



Action Alert – please forward widely

January 18, 2017

Senator Jeff Sessions' testimony proves he is not qualified to be our top victim advocate!!!

Senator Jeff Sessions (R-Alabama), President-elect Trump's nominee for Attorney General, had the opportunity last week to appear in front of the Senate Judiciary Committee to **convince the Committee and the American people that he can be trusted to serve as the nation's chief law enforcement officer**. **He failed**. Senator Sessions failed to convince us that he will enforce the law for all victims, he failed to convince us he will defend **ALL of VAWA**, and he failed to convince us he will protect marginalized communities, **disqualifying him from the position of the nation's top law enforcement official**. Although, after repeated questions from Senator Leahy, Senator Sessions admitted that grabbing women's genitalia without their consent is sexual assault, he failed to convince us that he understood the consequences of his previous statement to the contrary. When asked specifically about President-elect Trump's self-described actions, Senator Sessions' response that "the President is subject to certain lawful restrictions" was wholly inadequate. Sexual assault is far more serious than a transgression of an unspecified 'lawful restriction'. It is a crime, pure and simple! Call your Senators and urge them to **vote against Senator Sessions' confirmation!** Please ACT NOW. The Senate Judiciary Committee will vote soon on Senator Sessions' nomination, with a vote in the full Senate to follow shortly thereafter.

Tell them:

- Senator Sessions is not qualified to be our top legal advocate for victims;
- He did not tell the Judiciary Committee he would enforce the law for all victims. His past comments suggesting that women and LGBT persons do not experience enough discrimination to warrant protection under the law suggests that his enforcement may be selective.
- Senator Sessions said during the hearing, in response to Senator Leahy's explanation of the high rates of victimization on tribal lands, that the provisions recognizing tribal jurisdiction "should not have been attached" to VAWA. As to enforcing that part of VAWA, Senator Sessions said, "I didn't support that provision. I would have to make a legal decision as to how that provision works." When asked if he would defend tribal jurisdiction in court, he replied he would "defend the statute if it's reasonably defensible". His answer makes it clear that he would NOT commit to protect Native victims of domestic and sexual violence.
- Senator Sessions said in the past that he didn't see that the LGBT population as experiencing discrimination, and so he refused to support the Hate Crimes Act. When asked why he voted against the Hate Crimes Act, Senator Sessions responded: "It is better to study [the issue]."

- Senator Sessions was rejected by the Senate Judiciary Committee in 1986 for a federal judgeship due to a long record of racist statements and differential application of the law. As Representative John Lewis said in Senator Sessions' confirmation hearing for Attorney General, "It doesn't matter how Senator Sessions may smile, how friendly he may be, how he may speak to you. We need someone who is going to stand up, to speak up, and speak out for the people that need help." Actions speak louder than words, and Senator Sessions' prosecutorial and legislative history speak loudly and clearly!
- Senator Sessions has a long history of promoting bills and policies that keep immigrant victims and survivors in the shadows, making communities less safe and creating barriers to access to services.

Please **call** and/or **send a message to your Senators**, urging them to oppose Jeff Sessions' confirmation as Attorney General. **Social media posts** are also a great way to make your views known. **Below are a sample script, Tweets and Facebook posts.** Call [\(877\) 959-6082](tel:877-959-6082) to be connected to your Senators or find your Senators and their contact information [here](#). **Be sure to say you are a constituent!** The hashtag for this effort is #StopSessions. Find your Senators' Twitter handles [here](#).

Sample script:

My name is [your name] and I am calling from [your location and, if applicable, your organization]. I oppose Senator Sessions' confirmation as Attorney General. His comment about sexual assault, his prosecutorial history of differential application of the law, his opposition to VAWA 2013, his promotion of policies that harm immigrant victims and survivors, and his opposition to LGBTQ rights disqualify him from this position. Senator Sessions is not qualified to be our top legal advocate for victims.

Sample Facebook Post:

I oppose Senator Sessions' confirmation as Attorney General. His real or feigned ignorance about sexual assault, his prosecutorial history of differential application of the law, his opposition to VAWA 2013, his promotion of policies that harm immigrant victims and survivors, and his opposition to LGBTQ rights disqualify him from this position. Senator Sessions is not qualified to be our top victim advocate.

Sample Tweets:

[Senator's Twitter Handle] Sen. Sessions is not qualified to be our top victim advocate. #StopSessions

[Senator's Twitter Handle] Sen. Sessions' minimization of sexual assault makes him unfit for Attorney General #StopSessions

[Senator's Twitter Handle] Sen. Sessions opposed VAWA 2013 and cannot be trusted to implement and enforce it #StopSessions

[Senator's Twitter Handle] Sen. Sessions opposed the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) in 2013; we can't trust him to protect survivors as AG #StopSessions

For more information please contact [Rachel Graber](#) at NCADV, [Terri Poore](#) at NAESV, [Lisalyn Jacobs](#) at Just Solutions, or [Shelby Chestnut](#) at the New York City Anti-Violence Project. To change your e-address or add your name to get NTF alerts and updates, send an email with your name, organization (if applicable) and contact information to the [NTF list-keeper](#).

Further reading:

NTF letter to Senate Judiciary Committee <http://www.4vawa.org/ntf-action-alerts-and-news/2017/1/4/open-letter-to-the-judiciary-committee-regarding-senator-jeff-sessions-nomination>

See Senators who voted for the 2013 VAWA [reauthorization](#)

[Red-state Democrats turn against Sessions for AG: Several of them cite his opposition to domestic violence legislation four years ago](#)

<http://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/judicial/313351-sessions-is-unqualified-to-be-nations-leading-victim-advocate>

https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/jan/12/jeff-sessions-amita-swadhin-testimony-senate-hearing?CMP=share_btn_tw