Levin Amdt. No. 2175; To propose an alternative to section 1033, relating to a limitation on the transfer or release of individuals detained at United States Naval Station, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.” The motion failed 52-46. Senator Sessions voted against the motion. [CQ; United States Senate, Vote 238, [11/19/13](#)]

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE

According to Business Insider, ‘[t]he choice of Mr. Sessions is seen by some analysts as a signal that conservative social values could now take precedence over states’ rights – especially since recreational pot dispensaries are in mostly ‘blue’ Democratic states . . . Ethan Nadelmann, the executive director of the pro-legalization Drug Policy Alliance, critiqued Sessions as a relic of failed tough-on-crime policies of decades past, calling him ‘a drug war dinosaur.’ Mr. Sessions has also voted against sentencing reform, supported mandatory minimums, and was in favor of trying juveniles as adults. Sessions also supports the death penalty. In 2004, he claimed that grants applied to post-conviction capital offense cases were merely allocated for ‘anti-death penalty groups for the defense of murderers and terrorists.’

*Please note that this section includes a limited review of key votes. Additional information on Sessions' Senate votes will be added as research continues.*

**2004: Jeff Sessions Voted In Favor Of S 2329 - Victims' Rights Bill.** On April 22, 2004, the United States Senate voted on the "Passage of the bill that would provide victims of crime or their representatives the right to be heard at public proceedings and would require judicial officials to take victims' safety into account when deciding the fate of defendants. It would provide victims the right to reasonable, accurate and timely notice of any public proceeding involving the crime or of any release or escape of the accused. It also would authorize \$122.3 million from fiscal 2005 through 2009 for grants administered by the Justice Department to encourage states to establish and maintain programs to carry out the provisions related to crime victims' rights and for the development of a notification system of dates and criminal proceedings for crime victims." The motion passed 96-1. Senator Sessions voted in favor of the motion. [CQ; United States Senate, Vote 70, [4/22/04](#)]

**2013: Sessions Voted In Favor Of The Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act.** On March 22, 2013, the United States Senate voted on the "To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund to protect women's access to health care, including primary and preventive care, in a manner consistent with protecting rights of conscience." The motion failed 44-55. Senator Sessions voted in favor of the motion. [United States Senate, Vote 55, [3/22/13](#)]

## Drugs

**1999: Sessions Grilled Assistant Attorney General Robert Raben During His Confirmation Hearing Over Raben's Op-Ed Criticizing Drug Law; Sessions Said: 'You Are Going To Be The Spokesman, The Representative Of The Department Of Justice ... It's Against The Law To Utilize Drugs. How Can You Be Effective If This Is Your View About This Matter?'** According to Los Angeles Times, "Words are a powerful tool in this city. They can be used to praise or to clobber, to goad or to dissemble. And sometimes, as Robert Raben found out recently, they can come back to haunt you. Especially when you're relying on Congress to sign off on your next job ... In a 1997 column he penned for a Capitol Hill newspaper, Raben ridiculed a new drug-testing rule for House employees as simply another 'wrongheaded' salvo in the war on drugs. Mandatory testing was 'silly' and 'humiliating,' he said, and probably unconstitutional as well. Then there was the kicker: 'Those who lose sleep knowing that someone else has taken a hit from a joint on a Saturday night are on a roll with this drug testing program,' Raben wrote. Out of the mainstream? A bit. Radical? Probably not. More than a quarter of those surveyed in a Gallup Poll a few years ago said they, too, opposed further employee drug testing ... But Raben wasn't out of the woods yet. Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.) wanted to grill the nominee. The column was smug, Sessions said. And, yes, as an ex-prosecutor, he was one of those who lost sleep thinking about kids doing drugs on a Saturday night. 'You are going to be the spokesman, the representative of the Department of Justice' on legislative matters, Sessions said. 'It's against the law to utilize drugs. How can you be effective if this is your view about this matter?' Raben appealed for mercy. The column was not just smug, he offered, but flip and arrogant. And in the end, he said, 'it was a mistake.' Sessions wanted to know if Raben would really have considered suing over drug testing, as promised in 1997. No, Raben said. 'I was confused.' The deconstruction was complete. But to what end? Would Raben now be the next C. Lani Guinier or Robert H. Bork, felled by his own words?' [Los Angeles Times, 8/18/99]

**2007: Sessions Sponsored The Drug Sentencing Reform Act of 2007.** Sessions sponsored a bill that 'Amends the Controlled Substances Act and the Controlled Substances Import and Export Act to to decrease mandatory minimum sentencing thresholds for powder cocaine and increase such thresholds



for crack cocaine. Directs the U.S. Sentencing Commission to review and amend federal sentencing guidelines to: (1) reflect changes to mandatory minimum sentences made by this Act; (2) provide increased sentences for defendants who use violence or weapons in the course of a drug trafficking offense or who play an active role in the commission of such offenses; and (3) limit sentencing for defendants who play a lesser role in the commission of drug offenses and who receive little or no compensation from their crime. Requires the Director of the Bureau of Prisons to carry out a pilot program for home detention of nonviolent prisoners age 65 or older.’ Sessions introduced similar bills in 2006 (S.3725), 2001 (S.1874), [United States Senate, S.1383, Introduced [5/14/07](#)]

**2016: Sessions On Obama Shortening Sentences For Drug Offenders: ‘They Are Serious Criminals.’** According to The Arizona Republic, ‘President Obama’s decision to shorten the sentences of 214 drug offenders Wednesday has put him on pace to become one of the most prolific grantors of presidential commutations in history ... Sure enough, Obama came under fire Friday from two congressional Republicans for his commutations. ‘These 214 individuals are not so-called ‘low-level, non-violent’ offenders - which simply do not exist in the federal system,’ said Sen. Jeff Sessions, R-Ala. ‘They are serious criminals.’ On the other side, advocates say Obama hasn’t gone far enough. Even on commutations, Obama’s 562 grants only scratch the surface of the problem created by the mandatory minimum sentences adopted a generation ago, they say. ‘We have focused more on commutations than we have on pardons.’ [The Arizona Republic, 8/8/16]

### Juvenile Crime

**1997: San Antonio Express-News: ‘Sen. Jeff Sessions, R-Ala., A Sponsor Of The Evolving Senate Bill, Said He Objects To Juveniles Sharing Cells With Adults. But He Wants Federal Requirements Eased To Prevent Release Of Young Offenders When Juvenile Cells Are Not Available. ‘It Creates The Impression In A Young Mind That You Can Commit A Crime, And There Won’t Be A Price To Be Paid For It.’** According to San Antonio Express-News, ‘- Rodney Hulin haltingly read the letter from his 17-year-old son, imprisoned as an adult for arson: ‘Dad, I’m really scared, scared that I will die in here.’ After repeated beatings and sexual abuse by older inmates, Rodney Hulin Jr. hanged himself in his Texas cell. The teen-ager died after four months in a coma, his father told a Capitol news conference. Even as the nation’s crime rate subsides, the Clinton administration and Congress are preparing to confront juvenile ‘predators’ with tougher sanctions ... But the question of housing less- dangerous youth in closer proximity to adult criminals is one of the issues separating the administration and the GOP-led Congress on pending juvenile crime legislation. Sen. Jeff Sessions, R-Ala., a sponsor of the evolving Senate bill, said he objects to juveniles sharing cells with adults. But he wants federal requirements eased to prevent release of young offenders when juvenile cells are not available. ‘It creates the impression in a young mind that you can commit a crime, and there won’t be a price to be paid for it,’ Sessions said.’ [San Antonio Express-News, 6/9/97]

**1998: St. Louis Post-Dispatch: ‘Sen. Jeff Sessions, R-Ala., Chairman Of The Senate Subcommittee On Youth Violence, Echoed Clinton’s Call For More Action. ‘Juvenile Justice Officials And Schools Must Form Partnerships To Remove Young Criminals From Classrooms And Make Them Safer Places For Learning,’ Sessions Said In A Statement.’** According to St. Louis Post-Dispatch, ‘Sen. Jeff Sessions, R-Ala., chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on Youth Violence, echoed Clinton’s call for more action. ‘Juvenile justice officials and schools must form partnerships to remove young criminals from classrooms and make them safer places for learning,’ Sessions said in a statement.’ [St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 3/20/98]

**The Dallas Morning News: Sessions: ‘What We’re Saying Is On Certain Of These Most Violent And Serious Crimes, I Personally Believe They Should Be Tried As Adults.’** According to The Dallas Morning News, ‘Federal lawmakers on Sunday revived a debate over what can be done to address juvenile crime after the attack last week on students and teachers in Jonesboro. Sen. Jeff Sessions, R-Ala., who co-wrote a juvenile crime bill with Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, said on CBS’s Face the Nation that the measure would allow federal prosecutors some means to prosecute juvenile cases in instances of violent crime. ‘What we’re saying is on certain of these most violent and serious crimes, I personally believe they should be tried as adults,’ he said, adding that he does not favor, however, ‘federalizing juvenile crime.’ ‘Our bill seeks, through matching grant programs, to assist the juvenile court systems to respond. They are just overwhelmed with the cases. We’ve not supported them adequately,’ Mr. Sessions said. Completed by the Senate Judiciary Committee last summer, Mr. Sessions’ bill awaits a vote on the Senate floor. Like a counterpart measure the House passed last May, it pushes states to tighten up treatment of juvenile offenders by offering them \$ 500 million per year in incentive grants.’ [The Dallas Morning News, 3/30/98]

**2008: Sessions Introduced ‘A Bill To Establish A Commission On Federal Criminal And Juvenile Justice Assistance Programs.’** According to Congress.gov, the bill ‘Establishes the Commission on Federal Criminal and Juvenile Justice Assistance Programs to study methods to help revitalize and strengthen Department of Justice (DOJ) justice assistance programs.’ Sessions introduced the measure on 5/14/08. [United States Senate, S.3018, Introduced [5/14/08](#)]

#### Votes

**1999: Jeff Sessions Voted In Favor Of The Juvenile Crime Bill.** On May 20, 1999, the United States Senate voted on “Passage of the bill to authorize \$5 billion over five years to states to help reduce juvenile crimes and punish juvenile offenders and allow federal prosecution of juvenile offenders age 14 and older. The bill also would tighten restrictions on gun sales.” The motion passed 73-25. Senator Sessions voted in favor of the motion. [CQ; United States Senate, Vote 140, [5/20/16](#)]

#### Prisons

**2002: Sessions Supported A Bill Aimed At Thwarting Prison Rape.** According to The Washington Post, ‘Historic legislation was introduced this week to combat the epidemic of prison rape -- a scourge that is estimated to affect some 175,000 Americans annually. Normally fodder for stand-up comics, prison rape is in fact one of the principal untreated human rights abuses in America today. According to extensive research in numerous prisons, nearly one-quarter of all prisoners fall victim to sexual pressuring, attempted sexual assaults and rapes during their incarceration. One in 10 will be the victims of rapes, and two-thirds of those have been victimized, on average, nine times during their incarceration. When young people are incarcerated with adults, they are sexually assaulted five times more frequently than when they are confined with other juveniles. Rodney Hulin Jr. was one such inmate. Handed his first prison sentence at the age of 17 for setting fire to a neighbor’s fence, the inexperienced, slight inmate was repeatedly raped in prison almost immediately upon arrival. He begged authorities to move him to a juvenile facility or otherwise protect him. Despite the fact that his examination by prison doctors verified that Rodney had been raped, he was put back in general population and essentially told to fend for himself. When he was violated again, Rodney hanged himself in his cell. A broad coalition is supporting bipartisan legislation to address the epidemic of prison rape. Sens. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) and Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.) and Reps. Frank Wolf (R-Va.) and Bobby Scott (D-Va.) have introduced the Prison Rape Reduction Act of 2002 to address this issue in a manner that is both effective and federalism-friendly. Supporters span the political spectrum, from Charles Colson and Gary Bauer to

the NAACP and from Human Rights Watch to the Southern Baptist Convention.’ [The Washington Post, 6/13/02]

**2003: Sessions Sponsored The Prison Rape Elimination Act Of 2003.** According to Congressional records, Senator Sessions introduced the Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003 on July 21, 2003. The bill became Public Law 108-79 on September 4, 2003. [United States Senate, S.1435, Introduced [7/21/03](#)]

- **The Bill Required ‘The Bureau Of Justice Statistics (BJS) To Carry Out A Comprehensive Statistical Review And Analysis Of The Incidence And Effects Of Prison Rape For Each Calendar Year.’** ‘The Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003 (PREA; Public Law 108-79) requires the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) to carry out a comprehensive statistical review and analysis of the incidence and effects of prison rape for each calendar year. BJS’s review must include, but is not limited to, the identification of the common characteristics of both victims and perpetrators of prison rape; and prisons and prison systems with a high incidence of prison rape.’ [Bureau of Justice Statistics, Accessed [11/29/16](#)]
- **ACLU Supported Sessions’ Bill.** According to Slate, ‘This past July Congress enacted the Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003, providing \$60 million for a two-year survey of state and federal prisons to determine the pervasiveness of prison rape and creating various panels to offer remedies. Congressional sponsors of the bill included the most improbable political allies, and support for the bill ranged from the ACLU and Human Rights Watch to conservative evangelical organizations. (The clear interest of the latter in promoting religion among inmates has helped create a strange-bedfellowship with leftist prisoners’ rights groups.) The bill passed both houses unanimously, and President Bush, flanked by two former inmates who had been raped in prison, signed it in early September. The reason you’ve never heard of the Prison Rape Elimination Act is probably that no one who knows our criminal justice system believes it will do much of anything to eliminate prison rape.’ [Slate, [10/1/03](#)]

### Sentencing Reform

**1997: Sessions Believed That ‘Mandatory Minimums Deter[Ed] Criminals.’** According to The Star-Ledger, ‘A deterrent to crime Others, though, such as Alabama Sen. Jeff Sessions, a former federal prosecutor, believe mandatory minimums deter criminals. ‘They can scream and cry and wail and bring in their preacher and their mother,’ the Republican said, ‘but it’s still five in the big house. That word gets out and it has a deterrent effect.’’ [The Star-Ledger, 7/6/97]

**2005: Sessions Was Unhappy With A Ruling ‘Returning Discretion On Sentencing To Judges.’** According to The New York Times, ‘Lawmakers and legal experts predicted on Wednesday that the Supreme Court decision returning discretion on sentencing to judges would renew the struggle between Congress and the judiciary for control over setting criminal punishment. ‘This is a story about a fight between branches of the federal government for sentencing power,’ Frank O. Bowman, a law professor at Indiana University, said. Members of the House and Senate judiciary panels said that the decision, which they had been anticipating, was highly likely to set off a legislative fight over the extent to which Congress should be able to require judges to impose specific prison terms. ‘As the court recognized, the ball is now in Congress’s court,’ said Senator Orrin G. Hatch, the Utah Republican who characterized himself as disappointed by the decision but not surprised. ‘We will need to examine our options carefully.’ Conservatives, particularly in the House, have been highly critical of some federal judges for handing down sentences lighter than those called for in the guidelines and have moved to limit that discretion. Republicans on the House Judiciary Committee led the successful effort last year to require

the United States Sentencing Commission to provide Congress with the names of federal judges who broke from the guidelines. Representative Tom Feeney, the Florida Republican who wrote that provision, called the court ruling an ‘egregious overreach.’ ‘The Supreme Court’s decision to place this extraordinary power to sentence a person solely in the hands of a single federal judge -- who is accountable to no one -- flies in the face of the clear will of Congress,’ Mr. Feeney said in a statement. As they began to digest the decision, other lawmakers in both parties said they expected that hearings on sentencing guidelines would be quickly convened. Senator Arlen Specter, the Pennsylvania Republican who is the new chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, said he intended to ‘thoroughly review the Supreme Court’s decision and work to establish a sentencing method that will be appropriately tough on career criminals, fair and consistent with constitutional requirements.’ Senator Jeff Sessions, Republican of Alabama, a former federal prosecutor, called the opinion a disaster, saying, ‘The challenge will now be to determine what the core complaint of the five members of the court is and see if we can recreate the guidelines in a way that will meet the court’s test.’ Democrats urged caution.’ [The New York Times, 1/13/05]

**2010: Sessions Co-Sponsored The Fair Sentencing Act.** ‘In 2010, Sessions co-sponsored the Fair Sentencing Act, which increased the quantity of crack cocaine needed to trigger a mandatory minimum punishment and aimed to reduce the disparate penalties for crack and powder cocaine. And Trump’s running mate, Indiana Gov. Mike Pence, said at the vice presidential debate that ‘we need criminal justice reform.’’ [Alabama.com, 11/23/16]

- **The Fair Sentencing Act ‘Reduced The Statutory Penalties For Crack Cocaine Trafficking And Eliminated The Mandatory Minimum Sentence For Simple Possession Of Crack Cocaine.’** ‘Many fewer crack cocaine offenders have been prosecuted annually since the FSA, although the number is still substantial; Crack cocaine offenders prosecuted after the FSA are, on average, about as serious as those prosecuted before the FSA; Rates of crack cocaine offenders cooperating with law enforcement have not changed despite the reduction in penalties; and, Average crack cocaine sentences are lower, and are now closer to average powder cocaine sentences. The Fair Sentencing Act of 2010 (FSA), Pub. L. No. 111-220, signed by the President on August 3, 2010, reduced the statutory penalties for crack cocaine trafficking and eliminated the mandatory minimum sentence for simple possession of crack cocaine.’ [United States Sentencing Commission, [8/3/15](#)]
- **ACLU Saw The Fair Sentencing Act As A Step In The Right Direction.** According to ACLU, ‘The Fair Sentencing Act of 2010 (FSA) is actually only kind of fair. The passage of the 2010 law, which reduced the crack to powder mandatory minimum ratio in federal cocaine sentences from 100:1 to 18:1, was a significant step in the direction of fairness. While we applaud this change, we also look forward to the day when Congress adopts the actually fair ratio of 1:1. In the meantime, the Supreme Court has granted certiorari on two FSA cases, Hill v. United States and Dorsey v. United States, both out of the Seventh Circuit. In these cases, the Court will decide whether people whose offense predates the enactment of the FSA but who were sentenced afterwards should be sentenced based on the old 100:1 ratio or the new 18:1 ratio. If the Court rules the wrong way, a sizeable class of people will be excluded from Congress’ attempt to restore fairness and racial neutrality to federal cocaine sentencing, and the kind-of-Fair Sentencing Act will become even less fair.’ [ACLU, [12/22/11](#)]

**2016: The New York Times: Sessions Opposed Criminal Justice Reform.** According to The New York Times, ‘A major criminal-justice overhaul bill seemed destined to be the bipartisan success story of the year, consensus legislation that showed lawmakers could still rise above politics. Then the

election, Donald J. Trump's demand for 'law and order' and a series of other political calculations got in the way. Senate Republicans divided on the wisdom of reducing federal mandatory minimum sentences. Other Republicans, unhappy that President Obama was reducing hundreds of federal prison sentences on his own, did not want to give him a legacy victory. A surge in crime in some urban areas gave opponents of the legislation a new argument. Now, the Senate authors of the legislation say it is effectively dead ... 'I think he's highlighted some of the crime surges we've seen, and I do think it should require proponents of the federal legislation to re-evaluate their position,' said Senator Jeff Sessions, Republican of Alabama, referring to Mr. Trump. Mr. Sessions is both a chief ally of Mr. Trump on Capitol Hill and a leading opponent of the criminal justice legislation, along with the Republican Senators Tom Cotton of Arkansas and David Perdue of Georgia. Mr. Cotton said this year that the United States suffered from an 'under-incarceration' problem, not from too many people being in prison. These critics have been supported by an association of federal prosecutors that has assailed the legislation. Frustrated supporters of the proposal have pushed back, noting that even if violent crime is rising in some locations, the legislation is aimed at nonviolent criminals, mainly drug offenders. But the clash created a political dissonance and made some Republicans reluctant to risk their tough-on-crime image immediately before an election.' [The New York Times, 9/17/16]

### Death Penalty

#### **2002: Sessions On Giving Convicts Facing Death Access To DNA Standards: 'This Body Needs To Be Very Careful About Micromanaging The Death Penalty Procedures Established By The States.'**

According to St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 'A majority in the House -- 237 lawmakers -- has signed onto a bill that would give federal convicts access to DNA testing and would establish new standards for attorneys representing defendants facing the death penalty. States that receive federal anti-crime funding would- also be required to adopt the new standards. In the Senate, the Judiciary Committee is set to take up a similar bill shortly after Congress returns from its July 4 recess. 'Momentum for legislative action is clearly building,' said Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., chairman of the Judiciary Committee and the main sponsor of the Senate bill. The impetus for congressional action is clear, as capital punishment is being re-examined in the Supreme Court, governors' mansions and state legislatures. 'What we have here is a confluence of events -- high profile cases with exonerations, decisions by the Supreme Court, and activity and movement in state legislatures,' said Rep. William Delahunt, D-Mass., a main sponsor of the House legislation. 'This is not the old death penalty debate (about) 'Should it be abolished?' Delahunt said. 'This is about whether our system, with its imperfections, can it be improved.' Some opponents say the Leahy-Delahunt bills are an abolition effort cloaked as reform and that the proposals would do more to protect the guilty than free the innocent. And there is mounting opposition, particularly from prosecutors, who object to any sweeping legislation that they believe could hamper the ability of states to carry out capital punishment. 'This body needs to be very careful about micromanaging the death penalty procedures established by the states,' warned Sen. Jeff Sessions, R-Ala., a former prosecutor who sits on the Judiciary Committee.' [St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 6/30/02]

#### **2004: Sessions Called Grants That Go Post-Convection Capital Appeals Money That Would Go 'To Anti-Death Penalty Groups For The Defense Of Murderers And Terrorists.'**

According to The Washington Post, 'In some people's minds, most capital appeals are intentionally dilatory and frivolous. They have fought proposed federal grants to bolster post-conviction defense within states -- money that would go 'to anti-death penalty groups for the defense of murderers and terrorists,' Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.) declared.' [The Washington Post, 11/30/04]



**2016: Business Insider: ‘Ethan Nadelmann, The Executive Director Of The Pro-Legalization Drug Policy Alliance, Critiqued Sessions As A Relic Of Failed Tough-On-Crime Policies Of Decades Past, Calling Him ‘A Drug War Dinosaur.’** [Business Insider, [11/22/16](#)]

**2016: Business Insider: The Choice Of Mr. Sessions Is Seen By Some Analysts As A Signal That Conservative Social Values Could Now Take Precedence Over States Rights – Especially Since Recreational Pot Dispensaries Are In Mostly ‘Blue’ Democratic States.’** According to Business Insider, ‘After voters approved eight state marijuana ballot initiatives on Election Day, more than half of the 50 states now have laws that permit the drug to be used for medical purposes – and eight now allow it for recreation. But federal law continues to ban the substance nationwide, and the announcement that US Sen. Jeff Sessions of Alabama is President-elect Donald Trump’s nominee for attorney general, could bring the marijuana legalization movement to a screeching halt. The choice of Mr. Sessions is seen by some analysts as a signal that conservative social values could now take precedence over states rights – especially since recreational pot dispensaries are in mostly ‘blue’ Democratic states.’ [Business Insider, [11/22/16](#)]

### **SESSIONS PRAISED AND WAS LAUDED BY HATE GROUPS**

**Southern Poverty Law Center: ‘Sessions, Who Has Served In The U.S. Senate Since 1997, Has For Years Been The Key Bridge Between The Anti-Immigrant Movement And Congress.’** According to Southern Poverty Law Center, ‘Alabama Senator Jeff Sessions, one of President-elect Donald Trump’s closest advisers during his campaign and his selection for U.S. attorney general, has longstanding and extensive ties to both anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim extremist groups. Sessions, who has served in the U.S. Senate since 1997, has for years been the key bridge between the anti-immigrant movement and Congress. His efforts to combat comprehensive immigration reform legislation have won him plaudits across the nativist landscape.’ [Southern Poverty Law Center, [11/18/16](#)]

### **Family Research Council**

**2016: Hate Group The Family Research Council Praised Sessions’ Nomination: ‘FRC Has Worked With Senator Sessions On A Number Of Issues And Could Not Be Happier To Watch Him Usher In A New Era At DOJ -- One That Cherishes The Constitution And Its Protection Of Our Freedom From Government Oppression.’** According to the Family Research Council’s website, ‘Like every office, these agencies are only as good as their leaders. And yesterday, Donald Trump showed conservatives that he’s doing everything he can to make sure those departments have the best people at the top. The first wave of key appointments hit the wire, reassuring America that the country was under new management. After the eight-year scandal-factory of the Justice Department, the president-elect is making it clear that it’s a new day at DOJ with the nomination of Senator Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.) as attorney general. For the senator, the first to endorse Trump, the DOJ is hardly new territory. ‘My previous 15 years working in the Department of Justice were extraordinarily fulfilling. I love the Department, its people and its mission. I can think of no greater honor than to lead them,’ he said ... FRC has worked with Senator Sessions on a number of issues and could not be happier to watch him usher in a new era at DOJ -- one that cherishes the Constitution and its protection of our freedom from government oppression. If there’s one thing we know about Senator Sessions, it’s that he understands the importance of all of our God-given rights, respects the law, and will be a vital part of restoring our nation to greatness.’ [Family Research Council, [11/18/16](#)]

### **Federation For American Immigration Reform**

**Southern Poverty Law Center: Sessions ‘Regularly Attends Events Hosted By The [Hate Group] Federation For American Immigration Reform (FAIR).’** ‘Sessions has a close relationship with the ‘big three’ anti-immigrant groups. He regularly attends events hosted by the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), which has been named as a hate group by the SPLC since 2007. FAIR was founded by Tanton, a white nationalist who in 1993 wrote, ‘I’ve come to the point of view that for European-American society and culture to persist requires a European-American majority, and a clear one at that.’ For decades, FAIR has had one mission: to severely limit immigration into the United States. Its leaders have longstanding ties to white supremacist groups and eugenicists and have made many racist statements. Its advertisements have been rejected because of racist content. Dan Stein, FAIR’s current president, told Tanton in 1994 that those who supported the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, which abolished the racist national origins quotas that favored immigrants of European descent, wanted to ‘retaliate against Anglo-Saxon dominance’ and that this ‘revengism’ against whites had created a policy that is causing ‘chaos and will continue to create chaos.’ [Southern Poverty Law Center, [11/18/16](#)]

**Southern Poverty Law Center: ‘Sessions Regularly Attends FAIR’s Annual ‘Hold Their Feet To The Fire’ Event, Which Brings Together Anti-Immigrant Activists, Right-Wing Radio Hosts And Elected Officials Who Sound Off About Immigration On Talk Radio.’** According to Southern Poverty Law Center, ‘Sessions regularly attends FAIR’s annual ‘Hold Their Feet to the Fire’ event, which brings together anti-immigrant activists, right-wing radio hosts and elected officials who sound off about immigration on talk radio. In 2007, he was the keynote speaker at FAIR’s advisory board meeting.’ [Southern Poverty Law Center, [11/18/16](#)]

**FAIR: ‘FAIR Thanks Senator Jeff Sessions For His Leadership In Defeating The Bush-Kennedy Amnesty.’** ‘FAIR Thanks Senator Jeff Sessions for His Leadership in Defeating the Bush-Kennedy Amnesty During the recent legislative battle over the Bush-Kennedy illegal alien amnesty bill, no one played a more important and more public role in defeating it than Senator Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.). Day in and day out, Sen. Sessions stood on the floor of the United States Senate and on national television and publicly exposed each of the bill’s flaws and false promises. Together with a bipartisan group of legislators, Sen. Sessions stood up to the leaders of both parties and, in his words, ‘the masters of the universe’ who wrote the bill behind closed doors. Like a grand master chess player, Sessions devised strategy after strategy to block, thwart, delay, and ultimately defeat the bill in the Senate. At our annual national board of advisors meeting, held in Washington on September 29, FAIR publicly thanked Sen. Sessions for his principled leadership by presenting to him the coveted Franklin Society award. These awards have been made by FAIR to honor rare individuals who have made a real difference in representing the interests of the nation and the American people in immigration policy. Sen. Sessions was the keynote speaker at FAIR’s board of advisors dinner, where he publicly thanked the organization for the important role that we played in educating the American public about the plan to grant amnesty to millions of illegal aliens and vastly expand future immigration to the U.S. Sen. Sessions described the unprecedented tactics that the authors of the ‘grand bargain’ and the Senate leadership employed in their effort to force an unwelcome amnesty down the throats of the American public. Moreover, he confirmed that while cheap labor interests and ethnic interest groups were intimately involved in crafting the legislation, the American public was unrepresented in the negotiations. Sessions also noted that in their hurry to get the guest worker/amnesty bill passed before the American public learned what was in it, members of the Senate were being asked to vote on it before they even had the chance to read it. Sessions acknowledged the critical role that FAIR played in publicizing the shocking sell-out of American interests, leading to massive public opposition to the bill.’ [FAIR Immigration Report, November [2007](#)]

**Sessions Endorsed And Participated In Events Hosted By The Center For Immigration Studies.**

According to Southern Poverty Law Center, ‘The Center for Immigration Studies (CIS), also a Tanton-founded group, serves as the anti-immigrant movement’s think tank. It has referred to immigrants as ‘Third-World gold-diggers.’ After the devastating earthquake in Haiti in 2010, CIS head Mark Krikorian wrote, ‘My guess is that Haiti’s so screwed up because it wasn’t colonized long enough.’ In a 2014 speech where he decried ‘Obama-style immigration reform,’ CIS staffer Stephen Steinlight said that impeachment for President Obama was not enough. ‘I would think being hung, drawn, and quartered is probably too good for him,’ he said. During the last push for comprehensive immigration reform, Janice Kephart left her position at CIS to serve as special counsel for the Senate Judiciary Committee. During debates on the ‘Gang of Eight’ bill, she could be seen whispering into Sessions’ ear. Sessions, who has endorsed the work of CIS, participated in a panel discussion event organized by the group in 2006, and in 2013, he spoke on a CIS teleconference. Earlier this year, he spoke at a reception for guests invited to a CIS conference.’ [Southern Poverty Law Center, [11/18/16](#)]

NumbersUSA

**Sessions Lauded NumbersUSA And Put A Congratulations To Numbers USA In The Congressional Record To Mark Its 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.**

‘Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I wish to recognize the 15th anniversary of NumbersUSA, a national grassroots organization that advocates for immigration policies that seek to serve the national interest. NumbersUSA was formed in 1997 by Roy Beck, a former journalist who has been recognized by the Houston Chronicle as ‘one of the five leading thinkers in the national immigration debate.’ Under his leadership, NumbersUSA has grown from a mostly Internet-based organization of about 2,000 grassroots members to nearly 1.3 million activists, giving a voice to American citizens on the important issue of immigration and securing our border. Those who were in Congress during the 2006 and 2007 debates on comprehensive immigration reform will confirm just how effective NumbersUSA is. NumbersUSA was an active leader in an outgunned coalition that stood up to virtually all the elites in Washington. The big lobbies pulled out all the stops, spent millions of dollars, and bore down hard in their push for mass amnesty. But Goliath fell to the grassroots David, whose faxes, e-mails, rallies, visits to our offices, and phone calls registered the clear message that the American people would not accept Washington rewarding lawbreaking. The overwhelming grassroots response actuated by the NumbersUSA coalition was most evident when citizens called Capitol Hill in such volume that it shut down the Senate’s telephone system.’

[Congressional Record, [5/7/12](#)]

**Sessions: ‘NumbersUSA Has Grown From A Mostly Internet-Based Organization Of About 2,000 Grassroots Members To Nearly 1.3 Million Activists, Giving A Voice To American Citizens On The Important Issue Of Immigration And Securing Our Border.’** [Congressional Record, [5/7/12](#)]

**Sessions: ‘I Commend NumbersUSA For Speaking Out Effectively On These Important Issues For America. Their Voice Has Added A Valuable Perspective To The Discussion. I Congratulate Them On A Successful First 15 Years And Wish Them Even Greater Success Over Its Next 15 Years.’** Sessions said ‘I commend NumbersUSA for speaking out effectively on these important issues for America. Their voice has added a valuable perspective to the discussion. I congratulate them on a successful first 15 years and wish them even greater success over its next 15 years.’ [Congressional Record, [5/7/12](#)]

David Horowitz Freedom Center

**Southern Poverty Law Center: ‘In 2014, The Senator Received The ‘Daring The Odds: The Annie Taylor Award’ From The David Horowitz Freedom Center, Run By Anti-Muslim Extremist David Horowitz.’** ‘Sessions is also an ally of anti-Muslim organizations which have showered him with accolades. In 2014, the senator received the ‘Daring the Odds: The Annie Taylor Award’ from the David Horowitz Freedom Center, run by anti-Muslim extremist David Horowitz. In one speech, Horowitz asked, ‘Why are all the major Muslim organizations in America connected to the Muslim Brotherhood and why are 80 percent of the mosques filled with hate against Jews and Americans?’ In his acceptance speech, Sessions said, ‘I’ve seen some great people receive this.’ Past recipients include Pamela Geller, one of the most rabidly anti-Muslim activists in America today. Sessions also thanked Horowitz and spoke of how much he ‘admired’ him. The ceremony took place at one of Horowitz’s ‘Restoration Weekend’ events. Sessions also attended these events in 2013 and 2003.’ [Southern Poverty Law Center, [11/18/16](#)]

#### Center For Security Policy

**Southern Poverty Law Center: ‘In 2015, Sessions Received The ‘Keeper Of The Flame’ Award From The Anti-Muslim Hate Group Center For Security Policy (CSP) Run By Frank Gaffney.’** ‘In 2015, Sessions received the ‘Keeper of the Flame’ award from the anti-Muslim hate group Center for Security Policy (CSP) run by Frank Gaffney. Frank Gaffney has a long history of demonizing Muslims and promoting wild conspiracy theories. He has claimed that the Muslim Brotherhood has infiltrated the U.S. government, called for the reestablishment of the House Un-American Activities Committee, and claimed that Huma Abedin was part of a ‘Muslim Brotherhood conspiracy,’ a charge that was condemned by Sen. John McCain and then House speaker John Boehner. CSP released a report last year calling for a ban on Muslim immigration. A CSP vice president, Clare Lopez, said during a speech in 2013, ‘When people in other bona fide religions follow their doctrines they become better people – Buddhists, Hindus, Christians, Jews. When Muslims follow their doctrine, they become jihadists.’’ [Southern Poverty Law Center, [11/18/16](#)]

#### Act! For America

**ACT! For America Gave United States Senator Jeff Sessions A Rating Of 83% On Foreign Affairs, Religion, And National Security Issues.** According to Vote Smart, ACT! For America gave United States Senator Jeff Sessions from Alabama a rating of 83% regarding issues including foreign affairs, religion, and national security during the 2005-2006 election year. [Vote Smart, accessed [11/29/16](#)]

#### American Family Association

**American Family Association Gave United States Senator Jeff Sessions A Rating Of 100% On Socially Conservative, Religion, Marriage, Family, And Children Issues.** According to Vote Smart, American Family Association gave United States Senator Jeff Sessions from Alabama a rating of 100% on issues including Socially Conservative, Religion, Marriage, Family, And Children Issues during the 2009-2010 election year. [Vote Smart, accessed [11/29/16](#)]

#### American Renaissance

**American Renaissance Hate Group Claims That Gary Hebert, Lead Critic Of Appointment Of Jeff Sessions, Had History Of ‘Making Things Up About Racial Issues.’** According to American Renaissance, ‘Gerry Hebert, the leading critic of the appointment of Senator Jeff Sessions as attorney

general, has a history of making things up about racial issues — so much so, in fact, that a federal court imposed sanctions in one of Hebert’s voting cases. Reporters like Cameron Joseph at the New York Daily News have already used quotes from Gerry Hebert, a former Justice Department lawyer, to portray Senator Sessions as a racist. Almost 30 years ago, Hebert and his allies in the Civil Rights Division of the Justice Department were responsible for sabotaging a judicial nomination for Sessions. The reporters using Hebert as a source do not mention Hebert’s history of making up stories about purported racism, yet documentation of that history is easily located in the public record. Hebert’s exaggerations about racism in one federal court case resulted in sanctions being imposed by a federal judge, costing the United States taxpayer \$86,626.’ [American Renaissance, [11/18/16](#)]

### Knights Of The Klu Klux Clan

**David Duke: ‘Bravo President Trump,’ On Trump’s ‘Great Picks’ Of Bannon, Flynn, And Sessions.** According to Media Matters, ‘David Duke: ‘I really believe that we are on the way. The last three appointees of Donald Trump, the most important appointees, [Stephen] Bannon as his chief strategist. Flynn, of course, Michael Flynn as his national security adviser, top adviser, and [Jeff] Sessions as attorney general, I believe, are the first steps in taking America back. He’s appointed men who are going to start this process of taking our country back and I tell you, for the first time in years, our side is empowered, our side is enthusiastic, our side is excited, our side is hopeful, but more than hopeful, we are becoming confident. [...] Bravo President Trump! Some great first steps. We’re on the way, folks, to taking America back.’ [Media Matters, [11/18/16](#)]

### New Black Panther Party

**Associated Press: ‘In 2009, Senator Jeff Sessions Criticized The Justice Department For Dismissing Three Defendants From A Voting Rights Lawsuit Against The New Black Panther Party After Allegations Of Voter Intimidation Outside A Philadelphia Polling Place.’** According to Associated Press, ‘As a senator, Sessions criticized the Justice Department in 2009 for dismissing three defendants from a voting rights lawsuit against the New Black Panther Party after allegations of voter intimidation outside a Philadelphia polling place. The department’s Office of Professional Responsibility found no evidence politics played a role in that decision. He’s also defended the lawfulness of state voter identification laws.’ [Associated Press, [11/19/16](#)]