

Nov 3 2005 - Slaughter, Leading Women Members Speak Out on Alito Nomination as Threat to Women's ...

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Call for Close Senate Scrutiny of Questionable Rulings on Women's Rights

Washington, DC - Rep. Louise M. Slaughter (D-NY-28), Ranking Member of the House Rules Committee, today was joined on the steps of the Supreme Court by a diverse group of leading women Members of the House to challenge the past judicial record of Samuel A. Alito.

The Congresswomen asked the Senate to thoroughly examine Mr. Alito's troubling past approach to women's rights, in addition to questioning his views on civil and family rights.

"We are here today, as women leaders of the United States Congress, to tell our colleagues in the Senate, as well as the American people, that the President's nomination of Judge Samuel Alito to the Supreme Court is a clear and present danger to the rights of women in America," Rep. Slaughter said.

"Judge Alito's views toward women's rights are not only out of the mainstream, I would characterize them as radical. His nomination literally tips the scales of justice against women on the Supreme Court. Rather than offering a balanced successor to the moderate views of Justice Sandra Day O'Connor and the majority of this nation, the president has chosen someone hostile to the rights of all women." Rep. Slaughter continued. "Today, my colleagues and I stand here to ask that the Senate consider that this lifetime appointment could have destructive, life-long consequences for American women."

At the event, Rep. Slaughter was joined by Congresswoman Hilda L. Solis, Democratic Chair of the Women's Caucus, in addition to Congresswoman Linda Sanchez, Vice Chair of the Civil Rights Task Force. Representatives Lynn Woolsey, Barbara Lee, Jan Schakowsky, Susan Davis, and Debbie Wasserman Schultz were also in attendance.

What follows are Rep. Slaughter's remarks at the event, as prepared.

I want to thank you all for coming.

We are here today, as women leaders of the United States Congress, to tell our colleagues in the Senate, as well as the American people...

That the President's nomination of Judge Samuel Alito to the Supreme Court is a clear and present danger to the rights of women in America.

Judge Alito has espoused "radical" views toward women's rights.

He has written "radical" positions on sexual and workplace discrimination, the family medical leave act, choice issues and civil rights...among others.

An examination of Judge Alito's record reveals a troubling pattern on women's rights.

He has supported the unauthorized and inappropriate search of women and children.

Alito would make it difficult for women to succeed in the workplace by turning a blind eye to discrimination and sexual harassment.

The Family Medical Leave Act - which has benefited countless American families, simply would not exist for many Americans if it were left up to Judge Alito.

If we are to take Mr. Alito's long record as any indication of how he will preside as a justice...there is great cause for concern.

Alito's nomination is a step backward for women in America

On reproductive rights:

Judge Alito supported abortion restrictions that failed to allow exceptions when a woman's health is in jeopardy.

Alito has also argued that the state effectively has the right to give a man control over his wife...

He argued that before a married woman can have an abortion, she must notify her spouse.

The Supreme Court in 1992 ruled in a 5-4 decision that this was unconstitutional.

Judge Alito represents the swing vote on that decision and his appointment could, and probably would, result in the reversal of that opinion...Every woman in America needs to know that fact before this man is confirmed as a Justice on the Supreme Court

Does Judge Alito believe that women are not capable of making their own decisions? Are they not a better judge of their relationships than the government?

For most of this country's history, women were treated like second class citizens, incapable of making their own decisions regarding themselves, their children, property, their education and their right to vote.

Women in America, of all races, backgrounds and political affiliations, have fought too hard and come too far to have our progress jeopardized by this nomination.

Judge Alito's views toward women's rights are not only out of the mainstream, I would characterize them as radical.

His nomination literally tips the scales of justice against women on the Supreme Court...

Rather than offering a balanced successor to the moderate views of Justice Sandra Day O'Connor and the majority of this nation, the president has chosen someone hostile to the rights of all women.

Today, my colleagues and I stand here to ask that the Senate consider that this lifetime appointment could have destructive, life-long consequences for American women.

Our colleagues in the Senate have a responsibility to ensure that the highest court is not stacked against the hard fought rights that protect women across the country.