

# WILLIAM PRYOR ON STATE ATTORNEYS GENERAL

## Highlights:

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### **AS ATTORNEY GENERAL, PRYOR BELIEVED IT WAS MORE IMPORTANT TO SHIELD ALABAMA FROM FEDERAL OVERSIGHT THAN PROTECTING CHILDREN FROM ABUSE**

**Schumer: While Pryor Admitted Alabama Failed To Meet A Federal Consent Decree Regarding The Child Welfare Program, He Said, “My Job Is To Make Sure The State Of Alabama Isn’t Run By The Federal Courts. My Job Isn’t To Come Here And Help Children.”** While appearing at Committee On The Judiciary, U.S. Senate, Chuck Schumer said, “Attorney General Pryor’s ardent support of States’ rights extends even to the realm of child welfare. At the same time he was conceding that Alabama had failed to fulfill the requirements of a Federal consent decree regarding the operation of the State’s child welfare system, he was demanding that the State be let out of the deal. It is not so much the position he took as the comments made afterward. Attorney General Pryor said, quote, ‘My job is to make sure the State of Alabama isn’t run by the Federal Courts. My job isn’t to come here and help children,’ unquote.” [Committee On The Judiciary, U.S. Senate, [6/11/03](#)]

**Pryor Later Walked Back Those Comments And Said It Was His Job To Protect State Workers’ Ability To Protect Children.** According to Wall Street Journal, “Two weeks ago, for example, he shocked many would-be supporters when he emerged from a hearing at which he had argued to scrap a court settlement governing Alabama’s child-welfare system. (The settlement requires the state to provide more services to children from troubled homes and work harder to keep families intact.) His main concern, he told reporters, was to keep the federal courts out of Alabama, not to help children. [...] But Mr. Pryor is learning fast about saving face, and about admitting when he messes up. ‘If you take that sentence alone and blow it up, it looks harsh,’ he says. ‘I’m the father of two little girls, and I realize that.’ What he meant to say, he adds, is that the state’s social workers are charged with protecting children. As attorney general, he continues, his job is only to protect their ability to do so.” [Wall Street Journal, [5/21/97](#)]