

AIMING FOR ALITO

By all accounts, Samuel Alito is a brilliant, honorable man who is well qualified to be on the U.S. Supreme Court. But he has his enemies, almost all of whom are driven by ideology. There are some, too, who fear that if his nomination succeeds, the high court will be dominated by Catholics.

Prominent among Alito's critics is Americans United for Separation of Church and State. The radical organization released a report on Alito in December that was rife with bogus charges.

The report assumes that Alito departing from rulings held by Sandra Day O'Connor would be somehow unfair, thus implying that Alito should be placed in O'Connor's jurisprudential straitjacket. Even more absurd is the spectacle of an organization, which is ostensibly interested in religious liberty, going bonkers whenever it discovers that Alito values religious speech as much as secular speech.

Similarly, the report faults Alito for ruling that a first-grade child has a right to draw a picture of Jesus and have it displayed in school. (Alito is also hammered for not wanting to censor the same kid from reading a selection from the Bible in class.) And Alito is criticized for ruling that religious symbols like the crèche and menorah may be placed outside city hall if accompanied by secular symbols.

President Bush made an outstanding choice in selecting Samuel Alito. He deserves to be confirmed.