

Rehnquist-Powell

For the first time in its 52-year history, the ACLU fought a nominee for public office — William Rehnquist. “We know William Rehnquist as an advocate of drag-net arrests, as an opponent of racial integration, as a champion of executive authority to engage in electronic eavesdropping and political surveillance, as a campaigner for pre-trial incarceration and as an engineer of the Justice Department’s programs to abrogate the rights of persons accused of crime,” the Union said. “We believe that his commitment to state power at the expense of individual liberty makes William Rehnquist unfit to sit on the U.S. Supreme Court.” The ACLU in November had sent a letter to all United States senators urging that they evaluate William Rehnquist’s and Lewis Powell’s dedication to the Bill of Rights in judging their fitness to sit on the U.S. Supreme Court. “The Senate should not defer to a claimed right of the President to pick candidates for the Supreme Court who share his judicial philosophy,” the Union said. “Rather, we believe, the Senate should exercise its power to approve or disapprove candidates for the Court in terms of its own views of their judicial philosophy.”