

# JON KYL

**IMPACT:** Jon Kyl recently returned to the U.S. Senate, filling the seat of deceased Senator John McCain. Kyl is closely associated with anti-Muslim organizations and individuals. He also used his platform in the Senate to sponsor War on Terror legislation, and held multiple hearings that coupled terrorism to Islam.

- On September 4th, 2018, **Arizona Governor Doug Ducey appointed Jon Kyl to serve in John McCain's Senate seat** until an election is held in 2020. On September 5th, Kyl was sworn in.
- **Kyl served in the U.S. Congress for 26 years.** From 1987 to 1994 he served in the U.S. House of Representatives, and from 1995 to 2012 he served in the U.S. Senate. During his tenure as a Senator, Kyl chaired the Senate Republican Policy Committee and the Senate Republican Conference. In 2008, Kyl became the Senate Republican Whip, the second highest-ranking Republican in the U.S. Congress.
- In September 2003, while Kyl was the **Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Terrorism, Technology and Homeland Security**, he held a hearing called, **“Two Years After 9/11: Connecting the Dots.”** The hearing included **testimony from Matthew Esptein**, who then worked for the anti-Muslim organization the Investigative Project on Terrorism.
- Kyl additionally **held Senate hearings in June 2003 entitled “Terrorism: Growing Wahhabi Influence in the United States,”** and in October 2003 entitled **“Terrorism: Radical Islamic Influence of Chaplaincy of the U.S. Military and Prisons.”** Kyl also **introduced and co-sponsored numerous pro-War on Terror bills.**
- According to the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), Kyl has a **“history of anti-Arab and anti-Muslim rhetoric and actions.”** Kyl has made sweeping generalizations about Palestinians, using language such as the “persistence of Arab rejectionism” and “Arab inflexibility.”
- In March 2011, just a few weeks after the Islamophobic “Muslim radicalization” hearings were held, led by Rep. Peter King (NY), the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights and Human Rights held a hearing entitled **“Protecting the Civil Rights of American Muslims.”** Commenting on the hearing, then-Senator **Kyl said, “I’m a bit perplexed by the focus on today’s hearing.** If we’re concerned about the most egregious religious hate crimes, then I wonder why we’re not talking about crimes against Jews and Christians.” He later said, **“Selective indignation is not helpful.”**
- In September 2009, U.S. Representative Trent Franks, U.S. Representative John Shadegg, and U.S. Senator Jon Kyl wrote a letter to U.S. Representative Keith Ellison, the first Muslim Member of Congress, **asking Ellison to “reconsider speaking” at the Council on American-Islamic Relations’ (CAIR) Arizona chapter fundraiser.** In the letter, **Kyl, Franks, and Shadegg accused CAIR of having ties to foreign terrorist organizations,** citing US v. Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development, et al. **Kyl, Franks, and Shadegg also advised Ellison to “take the time to meet with [American Islamic Forum for Democracy (AIFD)] to learn more about what they are doing to support freedom and democracy.”** AIFD was founded by Zuhdi Jasser, whom the Center for American Progress (CAP) describes as a “validator” in the “Islamophobia network.”
- According to reporting in March and July 2006 in *Slate*, **Kyl and Senator Lindsey Graham (SC) attempted to mislead the U.S. Supreme Court as it concerned Hamdan v. Rumsfeld,** a case named for plaintiff Salim Hamdan, a Yemeni national who had been subjected to forced rendition and

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imprisonment at Guantánamo Bay. The Supreme Court ultimately ruled that the military commissions initially authorized by then-President George W. Bush were unlawful.

- In February 2009, **then-Senator Kyl invited Geert Wilders, a far-right Dutch politician who espouses racist, Islamophobic, and xenophobic views, to the U.S. Congress to screen the Islamophobic film *Fitna*.** The Center for Security Policy (CSP), an anti-Muslim organization headed by Frank Gaffney, and the International Free Press Society, an Islamophobic Dutch organization, sponsored the film screening.
- Kyl has long-standing ties with CSP. **In 1994, CSP awarded then-Senator Kyl its fifth annual “Keeper of the Flame” award. In 2012, CSP awarded Kyl a “second-degree Keeper of the Flame,”** with accompanying tributes by then-Sen. Jeff Sessions (AL) and Sen. Kelly Ayotte (NH). **Kyl has also taken part in many of CSP’s annual “Keeper of the Flame” award ceremonies by introducing the award winners,** including in 1999 (which included a surprise award for Gaffney himself); in 2007 for then-Senator Joseph Lieberman (CT) and six “Defenders of the Home Front” honorees, including then-FBI special agent John Guandolo and Zuhdi Jasser; in 2011 to Rep. Buck McKeon (CA); in 2015 to then-Senator Jeff Sessions.
- According to a July 2010 article in *Breitbart*, Kyl appeared on *Secure Freedom Radio* with Gaffney, criticizing then-Supreme Court Justice nominee Elena Kagan for the Islamic Finance Portal (IFP) that was established at Harvard Law School while she was Dean. Kyl remarked: “It is a short step from the whole Shariah Financing concept into deeper reliance on **Shariah law, which would be antithetical to everything we in the West and, specifically, in the United States, believe in.**”
- Kyl also has ties with David Horowitz, whom CAP describes as a “misinformation expert” in the “Islamophobia network,” and the David Horowitz Freedom Center (DHFC), a leading anti-Muslim organization in the U.S. In May 2010, Kyl **delivered a speech at the DHFC Santa Barbara Retreat, and in August 2010, Kyl paid tribute to Horowitz for Horowitz’s Lifetime Achievement Award from the Young America’s Foundation.** In July 2012, CSP and DHFC established a joint lecture program named for Kyl and former Senator Henry “Scoop” Jackson, entitled the Henry M. (Scoop) Jackson and Jon Kyl Lecture on National Security.
- After retiring from the U.S. Congress in 2012, Kyl took on a new job in Washington, D.C., as a **lawyer for lobbyist group Covington & Burling.** In March 2013, Kyl **joined the American Enterprise Institute as a Visiting Fellow** to lead the American Internationalism Project, housed under the Marilyn Ware Center for Security Studies.
- In May 2018, Facebook announced that it would be conducting a civil rights audit and a political bias audit. **The political bias audit was led by Kyl** with his team at Covington & Burling. According to reporting in VICE News, **“Kyl is associated with the very same anti-Muslim groups the civil rights advocates have flagged (unsuccessfully) for Facebook to remove.”** Kyl left the audit to return to the U.S. Senate.