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From: Joel Pardue [REDACTED] P6/b6
UNKNOWN])

To: jpardue@fed-soc.org (jpardue@fed-soc.org [UNKNOWN])

Bcc: Brett M. Kavanaugh (CN=Brett M. Kavanaugh/OU=WHO/O=EOP [WHO])

Subject: : Today's News
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CREATOR:Joel Pardue [REDACTED] P6/b6
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CREATION DATE/TIME:13-JUN-2003 14:35:13.00

SUBJECT:: Today's News

TO:jpardue@fed-soc.org (jpardue@fed-soc.org [UNKNOWN])

READ:UNKNOWN

BCC:Brett M. Kavanaugh (CN=Brett M. Kavanaugh/OU=WHO/O=EOP [WHO])

READ:UNKNOWN

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Pryor Prejudice

CRISIS Magazine - e-Letter

June 12, 2003

Dear Friend,

It was almost four months ago to the day that I first told you about Miguel Estrada, one of President Bush's judicial nominations for the US Court of Appeals. A highly respected lawyer in his own right and eminently qualified for the position, a vote on his nomination has nevertheless been filibustered by Senate Democrats determined to keep him out at any cost.

The reason? Estrada's conservatism scares them, plain and simple. They'll do anything to keep judges like him -- mainly, pro-life conservatives -- out of the higher courts. Most all of Bush's nominations have been stalled like this, and a Catholic nominee that is now up to bat in front of the Senate judiciary committee is no different.

Bill Pryor, attorney general from Alabama, has been hammered from all sides for his staunch pro-life beliefs. A devout Catholic, Pryor has gone on record calling Roe v. Wade "the worst abomination in the history of constitutional law." Pryor has also made strong statements against homosexuality, another popular political taboo.

But Pryor's record as an impartial judge is practically impeccable. Despite his firm insistence that abortion is a moral evil, he has upheld the Supreme Court's decision to the letter, doing his duty as attorney general faithfully. Much as he disagrees with the law, he knows that laws are changed in Congress, not the courtroom.

Pryor also has a history as a strong civil rights advocate. He helped prosecute the last of the notorious Birmingham bombers of the 16th St. Baptist Church in 1963 and spearheaded a campaign to strike Alabama's ban on interracial marriages. Alabama state representative Alvin Holmes, who is black, fully endorsed Pryor's nomination, commending Pryor's "constant efforts to help the causes of blacks in America."

In spite of this commendable record, Pryor's detractors seem interested only in his pro-life beliefs, and they minced no words in expressing their doubt over his ability to be an impartial judge. In his hearing before the judiciary committee, which began yesterday, New York Democrat Charles Schumer directly pointed to Pryor's private beliefs as a stumbling block, saying, "[Pryor's] beliefs are so deeply held that it's very difficult to believe those views won't influence how he follows the law. A person's views matter."

At another point, Schumer doubted Pryor's credibility as a judge at all, telling him, "Your record screams passionate advocate, but doesn't so much as whisper judge."

Such a personal attack on a man who is well-respected by his peers and recommended highly by other state attorney generals should be beneath Schumer, especially after looking at Pryor's distinguished career. It's one thing to question Pryor's beliefs, but to disregard his personal record solely on account of those beliefs is discrimination of the worst kind.

Fortunately, Pryor handled himself far better than Schumer during the hearing. When the senator asked him if he stood by his condemnation of *Roe v. Wade*, Pryor didn't bat an eye, simply responding, "I do."

The response must have caught Schumer off guard -- he probably expected Pryor to crack under pressure, but Pryor stood his ground. Later, Pennsylvania Republican Arlen Specter asked him again about his views on abortion.

Pryor responded, "I stand by that comment. I believe that not only is [Roe] unsupported by the text and structure of the Constitution, but it has led to a morally wrong result. It has led to the slaughter of millions of innocent unborn children."

Dumbfounded, the committee moved on. They probably didn't expect such candor from a man whose fate is in their hands, but they are quickly discovering that this is simply the kind of man Pryor is.

Pryor's long journey to a federal appointment is far from over, and when it finally comes time to vote, we might see yet another filibuster by Democrats not willing to give an exceptional candidate a fair vote. Schumer and others on the judiciary committee may continue to harp on Pryor's beliefs, insisting they will cloud his judgment, and discriminate against him on that point alone.

But Schumer and other Democratic senators on the committee have no proof that a pro-life Catholic is automatically disqualified to be a

federal judge simply because of his beliefs. They'll have to do some serious digging to find a solid reason to discount Pryor's nomination.

One thing is certain: If yesterday's performance is any indication, Pryor will continue to stand his ground, refusing to cave to accusations about his faith or personal beliefs. Whether or not they agree with him, the judiciary committee has to respect his unwavering honesty.

Let's hope it convinces them to give this excellent candidate the fair chance he deserves.

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