

or, particularly those who are watching, are still showing tremendous support for Judge Thomas.

My questioning has been a little bit touched upon by my colleague from South Carolina, Senator Thurmond, but I would like to proceed with those who have read the opinions. A couple of you referred to the fact you had read these opinions, and I want to say thank you for doing that because I think that brings a lot of knowledge to this committee, although we and our staff have had an opportunity to look at these opinions as well. It makes me feel good for those of you who have read the opinions that you have based your judgment and support of him to a considerable extent on what he has written.

The reason why I am glad for this is we did have some law professors here within the last few days who said Judge Thomas was not in the mainstream, and I asked them if that was based upon their reading of his opinions. Quite frankly, I was astonished that they had not read his opinions at all and they still had this judgment of him.

Ms. Norton and Ms. Bracher, is there any question, after reading these views of Clarence Thomas expressed through his opinions, that he is a mainstream jurist who is going to look at the written law and precedent to construe that law and who is going to look at the Constitution, the Framers' intent, and the precedent set by previous Supreme Courts in the interpretation of that Constitution? Ms. Norton?

Ms. NORTON. There seems to be a great concern that he will start bringing policy views unrelated to the Constitution into his judicial decision-making. I found absolutely no evidence of that in reviewing his decisions. His decisions were very carefully written, very carefully relied on precedent, on the exact language of statutes, on the proper role of an appellate court as compared to a trial court, and on the proper role of an appellate court compared to the U.S. Supreme Court. And I found his opinions to be just exceptional in the extent to which they were very carefully confined within the appropriate role of a judge.

Ms. BRACHER. I would also like to add I agree with Ms. Norton, but he has written opinions and they are joined by the judges on the D.C. Circuit considered to be on both sides of the political spectrum. And I would go one step further. Upon a reading of his opinions, I believe that every Senator could take comfort that Judge Thomas is a judge who will rule according to the law. His policy views and the policy positions that he has taken have not come into play when he has written his judicial opinions. He construes statutes as they are written with the intent of Congress, and he has ruled very narrowly on the precedent of the Court.

He even has gone so far as when precedents in other circuits have been to the contrary, he will review those precedents. He will distinguish them and explain where his rulings are coming from, and they are coming from the law.

Senator GRASSLEY. For those of you who would want to express a view, for those of you who support Judge Thomas—and all of you do—I am interested in whether viewing him not just as a jurist but as a whole person, do you think that he brings any special qualities to the Court that may not be there in some other Justices? Or do