

STATEMENT OF
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CHAIRMAN
MONTGOMERY COUNTY BLACK REPUBLICAN COUNCIL
MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
BEFORE THE
SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
U.S. SENATE

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Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

My name is George Jenkins and I am Chairman of the Montgomery County Black Republican Council of Montgomery County, Maryland, an organization composed of African American businessmen and businesswomen, lawyers, teachers, professionals, retired professionals, civic leaders, and involved citizens. We are one of the significant, organized African American chapters of Republicans in this country. I appear before you today to testify in support of the nomination of Judge Clarence Thomas to serve as an Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court.

The Montgomery County Black Republican Council voted unanimously in support of Clarence Thomas to the Supreme Court. We commend President Bush for his selection of a fiercely independent-minded individual who has demonstrated many qualities that distinguish him as a person who is highly qualified to serve on the highest Court in the land. Judge

Thomas has had a broad and diversified legal career including Assistant Attorney General in Missouri, corporate lawyer for Monsanto Company, Congressional staffer, Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights for the Department of Education, and Appellate Judge for the District of Columbia Circuit. Throughout his life and legal career, he has modeled himself on the American dream by progressing through increasingly challenging assignments and carrying out each one very effectively.

During the early years of his life in Georgia, Judge Thomas did not have many of life's comforts and material possessions. However, and perhaps more importantly, he was blessed to have grandparents and religious counselors who taught him the value of hard work, personal integrity, self-discipline, and obdurate perseverance. In taking to heart these lessons and seizing all available opportunities provided by the law, Judge Thomas achieved much of his dream and now stands as a paragon of success in his community and the nation. Reflecting on the various experiences and values ascribed to Judge Thomas, we find that many Americans share with him some of the same basic values: respect for and belief in family; religious commitments; dedication to education and being well prepared for opportunities when they come to you; life-long appreciation of family and teachers who help develop one's character; and an abiding sense of self-help when challenges occur.

Judge Thomas said in a previous confirmation hearing that he had become a lawyer to ensure that minorities were not excluded from opportunities to prosper in our society. He also said that he may differ with others on how best to do that, but the objective has always been to include those who have been excluded.

When he was chairman of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) Clarence Thomas compiled an outstanding record of accomplishments. He revitalized the agency, making it proactive rather than reactive, and emphasized its law enforcement mission. Judge Thomas' philosophy on affirmative action has been stated in many speeches -- every American should have the affirmative opportunity to advance and succeed on his or her merit in our society.

Notably, under the leadership of Clarence Thomas, the Commission:

***secured over a billion dollars in relief for victims of discrimination;

***filed more than 3,000 legal actions in U.S. District Courts during his tenure. In 1983, the Commission filed 195 lawsuits; by 1990 that annual figure had more than tripled to 640;

***instituted policies to insure that every charge filed was fully investigated and litigated with full relief sought for

victims of discrimination;

***transformed and revitalized the work environment at EEOC and revamped and improved the case processing system;

Under Judge Thomas, the EEOC championed the rights of older workers by:

***fully investigating and prosecuting charges of age discrimination under the Age Discrimination and Employment Act (ADEA);

***securing a total of \$389.7 million in benefits under the ADEA from 1982-1990;

***filing 781 ADEA lawsuits from 1982 - 1990;

***filing pattern and practice/class action lawsuits that represented annually between one-third and three-fourths total ADEA lawsuits; and

***establishing standards and procedures to reconcile older workers' ADEA rights and benefits achieved through collective bargaining.

There have been many articles in the media concerning Judge Thomas. Some have been supportive and others have been critical, and an issue of whether blacks would support his nomination has been ever present. It is noteworthy that while certain institutions, notably the NAACP and the Congressional Black Caucus, have opposed Judge Thomas' nomination, recent polls have indicated that at least 58% of American blacks approve of the appointment of Judge Thomas to

the U.S. Supreme Court. I represent a group of African Americans that unanimously support Judge Thomas.

We believe that Judge Thomas is an independent thinker and a highly qualified and able jurist. He has personal integrity, compassion, and intellectual honesty. Notably, Judge Thomas has stated that he has no intention of sacrificing his principles to accommodate others or because it would be expedient. We believe that Clarence Thomas is a fair judge who will interpret our constitution rightly and properly, and make decisions consonant with the intentions of our forefathers, instead of engaging in judicial legislating. We also believe that Judge Thomas is deeply committed to individual rights and will bring a broad and unique experience and perspective to the Court not shared by the other Justices.

Finally, we believe that Clarence Thomas has committed himself to hard work and excellence. As a product of a great and diversified American work ethic, Clarence Thomas should be applauded for his personal and professional achievements in spite of enormous difficulties. Because of his personal background, the offices he has held in government service, and his life's experiences, Judge Thomas understands the needs of all Americans including minorities, women, the elderly and the handicapped.

Distinguished Senators, Clarence Thomas, a product of a unique American experience, now seeks your confirmation. We, the Montgomery County (MD) Black Republican Council, support the nomination of Judge Clarence Thomas as Associate Justice to the United States Supreme Court and believe that he has the moral fortitude, intellect, breadth of experience, and regard for the appropriate interpretation of the constitution. In our view, these are the prime requirements for a Supreme Court Justice and we urge the Senate to confirm Judge Thomas.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my prepared statement. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you to offer this testimony.