

Now, I'm not going to take a lot of time. I just want to ask you two questions. I think this is the essence of this hearing. The first is—and we'll start with Ms. Norton and then on to Mr. Thompson, Mr. Kern, Ms. Bracher and Ms. Holmes, in that order—I will ask the same question to all of you. Is it your opinion that Judge Thomas is highly qualified and possesses the necessary integrity, professional competence and judicial temperament to be an Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court?

Ms. Norton.

Ms. NORTON. Yes, that is certainly my view. I have looked at his record. I am not personally acquainted with him, so I cannot speak with the 20 years' worth of personal knowledge that other panel members can address, but I can look at the way in which he has functioned as a judge and the way in which he has made his decisions. They are exceptional decisions in the way in which they deal with the role of the judiciary, the role of an appeals court. He was very careful to act within his role and to act appropriately.

Senator THURMOND. So your answer is "Yes"?

Ms. NORTON. Yes.

Senator THURMOND. Mr. Thompson.

Mr. THOMPSON. Senator, my answer is yes, and my answer is based on not only my friendship and knowledge of Judge Thomas, but the fact that I am a lawyer, and I am a citizen, and I am very much concerned about having quality people on the U.S. Supreme Court.

Senator THURMOND. Mr. Kern.

Mr. KERN. Yes, sir.

Senator THURMOND. Ms. Bracher.

Ms. BRACHER. Yes, and my knowledge is based upon his writings in the criminal law area, and as a woman and a citizen, I can say yes.

Senator THURMOND. Ms. Holmes.

Ms. HOLMES. Yes, definitely so. And my answer is based on having known Judge Thomas for over 20 years and having seen him not only in the positions that he has carried out but also in informal meetings with him.

Senator THURMOND. Now, my second question is this, and I will ask it of each one of you: Do you know of any reason why Judge Thomas should not be made a member of the Supreme Court of the United States?

Ms. Norton.

Ms. NORTON. These hearings have extensively dealt with every aspect of his record and of his approach to being a justice, and I believe that this committee has before it the information that would show that he will be an exceptional choice for that position. I know of nothing that would bar him from that position.

Senator THURMOND. So your answer is "No".

Ms. NORTON [nodding].

Senator THURMOND. Mr. Thompson.

Mr. THOMPSON. Senator, I know of no reason why this body should not confirm President Bush's choice for the U.S. Supreme Court.

Senator THURMOND. Mr. Kern.

Mr. KERN. No, sir.