

provide a meaningful example, we must come to understand that democracy is more than the right to vote, freedom of religion, freedom of the press, or even freedom of speech. If the spirit of our Constitution is to truly be embodied in our democracy, we must have fair representation in all aspects of our society. That includes all three branches of the government. It is through fair representation that our youth, coming from diverse cultural backgrounds, find role models and acquire the motivation for upward mobility. As an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, Clarence Thomas will be that fair representation for African-Americans.

With a background evolving out of Pin Point, GA, which has been vividly and emotionally described by Thomas himself and others who were his peers, to assert that when the cases that offer an opportunity for redress of the ills of poverty and illegal racial discrimination are placed before him that he would be indifferent, vote to maintain the status quo, or even worse, seek to turn the clock back, I believe is ludicrous. We may be singing different songs, but we are all singing from the same hymnal.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for letting me share this moment in history and for the opportunity, as a scholar of a historically black university, to express my support for Judge Clarence Thomas, who has consistently expressed his support for HBCU's, to be an Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court.

Thank you.

Senator HEFLIN [presiding]. Senator Biden is out of the chair, and I want to hear Ms. Thomas because I've still got things that keep competing with my time, and so if you don't mind, Dr. Becton, I am going to call on Ms. Thomas.

The light system is working, and if you can limit it to 5 minutes or we won't be out of here until 3 in the morning.

Ms. Thomas.

#### STATEMENT OF YVONNE THOMAS

Ms. THOMAS. Good evening, distinguished members of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

I am Yvonne Thomas, a lifelong resident of the great State of Alabama. I was born and reared in Mobile, AL. I received my undergraduate education at Alabama State University in Montgomery and received my master's degree from the University of Alabama in Birmingham.

For the past 27 years I have lived in a place with a name well known to many—Selma, AL. As you see, I am truly a product of the State.

I am here today representing Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., to speak in strong support of the nomination of Judge Clarence Thomas.

Zeta Phi Beta Sorority was founded in 1920 on the campus of Howard University in Washington, DC. The sorority now encompasses over 75,000 black American women with more than 500 graduate and college chapters across the country. Our members come from various walks of life. We are educators, students, entertainers, corporate executives, entrepreneurs, lawyers, and judges.

Zeta Phi Beta Sorority is committed to making a positive impact on the future of our children, and we do this by serving as mentors, assisting in providing educational opportunities, and helping to decrease the effects of the social ills which plague our communities.

Zeta Phi Beta sponsors numerous scholarships through our national foundation. Through our Stork's Nest Program, we provide prenatal care for indigent mothers. As another example of our involvement, we recently initiated a drug and substance abuse program for collegiate students.

In addition, Zeta Phi Beta has joined with many African-American organizations to address "the black male crisis" and have made this issue our national project for 1991. Through these and other programs we are demonstrating our commitment to improve our community.

Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. is a member of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights. We are, however, on record with the conference as nonconcurring with their position as it relates to the confirmation of Judge Clarence Thomas. We believe that Judge Thomas is qualified to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court. As pointed out by the American Bar Association, Judge Thomas has the judicial temperament, the integrity, honesty, intelligence, and independence necessary to serve on our Nation's highest court. We agree and urge his confirmation.

We are particularly concerned about the opposition to Judge Thomas. In many instances, there appears to be a double standard being applied to Judge Thomas. In addition, some who oppose him have said they are concerned because they think now that he has made it, he has forgotten from whence he came and who helped him get there.

We believe that in action and words, Judge Thomas has demonstrated over and over again that he has not forgotten. Anyone who makes a statement such as the one made by Judge Thomas when he said that he "was raised to survive under the totalitarianism of segregation, not only without the active assistance of government but with its active opposition." Judge Thomas added that he was "raised to survive in spite of the dark, oppressive cloud of governmentally sanctioned bigotry."

Mr. Chairman, he has not forgotten. Judge Thomas is living proof of the awesome accomplishments of the civil rights movement. Judge Thomas has acknowledged the fact that he is a direct beneficiary of the civil rights movement.

Judge Thomas wrote in *Integrated Education* that "many of us have walked through doors opened by the civil rights leaders; now you must see that others do the same. As individuals who have received the benefit of an education which was probably denied your fathers and mothers, and in some cases, sisters and brothers, you must devise a plan for a civil rights movement for the future."

In a speech at Savannah State College, Judge Thomas said, "We cannot forget the blood of the marchers, the prayers and hope of our race."

Mr. Chairman, these are not the words of a person who has forgotten.

Critics seem to believe that just because Judge Thomas has chosen a different road than they, that he must have forgotten

where he began. In a speech to Holy Cross College on March 24, 1984, Judge Thomas did not forget when he said,

Through my radical days, through my days at New Haven Legal Assistance, through the summer working under a grant from the Law Students Civil Rights Research Council, I did not forget. Through Holy Cross and Yale, I did not forget. As assistant attorney general and assistant secretary, I did not forget. As chairman of EEOC, I cannot and will not forget. I can never forget the agony of discrimination—the humiliation of prejudice.

In that speech, he went on to say,

I am an American—a black American. Nothing hurts me so much as the sufferings of my race. I firmly believe that the sufferings and the problems we face are so great that all who recognize them must look for solutions. We need new ideas in our arsenal of weapons to fight discrimination. At no time must we allow ourselves to believe that we must agree on every issue. We are not robots. We are a creative, resilient race. Just as we are different, we have different ideas and different opinions.

In these complex and troubled times, no one person or organization can claim to have the only answer to solve our problems. If they did, why are we still in this predicament?

As I mentioned earlier, Zeta Phi Beta Sorority has made the “black male crisis” our national project in 1991. We can think of no better message to send to our black youth than Judge Clarence Thomas. He should be the role model for those youth who have lost all hope and have lost the ability to dream dreams.

Yes, hard work, integrity, honesty, and intellectual independence are valued in this society. Let Judge Thomas’ appointment to the U.S. Supreme Court show how much.

The women of Zeta Phi Beta most definitely are in favor of the nomination of Judge Thomas. We know without question that he is exceptionally qualified to serve on the highest court of this Nation. We know he will not forget our shared life experience as African-Americans in this society. Nor do we fear that he will fail to hear the pleas and cries for fairness by all persons.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Thomas follows:]