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**Rachel Rossi**

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July 10, 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 Alliance for Justice (AFJ), a national association representing nearly 140 public interest and civil rights organizations, we urge you and your colleagues on the Senate Judiciary Committee to oppose the nomination of Ed Artau to the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Florida.

Artau's record reveals a dangerous combination of far-right ideology, ethical lapses, and judicial extremism. His nomination reflects a broader agenda to reshape the federal judiciary in the image of partisan loyalty, rather than a commitment to equal justice and the rule of law. His confirmation would threaten the rights of LGBTQ+ individuals, undermine environmental safeguards, gut basic gun safety protections, and further erode public trust in judicial ethics.

Artau has made clear that he cannot be trusted to uphold the rights of LGBTQ+ individuals — particularly transgender youth. In *H.S. v. Department of Children and Families*, Artau ruled against a trial court judge who used a transgender child's preferred pronouns during a custody evaluation, describing the judge's conduct as "antagonistic." Artau defended the father's right to deny gender-affirming care, even in the face of emotional abuse. His reasoning was not grounded in a neutral application of law, but rather in anti-trans bias masked as concern for parental rights. Artau's decision and actions align with the far-right movement's effort to delegitimize the identity, dignity, and autonomy of transgender youth and their families.

Artau's record also shows that, if confirmed, he will legislate from the bench to expand gun rights at the expense of public safety. In *Broward County v. Florida Carry Inc.*, he concurred in a decision permitting firearms to be carried in Florida airports outside of secure areas, casting aside the foundational public need for safety and security. His interpretation of the Second Amendment advances an absolutist view that jeopardizes the ability of communities to protect themselves from gun violence. As such, his actions pertaining to public safety align with the far-right wing movement's, not a jurist who believes in the rule of law, judicial independence, and the role of federal judges.

When it comes to protecting our land, water, and air, Artau again aligns himself with corporate interests, over the public and the law. In a challenge to the Clean Water Act's permit requirements, Artau sided with efforts to discharge pollutants into environmentally sensitive areas without proper oversight. His position undermined the EPA's authority and put public health — especially in historically marginalized communities like the Miccosukee Tribe living near the Everglades — at risk.

Artau's record is not only ideologically extreme — it is ethically disqualifying. In 1995, he improperly recommended the wife of the person who arranged his appointment to a Judicial Nominating Commission for a judgeship, an action that a gubernatorial investigation determined bore clear signs of quid pro quo. More recently, Artau presided over a 2025 defamation case involving Donald Trump and the Pulitzer Prize Board while actively seeking a federal judgeship through Trump-aligned Senator Rick Scott. Despite the obvious conflict of interest, Artau refused to recuse himself and ruled in favor of Trump, citing Trump's own rhetoric — calling the case a “phony witch hunt” and a “big hoax” — as part of his legal rationale. He was interviewed for a federal judgeship shortly thereafter. This is not judicial independence. It is transactional politics cloaked in a robe.

Even under questioning from Senator Richard Blumenthal during his nomination hearing, Artau defended his decision to remain on the case. He admitted that he had “indicated” ongoing interest in a nomination and that Senator Scott's office held him in “high regard,” but claimed — implausibly — that he had no “expectation” he was under consideration at the time. Such disingenuous parsing of facts only underscores the ethical rot that pervades Artau's nomination.

A federal judge must be guided by the Constitution, not political loyalty. Artau's record reveals a man willing to distort the law, sacrifice judicial integrity, and endanger public safety and civil rights to serve a political agenda. He lacks the impartiality, ethics, and basic judicial temperament required for lifetime tenure on the federal bench.

This nomination is not only a threat to the Middle District of Florida — it is a threat to the integrity of the entire federal judiciary. Confirming Ed Artau would further normalize the erosion of judicial independence and signal to the public that loyalty to a president matters more than a judge's fidelity to the rule of law.

We strongly urge you to reject this nomination.

Sincerely,

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

Rachel Rossi  
President, Alliance for Justice