

John Ashcroft — The Best Man For the Job

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The following are recent quotes on President-Elect Bush's nomination of Senator John Ashcroft for the office of U.S. Attorney General.

“The attack on Attorney General-designate John Ashcroft exemplifies all that is bad about the current dialogue on race in the United States. Good men and women who challenge liberal policy orthodoxy are vilified, while the civil rights establishment plays defense even for felons if they pass the race test.

“True, liberal interest groups have criticized Sen. Ashcroft for his stands on abortion, the death penalty and gun control. But knowing a great many Americans agree with Sen. Ashcroft on these subjects, they've decided to make race the hot-button issue. { ... }

“Members of Congress and the media, meanwhile, have no trouble finding bigotry on the right, but hesitate to challenge bigotry or playing the race card when it is clothed in benevolent intent and perpetrated by so-called civil rights groups and civil libertarians.

“The most important issue confronting the American public today is to have leaders who are morally and spiritually sound, especially in public offices like that of attorney general. John Ashcroft, no racist, as any fair look at his record shows, passes this test. { ... }

“He is an excellent choice for attorney general.”

(Robert L. Woodson Sr., president of the National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise in Washington; The Wall Street Journal; 1/17/01)

“Some of the objections to the John Ashcroft nomination for attorney general hint that the problem with his conservative politics is that it is rooted in his Christian faith. { ... }

“We must remember our country's progressive tradition of religious tolerance. In our nation's history, certain states subjected public officeholders to certain religious tests. For instance, in 1961, the Supreme Court struck down a Maryland law that required public officials to swear to a belief in the existence of God. Progressives fought valiantly against these religious tests, and it would be a grave error to promote a new religious test that would in effect block committed Christians from public service. { ... }

“ ... (It is perfectly within Christian belief that one can participate in an essentially just system that sometimes produces unwise laws that must be enforced, as Mr. Ashcroft would do. That is at least as principled a position as that of those Catholic politicians who personally oppose

abortion but vigorously support Roe v. Wade. (...)

“We are a nation that holds firm to the conviction that a person’s religious commitments, or lack thereof, need not bar him or her from public life. The Ashcroft nomination provides an opportunity to reaffirm the best of this old liberal virtue of tolerance.”

(Robert A. Sirico, president of the Acton Institute for Religion and Liberty; The New York Times; 1/17/01)

“Patricia Ireland, boss lady of the National Organization for Women, said yesterday that a confirmation of John Ashcroft would be ‘dangerous to women’s health.’

“She said nothing about how partial-birth abortion is dangerous to an innocent infant’s skull that gets caved in with scissors. (...)

“But so much has been made about Ashcroft being religious. Can you believe it? (...)

“Mark Klein, spokesman for the Zionist Organization of America: ‘John Ashcroft’s belief in God is no stronger than Joseph Lieberman’s view of God. And I don’t see that as a bad thing for either man or their faiths.’”

(Steve Dunleavy, The New York Post, 1/17/01)

“Americans yesterday didn’t get to see the other profile of Attorney General-designate John Ashcroft as he faced a Senate Judiciary Committee firing squad assembled by Sen. Patrick J. Leahy, Vermont Democrat.

“This column interviewed the former Missouri governor and senator on several occasions in recent years, finding a man of strong convictions, a quick sense of humor and many hidden talents. He often even agreed with Democrats, including President Clinton.

“Like when the latter asked Congress to grant him ‘the strongest possible line-item veto.’ Mr. Ashcroft not only reached out to Mr. Clinton, he compared him to his mother:

“ ‘When I was a boy, my mom used to say to me: “Your eyes are bigger than your stomach. You are loading up your plate, and you are not going to be able to finish the meal.” Our eyes have been bigger than our pocketbooks, and we need to give the president the right to take some of the stuff off our congressional plate.’ ”

(John McCaslin, The Washington Times, 1/17/01)

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