



A Union of Professionals

## Jeff Sessions—Attorney General

Jeff Sessions, a Republican senator from Alabama and a key immigration adviser to Donald Trump, is Trump's nominee for attorney general. Civil rights groups such as the NAACP, the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights,<sup>1</sup> the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute,<sup>2</sup> the Latino Victory Project, the League of United Latin American Citizens and America's Voice have all condemned Sessions for his racist and anti-immigrant statements and actions.

### RACIST COMMENTS AND ACTIONS:

In May 2016, the *Guardian* wrote that Sessions "may be one of the few elected officials in Congress who has a more politically problematic history on race than Trump."<sup>3</sup> Indeed, Sessions' repeated racist statements and actions are alarming: A number of outlets and individuals have already raised concerns about Carson's qualifications.

- Sessions' 1986 nomination as a U.S. District Court judge was rejected due to accusations of racism in his work as a U.S. attorney in Alabama.
- During Sessions' confirmation hearings, an African-American former assistant U.S. attorney testified that Sessions called him "boy" and told him that he thought the Ku Klux Klan was "OK, until he learned that they smoked marijuana."<sup>4</sup>
- Another Justice Department official testified that Sessions called the NAACP, the American Civil Liberties Union, the National Council of Churches, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and other civil rights groups "Communist-inspired" and "un-American,"<sup>5</sup> and that Sessions called a white civil rights lawyer a "disgrace to his race."<sup>6</sup>
- In 1984, Sessions charged three civil rights workers with voter fraud. The case followed increased African-American voter turnout in the state, which elected several black officeholders.<sup>7</sup> All three civil rights workers were acquitted.<sup>8</sup>

### OPPOSITION TO IMMIGRATION:

- In 2007, Sessions led the right-wing effort to prevent immigration reform from passing in the Senate.<sup>9</sup>
- An April 2016 *Washington Post* article described Trump's immigration playbook as "echo[ing] suggestions that have long been made by Sen. Jeff Sessions of Alabama."<sup>10</sup>
- A *Wall Street Journal* editorial called Sessions a leader of the "GOP's Deportation Caucus,"<sup>11</sup> and the *New York Times* editorial board attacked Sessions' immigration philosophy as seeming to "echo an uglier time in our history, when nativists wielded the spurious argument that the more immigrants taken in by America, the worse off America is."<sup>12</sup>
- Sessions opposed the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program and pushed legislation to sunset DACA and prevent future executive actions on immigration.<sup>13</sup>

### BAD FOR STUDENTS, WORKERS AND MIDDLE-CLASS FAMILIES:

- Sessions called Pell Grants "welfare"<sup>14</sup> and opposed a measure that would have allowed people with significant student debt to refinance.<sup>15</sup>
- Sessions criticized Trump's support for raising the minimum wage.<sup>16</sup>
- Sessions voted in favor of blocking a vote on the Paycheck Fairness Act, a bill that would have helped to address the gender pay gap.<sup>17</sup>

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- Sessions opposed reauthorizing the Voting Rights Act.<sup>18</sup>
- Sessions voted the wrong way on bills affecting AFT membership 73 percent of the time in 2015-16. He voted against an Every Student Succeeds Act amendment to end sexual orientation or gender identity discrimination in schools,<sup>19</sup> voted in favor of vouchers<sup>20</sup> and voted against union rights.

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/civil-rights-groups-condemn-jeff-sessions-appointment\\_us\\_582f12fde4b058ce7aaaa2b8](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/civil-rights-groups-condemn-jeff-sessions-appointment_us_582f12fde4b058ce7aaaa2b8)

<sup>2</sup> <http://thehill.com/latino/306854-latino-groups-condemn-sessions-as-ag-pick>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/live/2016/may/09/us-election-live-trump-palin-ryan?page=with:block-57310aabe4b07f53f216b145#block-57310aabe4b07f53f216b145>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2016/11/18/that-time-the-senate-denied-jeff-sessions-a-federal-judgeship-over-accusations-of-racism/?utmterm=.6228d19293e3>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.cnn.com/2016/11/17/politics/jeff-sessions-racism-allegations/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://newrepublic.com/article/61363/closed-sessions>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/cifamerica/2009/may/05/jeff-sessions-arlen-specter-judiciary-committee>

<sup>8</sup> <http://blogs.abcnews.com/politicalpunch/2009/06/you-cant-dwell-on-those-things-sen-jeff-sessions-r-alarecently-told-the-examiners-byron-york-if-i-had-be.html>

<sup>9</sup> <http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2016/04/inside-the-donald-trump-presidential-campaign.html>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.pressherald.com/2016/04/05/trump-would-seek-to-block-money-transfers-to-force-mexico-to-fund-border-wall/>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.wsj.com/articles/the-gops-border-spectacle-1406933161?cb=logged0.8928354600469712>

<sup>12</sup> [http://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/15/opinion/senator-sessions-straight-up.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/15/opinion/senator-sessions-straight-up.html?_r=0)

<sup>13</sup> <http://talkingpointsmemo.com/dc/senate-vote-house-bill-deport-dreamers>

<sup>14</sup> [https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/fact-checker/post/a-misleading-chart-on-welfare-spending/2013/02/20/1b40bcde-7ba4-11e2-82e8-61a46c2cde3d\\_blog.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/fact-checker/post/a-misleading-chart-on-welfare-spending/2013/02/20/1b40bcde-7ba4-11e2-82e8-61a46c2cde3d_blog.html)

<sup>15</sup> [http://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll\\_call\\_lists/roll\\_call\\_vote\\_cfm.cfm?congress=113&session=2&vote=00185](http://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll_call_lists/roll_call_vote_cfm.cfm?congress=113&session=2&vote=00185)

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.rollcall.com/news/home/donald-trump-meet-senate-gop-leaders>

<sup>17</sup> [http://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll\\_call\\_lists/roll\\_call\\_vote\\_cfm.cfm?congress=113&session=2&vote=00103](http://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll_call_lists/roll_call_vote_cfm.cfm?congress=113&session=2&vote=00103)

<sup>18</sup> [http://www.slate.com/blogs/weigel/2013/06/25/southern\\_republican\\_senators\\_happy\\_that\\_supreme\\_court\\_designated\\_their\\_states.html](http://www.slate.com/blogs/weigel/2013/06/25/southern_republican_senators_happy_that_supreme_court_designated_their_states.html)

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.congress.gov/amendment/114th-congress/senate-amendment/2093>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.congress.gov/amendment/114th-congress/senate-amendment/2093>