

**RESOLUTION ON THE CLARENCE THOMAS NOMINATION
TO THE U.S. SUPREME COURT**

Whereas, the National Baptist Convention has the moral responsibility to be prophetic in our message, and not turn aside from our witness; and

Whereas, President George Bush now has the authority to nominate and the United States Senate holds the authority to conduct hearings and decide on confirmation on a successor to the distinguished jurist Judge Thurgood Marshall of the Supreme Court of the United States; and

Whereas, Mr. Justice Marshall has been the embodiment of the aspirations of African Americans to secure a place of justice on which to stand firmly in the United States; and

Whereas, the National Baptist Convention concurs that the successor to Mr. Justice Marshall should also bring to the bar of justice the experiences, witness and aspirations of African Americans who have been locked-out, locked-over and not received respect and equal opportunity in our society, and;

Whereas, the Reagan-Bush Administrations have shifted the Supreme Court toward an ideology of the conservative right by packing the bench with ideologues who would rather blame the victims of society than give them the tools that give access to the fruits of our democracy; and

Whereas, the Reagan-Bush Administrations have further created a climate that perpetuates systemic racism that keeps African Americans from access to the training and resources to become first class citizens equal with others in our society, by its failures in education, housing, drug policy, health care, child care and those programs that make a healthy nation; and

Whereas, the Reagan-Bush Administrations have sought to move the American consensus away from justice, inclusion and equal opportunity and return it to an era of divisiveness, distortion and deception within the African American community as well as between the African American community and all Americans; and

Whereas, President Bush has nominated to the Supreme Court of the United States Mr. Clarence Thomas, a man of African American descent whose record includes positions as an aide to a United States Senator, director of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and a federal judge; and

Whereas, Mr. Thomas in carrying out his duties has manifested an ideology that is beaddled, confused and misinformed; and

Whereas, the National Baptist Convention can not be silent but must be witnesses to the truth by calling attention to the Bible narrative that the greatest opponents of Jesus were the Pharisees and Sadducees who represented a select, conservative and reactionary religious complex and who put our Lord on a cross and rejected a man who was a man for others; and

Whereas, we are morally called upon to be soldiers of the Cross, followers of the Lamb, that we must not fail to own His calls or blush to speak His name as regards this critical issue; and

Whereas, we must rebuff Mr. Thomas' arguments against affirmative action to remedy systemic racism in our society by affirming the fact that as proponents of affirmative action we have never said that unqualified individuals should be given jobs, but instead of called attention and witness to the historical record which reveals that too many with qualifications did not receive job opportunities prior to affirmative action; and

Whereas, Mr. Thomas evidences a failure to understand the history of the African American community which led to the process now creating a new African American middle class and which opened the doors of Yale University to him and others through affirmative action and program support; and

Whereas, Mr. Thomas perpetuates stereotyping, myths and misrepresentation of our achievements as an African American people; and

Whereas, Mr. Thomas contends that African Americans should pull themselves up by their own bootstraps, under the guise that this represents a new message rather than using his opportunity to be a witness that African Americans have always been the primary advocates of self-reliance; and

Whereas, Mr. Thomas' silence on the proud history of the African American community's efforts at self-reliance is an insult and distortion to an historical record that includes the Anna T. Jeanes Foundation schools, the partnership with the Rosenwald Foundation in which African Americans in the darkest years of the post-Civil War era raised the largest share of funds to create schools for our children, the establishment of the Freedman's Bureau which initiated schools, the sacrifices of African Americans who sold land and cattle for seed money to create schools, as well as the African American-led efforts which created such institutions of higher learning as Morehouse, Fisk, and Spellman; and

Whereas, Mr. Thomas in fact has been part of an alliance that has sought to distort and misrepresent the civil rights movement going back to the days of W.E.B. DuBois whose vision and leadership understood the relationship between self-help and the need to confront racism; and

Whereas, Mr. Justice Thurgood Marshall's career was a constant rebuke to those who misrepresented and distorted the civil rights movement, as a product of the oldest African American university, Lincoln University, as a student excluded from the University of Maryland because of his race, as an advocate of self-help within the community and as a man who was willing to confront the barriers placed by a racist society; and

Whereas, Mr. Thomas is a part of this same alliance that has reflected an ideology that the few are to profit at the expense of the many, as reflected in their unwillingness to support such measures as former Congressman Augustus Hawkins' employment bill while at the same time being willing to provide bail-outs for the Savings and Loan industry executives, establish land grant colleges with white-only restrictions with federal intervention, and to recognize the initiative of American farmers by providing additional support through farm bank programs and price supports; and

Whereas, Mr. Thomas has further added fuel to the stereotyping of African Americans by calling public attention to his sister, Emma Mae Martin of Savannah, Georgia, with attacks on her eligibility for public assistance and claiming that she and her children "have no motivation for doing better or getting out of that situation"; and

Whereas, in actual fact Emma Mae Martin was not receiving public assistance at the time of Clarence Thomas' public ridicule of her, but had taken two minimum-wage jobs at the same time in order to better provide for her family, in a manner familiar to many African Americans; and

Whereas, Mr. Clarence Thomas himself was the beneficiary of a private education in Catholic schools which provided him with advocates and intervenors on his behalf; and

Whereas, the national leader Dr. T.J. Jemison has been a champion of human rights and liberties as the progenitor of the Montgomery bus boycott and the National Baptist Convention would do a great disservice to support one who has given every indication of being against the traditional aspirations of African Americans for equality, equal rights and justice; and

Whereas, we are called to speak the truth with courage, and not to be dissuaded from our witness by those who seek to divide African Americans in order to create further gains for a socio-

political leadership that will not confront systemic racism but seeks to benefit from it; and

Whereas, the National Baptist Convention represents eight million African Americans and is the largest organizational body in the nation, who reject the label of special pleading because our only plea is to be a witness to His name as regards this critical issue;

Therefore, Be it Resolved, that the National Baptist Convention go on record calling on all state presidents, district moderators and members to mount immediately a massive lobbying campaign to approach their respective Senators to vote against the confirmation of Clarence Thomas; and

Therefore, Be it Resolved, that our call is for a nominee from the African American community who has a sensitivity to the aspirations of African Americans, the poor and women, unlike the current nominee; and

Therefore, Be it Resolved, that our position will be communicated to the President of the United States, so he will nominate a person that will reflect another judicial and ideological position that would give the U.S. Supreme Court a healthy balance.

Humbly Submitted,

National Baptist USA, Inc.
Civil Rights Commission

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