

so we decided we would start based on the State you were born in, and we would work our way from there. And so we will begin by welcoming the Senators from Georgia: our senior Senator, Senator Nunn, and Senator Fowler. We will yield the floor now to the distinguished Senator from Georgia, Senator Nunn.

STATEMENT OF HON. SAM NUNN, A U.S. SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF GEORGIA

Senator NUNN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to appear before your committee today to introduce to you my fellow Georgian, Judge Clarence Thomas. If confirmed, Judge Thomas will become the fifth native Georgian to serve on the Supreme Court and, according to my reading of history, the first Georgian in over 75 years.

As most Americans now know from hearing the inspiring story of his life, Clarence Thomas was born in the small community of Pin Point, GA, and was raised by his mother and his grandparents. He attended school in the nearby city of Savannah, where he experienced both the exhilaration of academic accomplishment and the pain of racial discrimination and economic hardship. While he pursued higher education outside the South at Holy Cross and Yale and pursued his profession of law in Missouri and here in Washington, Judge Thomas' roots remain in Georgia.

Mr. Chairman, I know this committee will be placed under great pressure from those opposing and those supporting this nomination. Many advocacy groups tend to focus narrowly on the nominee's likely vote on upcoming cases affecting their primary cause or causes. Some organizations complain that Judge Thomas has not generated a sufficient "paper trail" of judicial decisions and law review articles to enable them to determine with certainty how he will vote on a particular issue that captures their full attention. Others piece together details of his education and his personal life and speculate as to his likely vote on complex and complicated constitutional issues.

Mr. Chairman, I confess, in introducing Judge Thomas, that I do not know how he will vote on a reconsideration of *Roe v. Wade* or on other constitutional decisions that may soon come before the Court, nor do his opponents or supporters. I expect that Judge Thomas will not himself make such decisions until the case or cases are before the Court, the arguments have been heard, and he has had an opportunity to study the issues in considerable detail.

A narrow perspective is understandable for those who focus on only one or two issues, but I believe that those of us who have the constitutional responsibility of advice and consent must take a much broader view. Our duty is not to create or deny another vote on abortion or sex discrimination or affirmative action, or any other particular issue. Our duty, as I see it, is to confirm a Supreme Court Justice who, subject to good behavior, under the Constitution may serve for many years on the Court—indeed, may serve for life.

I doubt seriously, Mr. Chairman, that many of today's, maybe most of today's burning issues will still be raising the blood pressure of our Nation 7 years from now when Judge Thomas is 50,

much less when he reaches the still relatively young judicial age of 60. While our Constitution is a source of great stability for our Nation, our constitutional law is not immune from the incredible pace of change that is affecting so many aspects of our public as well as our private lives.

With the literal explosion of computers and information technology, biotechnology and genetic engineering, medical science and medical technology, the cases Judge Thomas will face in applying such constitutional concepts as privacy, human rights, equal protection, and due process may not be those envisioned today, or even those that we can imagine today.

On these and many other issues which we can barely glimpse on the horizon, even full-time professors of constitutional law do not have a completely settled view.

When all is said and done, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I believe that the Senate should vote on Clarence Thomas' nomination not based on his position on any one or two or three issues, but first on his ability to reason clearly, to reason fairly, and to reason wisely, as reflected in his answers to your questions which will be propounded before this committee; and second on his character, as indicated by his background, his values, his life experience, and the judgment of those who know him best.

Mr. Chairman, I hope that this committee and the Senate will take the long view of this nomination and the long view of the role that this 43-year-old nominee will play on the Supreme Court for years to come if he is confirmed.

Those who know Clarence Thomas best—and I have talked to many of them—make a powerful case as to his values, his legal and judicial abilities, his integrity, and his determination.

I am certain that some will judge Clarence Thomas by trying to pin him down on some fixed point of the ideological spectrum. I hope, however, that the majority of this committee and the majority of the U.S. Senate will vote on our perception of his character, his judicial abilities, his independence, and, most importantly, his willingness to learn and develop from experience and from reflection.

Mr. Chairman, I introduce Clarence Thomas with pride, in part because he was born in Georgia, spent his childhood in Georgia, graduated from high school in Georgia, practiced law in Georgia, and has family and many friends in Georgia.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, Clarence Thomas has climbed many jagged mountains on the road from Pin Point, GA, to this Senate Judiciary Committee. I believe that if he is confirmed, Judge Thomas will remember his own climb and will always insist on fairness and equal justice under law for those who are still climbing.

Mr. Chairman, I am proud to introduce to this committee Judge Clarence Thomas, a native of the State of Georgia.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Senator Nunn.
Senator Fowler.