

# JEFF SESSIONS

- In 2017, Jeff Sessions was confirmed as the **Attorney General of the United States**, nominated by President Donald Trump. He previously served as the Attorney General of Alabama and was a United States Senator from 1997 to 2016.
- In a September 2015 Senate press release, **Sessions warned of the “totalitarian threat to the free world...from ideological and apocalyptic Islam.”** He also said that “theologically-based Sharia law fundamentally conflicts with our magnificent constitutional order that separates church and state, and that considers free debate and dissent the way to a better world.”
- **Stephen Miller**, Senior Advisor to President Trump on policy and co-architect of the travel ban executive order, otherwise known as the Muslim ban, **worked as then-Senator Sessions’ communications director from 2009 to 2016.** The Atlantic reported that **while he worked for Sessions, Miller collaborated with Breitbart and its former head, Steve Bannon.**
- On September 5th, 2017, Sessions announced President Trump’s repeal of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program that protected from deportation undocumented immigrants who were brought to the U.S. as children.
- According to SPLC, Sessions has “**longstanding and extensive ties to both anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim extremist groups,**” in addition to anti-LGBTQ groups.
- In 2014, Sessions received the “**Daring the Odds: The Annie Taylor Award**” from the **David Horowitz Freedom Center**, a center led by David Horowitz, who the SPLC identifies as an anti-Muslim “extremist.” The award has previously been given to anti-Muslim activist Pamela Geller, who considers Islam a “radical and extreme ideology.”
- In 2015, **Sessions was awarded the “Keeper of the Flame” from the Center for Security Policy (CSP) run by Frank Gaffney**, a conspiracy theorist who the SPLC also describes as a vocal “anti-Muslim activist.”
- Sessions was a **vocal advocate for President Trump’s anti-Muslim rhetoric** and supported him in his proposed policies including Trump’s travel ban, otherwise known as his **Muslim ban.**
- In 2015, **Sessions was one of four senators**, along with Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX), to vote against a non-binding resolution in December 2015 that “affirm[ed] that the United States does not use religious tests for immigrants seeking admission into the country.”
- During his confirmation hearings, however, Sessions claimed that he does not think that “Muslims as a religious group should be denied entry to the United States.”
- While in the Senate, Sessions with then-Senior Advisor and Communications Director Stephen Miller, pushed anti-refugee research and talking points.
- In September 2017, **Sessions spoke at the Georgetown University law school on the topic of free speech on college campuses.** At the end of his speech, Sessions **described Afghanistan as having “no heritage” of what that United States “ha[s] been blessed with,”** which he identified as a heritage that “causes us to understand in a more deep

**way...why freedom is important.”** Scholars argue that this type of discourse is a cultural racism argument for modern imperialism.

- Sessions has been critical of minority rights advocacy groups, including the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). A Justice Department lawyer, J. Gerald Hebert, testified in Sessions’ 1986 federal judgeship hearing that while working together, **Sessions referred to the NAACP and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) as “un-American” and “Communist-inspired” groups that “forced civil rights down the throats of people.”**
- Although Sessions has denied being a Ku Klux Klan (KKK) sympathizer, previous assistant U.S attorney Thomas Figures testified in the 1986 hearing that **Sessions said he thought “the KKK were “OK until [he] found out they smoked pot.”**

**IMPACT:** U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions has ties to anti-Muslim organizations and individuals, such as Stephen Miller, the Center for Security Policy, Frank Gaffney, and David Horowitz and his Freedom Center. In addition to his anti-immigration and anti-civil rights remarks and voting record in Congress, Sessions has claimed that Islam is a “totalitarian threat” and believes that sharia is incompatible with the U.S. Constitution.

Bridge Initiative Factsheet