



## Committee for Religious Liberty

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February 4, 2019

The Honorable Lindsey Graham  
Chairman  
Committee on the Judiciary  
United States Senate  
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein  
Ranking Member  
Committee on the Judiciary  
United States Senate  
152 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Graham and Ranking Member Feinstein:

I write to express my deep concern with recent incidents of religious intolerance displayed by members of the Senate Judiciary Committee. As the Committee begins its consideration of nominees in the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress, I ask the Committee to soundly reject any attempt to impose a religious test on nominees. The Committee – and every senator – has a constitutional obligation to do so.

In recent months, multiple nominees to the federal judiciary have been interrogated about their membership in the Knights of Columbus, with the implication that participation in the largest Catholic fraternal organization in the country – a respected organization that has accomplished so much good for over a century – could be disqualifying. To call out the Knights of Columbus for derision is simply appalling.

These lines of questioning amount to a religious test – a test, in these cases, which discriminates against Catholics. However, my concern over these incidents extends beyond my own Church. Historically, Jewish and Muslim, as well as Catholic and other leaders, have faced discrimination and sometimes outright persecution as they have sought to serve in public office.

Not only are religious tests unconstitutional and unjust, they are an attack on **all** people of faith and those with no faith at all. Religious tests tell not only Catholics, but all Americans, that they cannot both serve their country and live out their convictions.

Our country is highly pluralistic and, currently, highly polarized. Imposing religious tests on judicial nominees deepens the divides in this country and fosters resentment. A religious test says, “You do not belong here. You are not a true American.” Senators should be working to navigate our country through these tumultuous times, not intensifying the waves.

I implore you: end these discriminatory questions and refrain from further imposing religious tests on judicial nominees.

Sincerely,

Most Reverend Joseph E. Kurtz  
Archbishop of Louisville  
Chairman, USCCB Committee for Religious Liberty