

another way you would wish to proceed. Why don't we start, then, with Harriet Woods.

STATEMENT OF A PANEL CONSISTING OF HARRIET WOODS, PRESIDENT, NATIONAL WOMEN'S POLITICAL CAUCUS; MOLLY YARD, PRESIDENT, NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN; ELEANOR SMEAL, FUND FOR THE FEMINIST MAJORITY; HELEN NEUBORNE, NOW LEGAL DEFENSE AND EDUCATION FUND; ANNE BRYANT, AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN; AND BYLLYE AVERY, NATIONAL BLACK WOMEN'S HEALTH PROJECT

Ms. Woods. Mr. Chairman and other Senators, I am really pleased to be here.

I am Harriet Woods, former lieutenant governor of Missouri, and now president of the National Women's Political Caucus, which is a national bipartisan membership organization that works hard to get women into elected and appointive office. I guess you could call us the bootstrap organization, an electoral organization for women, and we do it the hard way, one-by-one-by-one-by-one, sort of the way Clarence Thomas wants to provide relief for discrimination for women in the economic and civil areas.

Someone has estimated that, looking at the U.S. Senate and some of our other electoral bodies, that if we keep up this way, it could take 400 years to get gender equity in our electoral bodies, and, as someone else has remarked, justice delayed is justice denied.

So, I am here for justice and I am also, with due respect to the Senators, here to remind you that advice and consent is more than a prerogative of the Senate, it is a protection for the people.

Now, I have heard some talk about special interest groups, and I have to say right off to this panel that women are not a special interest group, we are the majority, a majority of the population, a majority of the registered voters, and a majority of those who do vote. Yet we continue to receive less pay for our work, we suffer indignities in the workplace, we have fewer opportunities for career advancement, we are the teachers, rather than the superintendents, we are often ignored at medical research, and paternalistically told that we can't even make our own reproductive decisions.

But when we do turn to legislative relief, as I have said, what do we find? We find 29 out of 435 Members of Congress. It is not for want of trying. Since the 20 years since the caucus was founded, we have quadrupled the number of women in legislatures, all the way to 18 percent. In Louisiana, when they passed what they probably boasted was the most punitive law on abortion, out of 144 members of that legislature, 3 were women.

So, it is important that when we come here, we come because we can't make those decisions ourselves, we have to petition for our rights. We need to look to the courts, and so Judge Thomas is important.

I thank those Senators who asked questions on our behalf and the behalf of women for us, but, I have to tell you, we weren't very happy with the responses. They seemed to be based on the notion

that we ought to trust him on the basis of his life story. I wish we could do that. His friends say he is a very nice man, and I do think it is important if we could get more diversity in the Court, particularly the presence of someone who has experienced the impact of racism in our society.

But this is too important for blind faith, and I think Senator Biden has indicated he is puzzled that he hasn't come out forthrightly on some of these positions elsewhere. I think there are a lot of clues to that, Senator Biden. I think he is a man who is running away from himself, but also has avoided taking positions on some issues, because he is insensitive to some of them.

Well, what can I add to these already rather lengthy deliberations? I know that other members of the panel will be speaking to some of our frustrations in his testimony. I can remember—with painful clarity—a debate in the Missouri State Senate in 1977, when certain male legislators successfully argued that it would violate the natural order of the universe, if wives, as well as husbands, could be held liable for criminal support. You know, it is not just esoteric legalese, when we talk about the way some people want to apply natural law when it comes to women.

I can remember a frustrated investigator for the EEOC, in St. Louis, who came to me and said he had an air-tight case of systemic sexual discrimination—discrimination in a St. Louis corporation—and the case was taken up to the central office and died, and was pigeonholed under Clarence Thomas. So, I don't care what the statistics say, actions were taken to block relief.

There is a new phenomenon in this country called political homelessness, because people in this country have lost faith in their Government. The millions who are watching this process, what are they going to think about advice and consent, if a nominee can appear before you, and stonewall you, and refuse to answer, be evasive, and yet be confirmed?

I want to say to you that you may be dooming us to a similar game plan for all future nominees. Will we ever again hear forthright responses? They also wonder what we are talking about in terms of costs of these campaigns for nomination.

I would like to conclude with a quote from a play, "A Raisin in the Sun," where some of you may recall how Langston Hughes described the story of a black family struggling to pursue the dream of escaping the ghetto, by the way around the dream of a strong woman: "What happens to a dream deferred?" he wrote.

Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun? Or fester like a sore—and then run? Does it stink like rotten meat? Or crust and sugar over—like a syrupy sweet? Maybe it just sags like a heavy load. Or does it explode?

Senators this Nation can't afford a Supreme Court Justice who fulfills his own dreams, but accepts detours and delays for those pursuing dreams of their own. We urge you to vote against the confirmation of Judge Thomas.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Governor.

Ms. Yard.