

For the Record: On Phill Kline

In an apparent effort to divert attention away from bad publicity surrounding the Kansas attorney general's office, a few people are attacking the legacy of former attorney general, Republican Phill Kline.

As one who has watched Kline's career, and as one who has the unique privilege of comparing his work to some very fine attorneys and judges around the country, I want to set the record straight. Phill Kline has served honorably and boldly.

In the United States Supreme Court, Kline tackled significant cases, such as a multi-million dollar conflict over water rights. In another case, he asserted the state's right to receive taxes on gas production and in another he argued and won on the tough issue of the death penalty. Kline has the courage to keep taking the difficult cases.

Kline, the legislator, impressed many voters before he ever shouldered the duties of attorney general. When several shelters for homeless pregnant women sought nominal support from the legislature, Phill Kline brought unity in the pro-choice and pro-life factions to pass a budget item, and he united these factions again to overturn the then-governor's only line-item veto of the pregnancy shelter budget item. When Kline ran for the office of attorney general, he enjoyed overwhelming law enforcement support, namely, sheriffs, and also police and troopers' associations.

As attorney general, Kline's criminal division increased collections from Medicaid fraud, and locked up more than fifty criminal fugitives. He helped bring down a national drug gang through Operation Little Apple, a joint project with the U.S. Attorney's office. Kline's prosecutions and assistance with legislation dramatically reduced Kansas meth labs. He helped jail more than a hundred internet child-predators through a task force which became a national model. He led the fight to pass Jessica's Law.

And he got these results while reducing overall expenditures.

You would think a guy like this would be universally popular. Unfortunately, Kline has political opponents because he is also courageous enough to enforce the rule of law when it comes to the unborn.

Nevertheless, Kline's peers recognized his achievements by electing him as chair or co-chair of various associations and task forces, and one constituency group selected him as their prosecutor of the year. Phill Kline's record as a good attorney and as a dedicated public servant speaks for itself.

In this election year, recognizing a courageous public servant reminds us that our freedoms -- the very concept of the rule of law -- will only be as good as the servants we elect. As much as his political opponents on the life issues would like to rewrite the story of Kline's service, the facts are in Phill Kline's favor.

By:

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