



Eleven Dupont Circle NW, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20036
www.afj.org | 202-822-6070

Field Offices
Dallas | Houston | Los Angeles |
San Francisco

PRESIDENT

Rachel Rossi

CHAIR

Madeline deLone

July 14, 2025

Senator Charles Grassley
Chair, Senate Judiciary Committee

Senator Richard Durbin
Ranking Member, Senate Judiciary Committee

Dear Chairman Grassley and Ranking Member Durbin,

On behalf of the Alliance for Justice (AFJ), a national association representing nearly 140 public interest and civil rights organizations, we strongly urge you and your colleagues on the Senate Judiciary Committee to reject the nomination of Emil Bove to serve as a judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit.

Bove has a proven track record of placing loyalty to President Trump over the Constitution and the rule of law. He has openly threatened officials who resisted illegal government overreach and silenced dissent by firing career law enforcement officers who disagreed with his political agenda of retribution. According to a former Department of Justice official, Bove even outlined explicit plans to defy court orders that blocked the administration's illegal attempts to deport thousands of individuals. Confirming Bove to a lifetime appointment would undermine the core principles of independence and impartiality of the federal judiciary, irrevocably damaging a fundamental pillar of American government and democracy.

Bove has shown time and again that he will prioritize pursuing Trump's agenda over the rule of law. As Trump's personal defense attorney in the classified documents case and the election obstruction case, Bove defended Trump – who refused to return presidential records he had improperly taken and sparked a violent insurrection at the U.S. Capitol – by pushing for a sweeping and unprecedented interpretation of presidential power that goes against the very notion of democracy. In apparent direct conflict to that former representation, once he became a senior official at the Department of Justice, Bove acted as Trump's personal hatchet man and targeted law enforcement officials involved in the search for classified documents at Mar-a-Lago. He ignored the fact that these officials were lawfully executing a court-authorized warrant and carrying out their duties. Bove's disregard for the rule of law is evident throughout his career and foreshadows a federal judge that would prioritize partisan loyalty over equal justice.

Bove's corruption extends beyond punishing perceived political enemies – it also includes granting special privileges to potential political allies. In his role as Deputy Attorney General, Bove directed the dismissal of charges brought against New York City Mayor Eric Adams for taking bribes and soliciting illegal campaign contributions. This led to several experienced prosecutors refusing to fulfill the order and quitting in protest because there was no sufficient legal justification for dropping the charges.

It appears to be a blatant quid pro quo arrangement between Adams and the administration. Mayor Adams's charges were dropped, and Trump received his compliance with the administration's aggressive and punitive immigration enforcement tactics. In stark contrast, those state and local leaders who would not acquiesce and instead intended to protect their communities from the administration's unlawful targeting were threatened.

Additionally, Bove lacks any resemblance to the temperament, judgment, and professional conduct required of federal judges. While Bove was a federal prosecutor in Manhattan, the U.S. Attorney's Office conducted an "internal inquiry" into his leadership of the terrorism and international narcotics unit after complaints were made about his "abusive" treatment of staff and vicious temper. The investigation led to a recommendation that he be demoted from his position. Bove was also the subject of a letter to the Office's leadership by a group of both defense attorneys and prosecutors who had worked with him, in which they illustrated that Bove had used unethical tactics while litigating cases. Judicial temperament and sound judgment are crucial for the fair, impartial application of the law and for maintaining public trust in the legal system. Bove's record and qualities once again make him wholly unfit for the federal bench, and his appointment to the Third Circuit would undermine the entire nation's judicial system.

Bove's heated nomination hearing was filled with theatrics and nonanswers further illuminating who he is: an offensive man who disregards the rule of law, buries the truth, and weaponizes positions of power to appease Trump. The hearing not only failed to dispel any of the numerous concerns facing Bove's nomination, it even further heightened them. Throughout the hearing, Bove refused to provide answer to senators' direct questions pertaining to his actions to dismiss charges against Mayor Adams, his directives to fire DOJ and FBI officials involved in investigating violent insurrectionists, the corroborated allegations of his efforts to defy court orders and make misrepresentations to the court, and the inquiries into his "abusive" management and problematic temperament. He denied multiple credible claims regarding his horrifying record, claimed broad privilege to dodge answers, and professed to "not recollect" occurrences that normal people do not forget. The hearing further illustrated that Bove is a political operator committed to advancing Trump's agenda to no bounds – one who is willing to disregard the rule of law, weaponize the federal government to target perceived political opponents, and even defy court orders.

The Canons and Code of Judicial Conduct for United States Judges require a federal judge to "maintain and enforce high standards of conduct and [] personally observe those standards;" to "respect and comply with the law and [] act at all times in a manner that promotes public confidence in the integrity and impartiality of the judiciary;" to "not engage in behavior that is harassing, abusive, prejudiced, or biased;" and most importantly, to "not be swayed by partisan interests." Bove has simply not demonstrated he will comply with these minimum requirements. Any one facet of Bove's record fundamentally disqualifies him for a lifetime appointment to the federal judiciary. His nomination undermines the foundational principles of our legal system: an independent judiciary that provides essential checks and balances against abuses of power and that applies equal and fair justice under the law. If Bove is confirmed, there is no doubt that he will prioritize a partisan agenda rather than his oath to uphold the Constitution and laws of the United States.

Preservation of the independence of the judiciary and protection of the rule of law is critical. Given Bove's clear record of defiance of these core democratic values, it is abundantly clear that you must oppose Bove's nomination.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rachel Rossi".

Rachel Rossi
President, Alliance for Justice