

RESOLUTION ON THE CLARENCE THOMAS
NOMINATION TO THE SUPREME COURT

Excerpts

1. The U.S. Supreme Court is our nation's highest court. The Justices have been delegated the authority to interpret the laws that affect all citizens.
2. President George Bush's nomination of Judge Clarence Thomas to fill the vacancy of retiring Justice Thurgood Marshall, provides the country a unique opportunity to reflect on our current dilemma in the field of American politics.
3. There is a "conservative trend" sweeping the body politic. The hard won gains of the Civil Rights Movement are being eroded by a series of court decisions.
4. We, the members of the Progressive National Baptist Convention, meeting in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, view the nominee, Judge Clarence Thomas, as a product of African American descent. He has seen the injustices that afflict people of color.
5. While we affirm his humanity, believing that God's redeeming grace can transform our brother into a new creature, we must set forth a standard by which the U.S. Senate and citizenry must judge this nominee.
6. America is a multiracial society. Therefore, a justice on the U.S. Supreme Court must be sensitive to human rights and social alienation. We affirm the right of every individual (black or white) to hold whatever view he or she may wish, be it liberal, conservative, or otherwise. Moreover, we recognize that diversity of opinions and points of view are necessary within our community.

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7. However, the 21st Century American agenda demands a Judiciary that is not locked into ideological warring factions. The U.S. Supreme Court must provide equal justice under the Laws of the Constitution.
8. The U.S. Senate hearings of September 9, 1991, scheduled for Washington, DC, shall afford the nominee an opportunity to express views on a variety of topics. His record to date leaves many citizens troubled over his basic judicial philosophy.

RESOLUTION

9. WHEREAS, the Progressive National Baptist Convention (PNBC) was born out of a climate and an experience of turmoil and violence, struggling for the rights, freedoms, and liberties of its constituency and all people; and
10. WHEREAS, PNBC is the only such convention that stood forth and championed the cause of Civil Rights, while providing a home and a national platform for one of God's most dynamic servants and our beloved leader and brother, the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; and
11. WHEREAS, African Americans, other racial minorities, and women have historically been victims of immeasurable crimes of hatred and oppression, discrimination in the labor force and denied access to public and private institutions in the United States for reasons unrelated to their merit and qualifications, but based on race and gender preferences; and
12. WHEREAS, the aforementioned victims of racial hatred and discrimination have appealed to the Supreme Court of the United States for equal protection of their constitutional rights; and
13. WHEREAS, the U.S. Supreme Court is a critical national institution, which should combine scholarly constitutional interpretation with a deep appreciation of the concrete history and social reality of the American people; and

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14. WHEREAS, a proper consideration of the nomination of Mr. Thomas to the U.S. Supreme Court requires not only a careful examination of the qualifications, outlook, and history of Mr. Thomas, but also the intent, history, and policy direction of President Bush; and
15. WHEREAS, the Reagan/Bush and the Bush/Duayle administrations have reflected a consistent policy direction with clear and measurable negative impacts on the African American community for over ten years; and
16. WHEREAS, this policy direction includes deregulation and structural unemployment, removal of anti-discrimination protection for historically oppressed minorities, reduction in health care, cutbacks in social assistance for the poor in general, and a major redistribution of wealth away from the middle class and the poor towards the already wealthy and super-rich; and
17. WHEREAS, the political tactics and strategy of Mr. Bush reflect sinister manipulation of race, as in the case of Willie Horton; and
18. WHEREAS, the policy direction of the last ten years has resulted in unprecedented impoverishment of the working poor and the bottom strata of the population, yet at the same time the unprecedented growth of wealth among the upper strata of the population; and
19. WHEREAS, Mr. Thomas has been a part of the conservative trend for the entire ten year period as an aid to Senator Danforth, as EEOC Director, and as a federal circuit court judge; and
20. WHEREAS, we are called to know a tree by the fruit it bears and
21. WHEREAS, the record (fruits) of Mr. Thomas shows a consistent pattern, most clearly reflected in his years as Director of EEOC, of joining the Bush policy direction of removing anti-discrimination protection for African Americans, denying equal pay for equal work for women, and failing to act decisively on age discrimination cases brought before the EEOC; and

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22. WHEREAS, the Thomas nomination is part of an accelerated trend of Bush to strengthen the power, prestige, and influence of a network of people, who are more effective in opposing the gains of the Civil Rights Movement and a progressive African American agenda than white conservatives because they appeal to the commendable reluctance of African Americans to not publicly oppose other African Americans; and
23. WHEREAS, the trend to strengthen the prestige, power, and influence of African Americans who (objectively, regardless of personal intent) promote confusion, division, and lay the African American community open to further abuse and exploitation, and is therefore dangerous, short-sighted, and unfaithful to the best tradition of struggle and sacrifice of the African American people; and
24. WHEREAS, the nomination of Mr. Thomas for U.S. Supreme Court Justice should be considered in context and as part of a dangerous trend that does not measure up to the principles on which the FNBC was founded and which has guided its existence; and
25. WHEREAS, we, the FNBC, know that our hope still is in God and never was in a cynical Republican government nor in a lukewarm Democratic government.
26. BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Progressive National Baptist Convention opposes the nomination of Judge Clarence Thomas for the U.S. Supreme Court until or unless in his Senate hearings he expresses support of the Constitutional rights won in our hard fought struggles for civil rights.