

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Hooks.
Reverend Brown.

STATEMENT OF REV. AMOS C. BROWN

Reverend BROWN. Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, in a virtually unanimous vote in independent conventions during the months of August and September, the nomination of Judge Clarence Thomas to the U.S. Supreme Court is opposed by the National Baptist Convention of America, the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc., and the Progressive National Baptist Convention.

It is significant that this action was taken by bodies that represent constituencies of 14 million people. Our decision was done with deliberation, much thought, debate, and prayer. We took this action based on Judge Thomas' personal record, his speeches, the political ideology that he espouses, and the associates he maintains.

We feel that Judge Thomas must be subjected to the words of St. Paul, that we are all living epistles read of men and women. Judge Thomas has written his epistle, and we have, with compassion, understanding, and a sense of justice, concluded that he is not the man to be chosen for this high position.

We consider it to be unfortunate that his personal beginnings, professional, and academic careers have been so much the focus by the media and even the process of the Senate Judiciary Committee during opening hearings and testimony. The American public has not been given a fair opportunity to get a sense of what the real issues are and the impact of this gentleman's serving on the Court.

Instead, Judge Thomas has used his own background to justify himself, in my estimation, giving the appearance that he has had a more difficult time, when we know he received advantages not extended to the vast majority of African-Americans.

It has been the lay of the land for African-Americans to virtually have to make a way out of no way. We were denied a way not just due to poverty, but we have experienced terror and acts of dehumanization, as I personally witnessed in my childhood in Jackson, MS. At 14, I witnessed the lynching of Emmett Phail. I attended segregated schools where African-American teachers received inferior wages and students were given second- and third-hand textbooks from white schools.

My constitutional rights were further violated when I was refused readmittance to a segregated high school because I went to Cleveland, OH, and testified to the national convention of the NAACP on the low quality of education for African-Americans in Mississippi and low salaries for teachers.

We are further disturbed that when the hearings are over Judge Thomas' epistle records that he has disavowed and disowned all his previous writings and speeches that he had embraced up to the point of being appointed a Federal judge. Now he is trying to give the appearance of being a changed man, saying to the American public that once he puts on his judicial robes he will be singing a different song, talking a different talk, and walking a different walk.

We have no recourse but to feel that he has taken this stance in order to get himself ahead. In his speech entitled "Economic Free-

dom," he has also maintained that the minimum wage was a deterrent for African-Americans, and he considered it a denial of economic freedom. We consider this to be a blatant act of denying economic parity and dignity to African-Americans specifically, who earn 50-percent less than the dominant culture.

Would he say the same for himself regarding the minimum wage when he aspires for his check for \$100,000 plus?

Further, we must, as representatives of the Church of Jesus Christ, call him to task for misrepresenting the status of his sister, Emma Mae Martin, when he berated her before a group of black Republicans, indicating she was like most blacks on welfare, not taking initiative, trying to chisel the system, getting angry when the check didn't come on time. We know that, in fact, when this speech was made, Ms. Martin was actually working two minimum-wage jobs, trying to make a way out of no way, as many African-American women have had to do as single parents.

During his testimony before this committee, Judge Thomas said on several occasions that his speeches did not reflect his views but what he believed his audience wanted to hear from an African-American.

Mr. Chairman and members of this committee, what if Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., had appealed to popularity and not to justice? What if Mr. Justice Thurgood Marshall had appealed to popularity and not to justice?

There is a responsibility to instill justice and a duty to speak for justice, especially when it is not popular. Though we are ministers and people of compassion, we must be sensible. The Scriptures say we shall be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. We must love God with our heart and our mind.

Our mind causes us to question Judge Thomas' legal qualifications. He has not rendered any major judicial opinions. At best, what he has produced is a barrage of speeches and writings in support of the right-wing conservative ideology. Moreover, he has gone around the country making speeches defending Oliver North, a man who obviously violated the Constitution through his actions. He has also fraternized with persons who have embraced the South African apartheid government by serving as lobbyists.

Therefore, we consider it to be disgraceful and an insult to African-Americans, to women, and minorities to ask us to have the heart to trust a man who has not respected his sister, who has advanced a faulty argument regarding the solutions to racial injustice, and prays to and sings the glories of the conservative political religious right that has sought to turn the clock back and dismantle all of the civil rights gains that were won through blood, sweat, and tears.

If I may put it in church and ecclesiastical language, as one of my mentors said, maybe he has converted. But we don't think that you would take a man off the mourner's bench and make him chairman of the deacon board or pastor of the church.

Finally, this Senate Judiciary Committee ought to have in this hour a sense of history and recall that in yesteryears there was one Booker T. Washington—a sincere man, yes; an industrious man, yes; a committed man, yes. But he was so used by our oppressors, so presented as a symbol, that while he was having dinner at the

White House with Theodore Roosevelt, it was common practice that blacks were lynched monthly.

We cannot afford to desecrate our heritage or mar the struggle for freedom by repeating in the 1990's a scenario of lifting up Clarence Thomas as the symbol and embodiment of African-American achievement and being worthy of sitting on this Court at a time when it is more dangerous for an African-American male youth in urban America than it was in combat in Vietnam or the Persian Gulf.

We cannot lift him up as a symbol on a Court that is already stacked, thus rendering his one presence ineffective. We cannot afford to have a symbol devoid of substance at a time when the life expectancy of African-Americans is 6 to 7 years less than the majority culture. We cannot deal with cotton-candy politics that would give us a good taste in our mouths, but keep us with empty stomachs which cause us to have poor nutritional and health lifestyles.

We must have at least one person of African-American descent on the Court who knows what it means to be concerned about all of God's children, who maintains a sensitivity that would cause him to think about the locked out, the left out, the looked over, as he sits in postured halls to render opinions that would impact on the lives of millions.

We need a judge who will do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with his Maker until the day will come when all of us in this great Nation will find a sense of self-worth and pride and dignity, and be able to say: I am black and I am proud; I am brown and I am sound; I am yellow and I am mellow; I am red and I ain't dead; I am white and I am all right.

Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Reverend Brown follows:]