

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Grassley.

Senator GRASSLEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to thank you all for most of you coming so far and probably under difficult circumstances to come and testify in support of Clarence Thomas. I appreciate very much your testimony. I almost felt, when Reverend Haygood got done, we ought to call for a vote. [Laughter.]

Also, I want to tell Ms. Frazier, I am not one of those "highfalutin legal types" that you are talking about, because I am not a lawyer, so I hope you will feel some affinity toward at least one member of the committee.

I want to ask in a serious vein, I think maybe just a little bit different approach some of my colleagues have taken, but it is to get people like you, who I would like to think are the ordinary American people who look at things differently than are looked at here inside the beltway, the people who are my constituents back home, do you have any question about Clarence Thomas' commitment to civil rights and equal opportunity and all of the concepts that civil rights and equal opportunity mean in 1991?

Ms. HOLIFIELD. Yes, I do, Senator. As far as civil rights in 1991, I think we are going to have to stop focusing on progress that we have made—continue to focus on it, but stop looking back and let's move on with our people, teaching them about economic empowerment.

We have been able to move from the back of the bus to the front of the bus, but there is no use of us keep using that for an excuse. We have to move on with the work ethics for our people, teach them about economics, teach them about arriving early in the morning and going out to a job. If they do not want a job, creating a job. This is the work of the 1990's for us, as far as civil rights is concerned.

Senator GRASSLEY. I do not disagree with anything you have said. I think, though, that my question was not clear. It is just whether or not you have any question, if Clarence Thomas is on the Supreme Court, that he will adequately look out for civil rights and equal opportunity and protect the constitutional rights in that area?

Ms. HOLIFIELD. I do. I do believe that he will.

Senator GRASSLEY. OK. Ms. Bryant?

Ms. BRYANT. I believe he will.

Senator GRASSLEY. Ms. Frazier?

Ms. FRAZIER. I believe, from past history, those people who we thought are not supportive of us as a race, I think history will show that those persons made some of the best decisions that affected our lives.

Senator GRASSLEY. Reverend Haygood?

Reverend HAYGOOD. I have no reservations.

Senator GRASSLEY. OK. If Clarence Thomas is unquestionably committed to civil rights, and he has made that statement—and you have said you believe that he is sincere in that and will follow that out—why do you think that your national leadership opposes his nomination? By your national leadership, I suppose I speak mostly to you, Ms. Holifield, because of your association with the local chapter there, but also for Ms. Bryant, as well, as a spokes-

person, primarily you two on that point. The other two can answer, if they want to.

Ms. HOLIFIELD. Well, as of July 30, the national took its stand and the Compton chapter was already on record supporting Judge Clarence Thomas on July 20, so that cannot be taken away from us. But I think the national based their point not to support him based upon some Washington bureau report that was put out, and I have not read it.

Ms. BRYANT. I think that perhaps they could possibly be out of touch with the mainstream of minorities.

Senator GRASSLEY. Do you have anything you want to add, Ms. Frazier or Reverend Haygood, in response to my question of why you think that the national leadership in the civil rights movement opposes his nomination?

Ms. FRAZIER. That question is too formal. First of all, I do not believe that the leadership, as you call it, I think maybe those who are called leadership have a different view, but I think that it is a mixture of things and I think that we see it thrust so often, individuals who probably speak out, and you term those as leaders, and I do not think that is always the case and I think it kind of gets sidetracked. I think our focus, as Ms. Holifield said, our focus should be put more on economics.

Senator GRASSLEY. Well, you are suggesting that maybe the spokesmen in Washington, DC, for civil rights are not necessarily the real leadership of the organizations, but from our standpoint here, those are the people who come and represent the organizations and testify at hearings, not only on nominations, but at lots of different hearings. You know, they are the people that have the high focus in Washington, DC.

I am not finding fault with your—

Ms. FRAZIER. Senator, I am not trying to challenge you, but I think that sometimes, me being an elected official myself, I think sometimes we put buffers between us and people. I think if you would go, just as Joe Blow, I think if you would go to those people, I think that you would get a pretty different prospect of that and I think those people who come, come because you expect them to come.

Senator GRASSLEY. OK.

Ms. FRAZIER. But I think people, the J.Q. Public, the middle class, I do not think it is the down and out people. I think anybody who works for it, be it blue collar, if they are contributing to the tax base of this country, are important, and I think we see more of us reaching out to those people, and I think you would get a different view of what the mainstream minority community is all about.

Senator GRASSLEY. I think you give a very legitimate answer and I do not find fault with it.

Reverend Haygood.

Reverend HAYGOOD. Yes, Senator, I believe that the dichotomy that exists between the traditional black leadership and Judge Clarence Thomas is that, during the last 10 years, Judge Thomas has been within the mainstream of America. He has worked within the system of this country. He has worked with blacks and he has worked with whites and he has worked with Hispanics.

As you know, it was the tradition of black leadership establishment that did not return the telephone calls of Judge Thomas. Judge Thomas went out to them to get their assistance, but we are told that they did not even respect him enough to return a telephone call.

You remember when they had the Fairmont Conference in California. Judge Thomas came back, and the Washington Post noted him as having the thinking that was slightly right of center, and that is when he was appointed to the Reagan administration.

The whole United States of America has seen this difference during this hearing, is that here is one black leader who seriously accomplished what he set out to accomplish. The gentleman from Fairmont said we are excited, because we are going to be a part of changing the world. Senators, that is what Clarence Thomas has done during the last 10 years in America. He has changed the world. He has changed a world so that we can see the majority of the people in this country adhere to his philosophy.

Not only that, but we have seen that the Berlin Wall has been knocked down, we see the torch of freedom being carried to the Soviet Union and to Poland and the Baltic States. Here for the first time in the United States, freedom that we have so dearly articulated and that we find expressed in the Declaration of Independence, flourishing at home and around the world.

Judge Thomas has had a leadership in that. So, I say that when the leadership of the left decides to come and sit down at the table and engage in authentic debate that he has asked for, then there will be some union, there will be some togetherness, and perhaps in our diversity we shall indeed find our strength.

We may differ. The important thing is that our differences do not continue to divide us, that somehow we can sit around a common table, and they can disagree with one another, without saying that he is liberal or he is conservative or he is moderate. But we are Americans. We are neither black or white, brown nor yellow, but we are all Americans and we hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Senator GRASSLEY. I have one question that will require a no or a yes. I know my time is up. I did have a lot of other questions, but I think through the course of our discussion here you have covered most of the other ones.

But a very specific question to Ms. Holifield and to Ms. Bryant: Did the national leadership of the NAACP ask your chapters not to support Clarence Thomas, or, in your case, where you announced before they did, did they ask you to reverse your decision?

Ms. HOLIFIELD. In my case, Senator, on July 20, the Compton NAACP Chapter voted to support Judge Clarence Thomas unanimously, and I wanted to say to you that there are far more Democrats than there are Republicans in the chapter. As a matter of fact, I think there are about two or three Republicans in the whole chapter.

On July 30 or 31, the national came down with its decision, and the way they came down on our chapter is they said to retract, resign or we are going to take your charter. There was a reporter