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**STATEMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE ALVIN HOLMES,  
 A MEMBER OF THE ALABAMA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
 BEFORE THE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE OF THE  
 UNITED STATES SENATE  
 SEPTEMBER 19, 1991**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee,

I express my appreciation to each of you for allowing this statement to enter the records of the Judiciary Committee of the proceedings of Judge Clarence Thomas' nomination to the United States Supreme Court.

First of all, Judge Clarence Thomas talks about his childhood as if he is the only black person who suffered racist insults. The fact of the matter is that every black American in the south withstood indignities of segregation and "Jim Crow." Each of us can share a story of humiliation during the U.S. apartheid in the deep south.

It is very unfortunate that Judge Clarence Thomas attempts to lift his experience above that of others in the black community and it should be insulting to the committee that Judge Thomas has used such pandering tactics to ingratiate himself with the committee.

What is different about Judge Clarence Thomas and the majority of the black community in the deep south is that thousands upon thousands of black people marched, demonstrated, went to jail, were brutally beaten and, unfortunately, there were some who gave their lives standing up for their dignity until the walls of segregation and humiliation came tumbling down.

If Judge Thomas was so insulted during his childhood by the indignities of segregation, then where was he during the sit-ins, the freedom rides, the confrontation with Bull Connor in Birmingham, the confrontation in Albany, Georgia, the marching in Mississippi, the Selma to Montgomery march, the great march on Washington for jobs, and the march in Memphis, Tennessee? Judge Thomas was not among the multitude, yet he criticizes black people in masses and civil rights organizations that chipped, and continue to chip, away at the scourge of

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discrimination so that our constitution can be a living document for all Americans. Obviously, he was not concerned about the freedom of blacks because he never participated in any civil rights movements in the country to my knowledge. Instead, Judge Thomas criticized black civil rights leaders as "bitching and moaning all the time."

In regards to affirmative action, the southern states have a long history of denying black people equal employment opportunities. If it were not for various laws, rules and regulations concerning affirmative action to give the blacks an equal chance, much would be left missing.

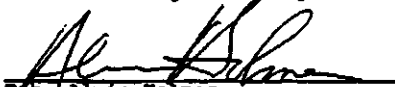
In the long history of most states in the nation, if it were not for different rules and laws dealing with set-aside programs and affirmative action, blacks would not have the opportunity to participate in the economic prosperity of this nation.

Further, Judge Thomas has taken a strong position against United States Supreme Court decisions dealing with the rights of poor and disadvantaged people. Judge Thomas states that he was once poor and now, since becoming successful, he, in my opinion, has turned his back on the poor and the disadvantaged of this country. There exists no positive record, to my knowledge, that Judge Thomas put forth any efforts to help the poor, the discriminated, the destitute, the old, and the black people of this nation.

I feel that, once on the Supreme Court, Judge Thomas will lead the Court on all civil rights matters. That his voice will be used to permit extreme discrimination to re-emerge. Moreover, if Judge Thomas is approved for the Supreme Court, in my opinion, it will send the wrong message to young black Americans that the way to be successful in life is to criticize the civil rights movement and civil rights leaders of this country and cater to the extreme conservative elements of this country that have always taken the position against the quality and freedom of black people.

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for allowing this testimony to enter into the records of your proceedings.

Please vote against Judge Thomas' confirmation.



Rep. Alvin Holmes  
State Representative and Chairman  
of the Affirmative Action Committee  
of the Alabama Legislative Black Caucus