

set up or reasons that they set up to discriminate against each other. Often, when both groups are white it is religion or some other ethnic difference, but when you are dealing with blacks, you are dealing with people who are highly visible, and the degree to which discrimination is expressed against us is far greater.

And any black who says that we are just like everybody else and should never expect to have any kind of special treatment in order to overcome certain problems is basically dishonest. They are dishonest because of the current reality; they are dishonest because, as an intellectual, they want to disregard all of history.

Blacks are the descendants of African slaves who were brought here against their will, not like other immigrants. We were, for 300 years, treated as slaves and suddenly set free with very little or nothing to compensate. There was a social experiment called the Freed Man's Bureau. Thank God for that, because it created historically black colleges.

But, basically, nothing happened when the slaves were set free to deal with the problem that they had their labor stolen from them all those years. They had no property, et cetera, et cetera. So the whole concept of reparations has to enter into dealing with the descendants of African slaves today, but we refuse to accept that.

In every group, there is a certain percentage who will overcome and excel no matter what the conditions are, no matter how great their pressure. There is a certain percentage who will overcome. The majority of the people are just normal human beings; they will not be able to overcome without some special help.

We accept the principle of reparations in the case of war. One nation loses a war; they have to pay. We also accepted it in the case of Israel and the Jews under the Nazis. We went one moral step further, and oppressed people who had not won the war were paid reparations by the Germans because of the conditions they subjected those people to during the course of the Nazi period.

I am not asking for reparations in the payment of dollars to individual blacks, but some consideration of what—300 years of slavery, followed by years of de facto discrimination that impact on a people has to be taken into consideration.

Any person, black or white, who is an intellectual and knows history and wants to disregard this totally, I find, you know, either naive or basically dishonest, and I think in the case of Judge Thomas it is basic dishonesty.

Senator SPECTER. Well, my time is up, Mr. Chairman. May the answers continue?

The CHAIRMAN. Yes.

Mr. WASHINGTON. I will be brief in my response, not to say that the others weren't, of course, because they are senior to me.

The first question you asked is about—you ran off a litany of things dealing with—and you arrived at the correct assessment that we are dealing with, unfortunately, a period of more racial divisiveness in this country than any of us would think ordinarily possible in 1991; that we were on a course where things were getting better. Now, it appears that things are either standing still or moving backwards.

And the question you raised, as I understood it, Senator, had to do with Judge Thomas' views about affirmative action vis-a-vis

that, and the question was does his position have a reasonable basis. The answer to that question is no because it misappends, if you will, the very touchstone of what discrimination is.

Judge Thomas' view is that whatever has happened to him, good or bad, has happened to him as an individual. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Prejudice is prejudice because of group identification. People can't prejudge you if they don't know you, except either you are too tall, Senator Simpson, or you are too short or you are too black or you are too this or you are too that, based upon group identification.

It oversimplifies and overlooks the fact that, as my colleague has said, the prejudice that is visited upon black people or Hispanics or any other group of individuals is born of someone having categorized them as being not as qualified to have the job. So, that is not going to go away.

If you did away with all affirmative action, then there are white people and black people and Hispanic people and all kinds of people who think that the view of the sunset is somehow enhanced if they are standing on somebody else's shoulders. Nothing is going to change about that. There are always going to be white people who think the black guy got the job because he was black rather than because he was qualified.

We as leaders have to ensure that regardless of how we feel about these laws, if these are laws on the books that are bound to be enforced that overcome the vestiges of past discrimination, we can't play political cannon fodder with them, it seems to me. We lend ourselves to that kind of notion when we get out and play politics with notions about job discrimination and the like.

We know that Griggs decided that there would be remedies available to overcome the built-in headwinds as long as the headwinds continue to exist for women or for Hispanics or for—one of these days, it is going to be for white males. A majority of people in this country are not going to be white males forever. Demographers already tell us that. So when you become the minority, then will the built-in headwinds be opposing you? I think so.

In answer to the second part of the question of does he have the potential to be a role model, he has the same potential as in Rudyard Kipling's admonition in the poem, "he travels the fastest who travels alone"—"when by the aid which he has done and the aid his own which he has done, he travels the fastest who travels alone." That is the role model he presents. He presents a role model that if you want to get ahead in life, don't come up through the ranks the same way that you and all the rest of us do; get in the short line.

That is exactly what he has done. He went over, he looked at the line over here on this side, and he said that the line of black people who want to move up is shorter over there, so he got in the short line, and that is the role model that he presents for black Americans, I think.

Mr. LEWIS. Senator, let me just state that in spite of all of the changes, in spite of all of the progress that we have made in this country during the past few years, the scars and stains of racism are still deeply embedded in American society. So there is still a need for affirmative action. I think you have a nominee who would