

Mr. STOKES. No, Senator, I didn't. What I said was that he was on the White House Task Force on the Family and that he signed the report, which criticized the Supreme Court for its ruling in that case. In criticizing it, I could have said he also criticized Justice Marshall, because Justice Marshall was on the concurring opinion with Justice Brennan, but I knew nothing about the housing section.

I do know that he said he didn't read the report in your hearings here and he said that he just signed it, I do know that.

Senator THURMOND. Well, he testified at the hearings that he did not endorse that whole report. I thought you ought to know that.

Mr. STOKES. Certainly.

Senator THURMOND. Now, I want to mention this to you: You are all Democrats. A great many of the black people now are joining the Republican Party, and I hope you will respect their right to do that. There is a general feeling—whether it is true or not is another question, but there is a general feeling that black Democratic leaders prefer not to support a black for a high position unless he is a Democrat. There is a general feeling out there to that effect, and I just want to pass that along to you.

We are glad to have you here and we thank you for coming.

The CHAIRMAN. Would you all like to say thank you in order? [Laughter.]

Mr. WASHINGTON. I would like to say that I appreciate that, Senator, but I would hope that you would take that with a grain of salt, quite frankly, from those who make those statements. I think you will find, Senator, that we have at least always known that there is as wide a divergence of views and opinions in the black community as there is in any other community. It just happens that most of the vocal leaders in the 1940s and 1950s and 1960s happen to have been associated with the Democratic Party. We recognize that President Lincoln was a Republican. Some of my best friends are Republicans. [Laughter.]

We have been trained, Senator, because most of our lives and most of us are old enough, without telling our ages, for most of our lives we have had to confront racism in many forms. It has become more sophisticated now, but we recognize that—we would be the last people on earth to put people in a group, because prejudice means prejudging based upon group identification. We don't look at Republicans as being Republicans. We look at the character of the individual.

I count among some of my best friends and some of the people I admire the most Republicans who I consider to be champions of civil rights, like Senator Specter. I am not saying that just because he is here. I have been watching him on television. Senator Hatch and I disagree on a lot of things, but I think we consider ourselves friends.

Don't listen to those who tell you that we are trying to keep down the movement. We want many blacks to be involved in the Republican Party. We want every black person to vote. We are not like those who discourage people from going to the polls to vote. We think that the best democracy is one where all people participate.