

# **ACTION ALERT**

## **FROM THE UUA WASHINGTON OFFICE**

### Join National Days of Action Against the Confirmation of Judge Alito— Every Day Until the Senate Votes!

As the full Senate prepares to vote on Judge Alito's confirmation—which could be any day now—the UUA Washington Office for Advocacy encourages interested Unitarian Universalists to participate in national days of action by contacting their Senators and writing letters to the editor. Since we don't know exactly when the vote will be, every day until it happens is a good day to take action!

You can be sure that offices will be hearing from pro-Alito religious fundamentalists, so telephone calls and faxes from people of faith opposed to Alito's confirmation can be particularly effective. Even if he is eventually confirmed, every vote against his confirmation is important! In fact, in early December no one predicted that 8 Senators on the Judiciary Committee would oppose his confirmation, but that's what happened!

While a constituent will rarely get through to a member of Congress on the telephone, talking to or leaving a message for the relevant staff person definitely has an impact. Letters to the editor in local newspapers can also be a valuable way to bring issues to Senators' attention.

#### **SUGGESTED MESSAGE POINTS**

- I am a religious person—an Unitarian Universalist—and I urge Senator X to oppose the confirmation of Judge Alito. I'm extremely concerned with civil liberties [reproductive freedom, illegal wiretapping, etc], and I just don't think Judge Alito will defend the rights and freedoms that I care about.
- I don't question Judge Alito's character or competence, but I do have a problem with his record, which shows a consistent bias against individual rights and protection from government power. I think President Bush's surveillance program is definitely illegal, but I don't trust Judge Alito to hold the administration in check.
- Our religious movement is committed to civil liberties and civil rights. We believe that Judge Alito would not protect the rights and freedoms of all Americans and would not stand for the human and civil rights of immigrants and those seeking asylum.
- Our faith tradition has a long history of supporting Women's Rights and Reproductive Freedom. We are concerned that Mr. Alito does not share this same respect in his judicial philosophy. He has expressed opinions that call for more restrictions on a woman's right to choose, including going further than any other American judge in stating that a woman should be required to notify her husband, even an abusive husband, before access to an abortion will be granted. We are gravely concerned by this opinion and others that indicate that Mr. Alito does not necessarily see a married woman as a legal entity on her own, separate from her husband.

#### **FIND PHONE NUMBERS**

- Go through the Capitol switchboard: Dial 202-224-3121 (24 hours a day) and ask the operator to connect you (be prepared to ask for your Senator by name); or
- Look up Congressional information with your zip code at [www.uua.org/uuawo](http://www.uua.org/uuawo) --just click "advocacy resources" from our homepage. You can also sign-up for the Washington Office's weekly "Advocacy News" email alert for legislative updates on important issues.
- **Can't get through right away?** Many people must be phoning Congress. Keep your calls coming! If you prefer not to wait, call the next day or phone the district office.

## **BACKGROUND**

The importance of a lifetime appointment to the Supreme Court cannot be overstated. A Supreme Court Justice appointed today will have the opportunity to shape the Court for two or more generations. The Court, particularly as of late, has been marked by narrow 5-4 decisions on many issues, including those pertaining to reproductive choice, separation of church and state, environmental protection, and worker rights, as well as other issues of great import to many Americans.

The UUA opposes Judge Alito's confirmation, based on concerns over civil liberties, including religious liberty, the right to privacy, and due process. The UUA is joined in opposition to Alito by a number of other organizations, including the Union of Reform Judaism. As predicted, Judge Alito's testimony did not allay our concerns. In fact, Judge Alito affirmed his opinion that the strip-search of a mother and a 10 year old girl without a specific warrant to do so was legal; he did not distance himself from a long-troubling history in cases involving discrimination based on race, gender, and disability, as well as in cases involving people claiming rights under the First Amendment. He also refused to call *Roe vs. Wade* "settled law" or affirm support for a health exception in anti-abortion legislation.

Please note that the UUA does not represent or claim to represent the views of individual Unitarian Universalists or individual congregations, but of the Association as a whole, as defined by statements approved by the General Assembly. Also, lobbying related to a nomination is an IRS-sanctioned activity for non-profits.

See [http://www.uua.org/news/2005/051212\\_alito/index.html](http://www.uua.org/news/2005/051212_alito/index.html) for all the UUA's resources on Judge Alito, including a detailed memo outlining the UUA position.