

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Hayes.

STATEMENTS OF A PANEL CONSISTING OF ED HAYES, COUNCIL OF 100; AND DAVID ZWIEBEL, AGUDATH ISRAEL OF AMERICA

Mr. HAYES. Good evening, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Good evening.

Mr. HAYES. Members of the committee.

My name is Edward Hayes, Jr. I am an attorney in private practice at Baker & Hostetler in Washington, DC, and I appear before this evening on behalf of the Council of 100, a national organization of black Republicans.

The primary goal of the council is to stimulate and foster participation by black Americans in the U.S. political process. The council has appeared before the Congress on prior occasions to support candidates and to share its views on important pending legislation.

We are delighted to appear today to support the candidacy of Judge Clarence Thomas as a Justice on the Supreme Court. Indeed, when Justice Marshall announced his resignation from the Court, the council wrote to President Bush recommending the consideration of Judge Thomas. We made this recommendation because we know Judge Thomas as an individual, and because we have admired his selfless contributions to our country as a government official in several significant capacities.

Having learned even more about him through the strenuous confirmation process, we continue to believe that he should be confirmed for the Supreme Court.

Because my time before you is brief and the hour is late, I would like to focus on only a few key reasons for our support of Judge Thomas.

The first reason is the wealth of experience that Judge Thomas has already achieved. Having worked for Senator Danforth, having served in senior positions in the administration, and serving now as a member of the U.S. Court of Appeals, he has had exposure to all branches of government. In addition, having worked as an attorney for Monsanto Corp., he could be the only Justice to have worked in the corporation counsel office of a major company.

This opportunity to observe the operation of both government and business, and to address public concerns, gives Judge Thomas a perspective that few Supreme Court jurists, past or present, could match.

Clearly, the Supreme Court is not like any other institution, and therefore more scrutiny is required. Yet, it must be remembered that you do not have a blank slate before you. The positions for which the Senate has already appointed him have provided Judge Thomas the broad experience that qualifies him today. The Senate has, on other occasions, passed on his character after examination. The strength of his character is no less today. And in the end, when we judge nominees, the nature of one's character should be the bottom-line criterion.

A second reason for the council's support is that Judge Thomas has the honed ability and the independence of mind, desirable of a jurist. As has been demonstrated in this hearing, Judge Thomas' independence of mind has not come without a great deal of person-

al cost to him and to his family. By daring to challenge conventional thinking, he has been ostracized by certain of his peers, and personally attacked by spokespersons in the black community.

Those who think that his questioning approach to examining policies that have become sacred cows is a matter of convenience, in order to endear himself to the Republican Party, would do well to consider the testimony offered on September 16, by Sister Mary Reidy, who taught Judge Thomas when he was in the eighth grade. According to Sister Mary, even at a young age, Clarence Thomas did not uncritically accept orthodoxy.

It should be clear to all by now, that Clarence Thomas is first and foremost an independent thinker. This is what we should require of our jurists. They must all be bright, sensitive, fair, and grounded in the Constitution as the law of the land, but they must also be able to analyze, independently, the law before them, and to apply it with an open mind, without being beholden to a particular philosophy, ideology, or patron.

Finally, we applaud the nomination of Clarence Thomas because it has brought to the fore the diversity of views that are so often overlooked within the black community. Certainly, Judge Thomas has been controversial, and rightly so. Anyone who dares to march to a different drummer will be controversial and arouse passion. However, it must not be ignored that despite the visibility of certain persons within the black community that oppose Judge Thomas, there is also a great deal of quiet support for him, as indicated by recent polls.

In conclusion, the Council of 100 believes that if the finest steel is tempered in the hottest fires, then Clarence Thomas is a man of fine steel indeed. He has an open legal mind, he is fair and caring, and he has a commitment to public service. Moreover, he has the moral character, the breadth of experience, and a due regard for cautious construction of constitutional issues needed for a Justice.

Thank you for permitting me, on behalf of the Council of 100, to address the committee in support of the nomination of Clarence Thomas.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Hayes follows:]