

the root responsibilities of families. We need efforts to convince people that laws don't change people. People change laws. Laws can change people's behavior, but it takes a new value system to change people's hearts.

The point is we are in disagreement not necessarily with the facts but with the priorities. We feel that in 1991 the priorities should be economic and educational empowerment, not race-based solutions simply, but, rather, economic conditions, economic programs, and economic solutions.

Senator GRASSLEY. And their opposition is because Clarence Thomas challenges that traditional approach?

Reverend SOIRES. Clarence Thomas comes along as a post-World War II baby. Clarence Thomas is not really a veteran of the pre-World War II leadership. He is 43 years old. I am 40 years old. I was too young to march with Dr. King. I was too young to go to jail 40 times and have my head beaten, and often perceived as someone who perhaps is not loyal to that tradition. But there does come a time—just like we did in the Persian Gulf—there comes a time when after the war is over you look at what is the next step. That doesn't mean that the war against racism is over, but we have our civil rights, we have our public accommodation rights, we have our voter registration rights. There is no need for me to lead a march on city hall to get the right to vote. My task in my community is to convince people to register and to vote.

Now, we have to protect the voting rights on the one hand, but that should not function in the absence of people who do what I do, and that is motivate people to exercise their rights. We are in partnership, not in competition.

Mr. WOODSEN. I think that part of it is ideological, too. Clarence Thomas does not fall conveniently into liberal Democratic tradition that many members of the Black Caucus have defined black Americans. They have become in one sense the police of black thinking. And there has been a gag rule imposed on the black community over the past 20 years that unless you see life through the prism of a liberal Democrat, you will be suspicious, you will be castigated. And so I think Clarence Thomas, because he does not espouse that position, is castigated.

I think members of the caucus talk about they are suddenly going to judge him based upon the content of his record and not the color of his skin. And yet there have been several black officials, including some of their own members, that have been guilty of personal indiscretions and illegal acts, and one judge in New Orleans who was guilty of accepting a bribe while on the bench and found guilty by a court. And I remember being on *McLaughlin and Company* with a member of the Caucus when John McLaughlin asked both of us: What do you think about what this man did? Do you think, as some are saying, that he was targeted by whites? And this member said yes. Not judging him on the content of his record or his character but the color of his skin.

And all of a sudden, when Judge Thomas emerges on the scene, members of the Black Caucus suddenly became color blind and wanted to judge Clarence Thomas based upon the context of his record. I think that this moral inconsistency is not really being perceived well in black America, at least the people that I talk to.

Therefore, I think his membership in a different club, if you may, is a source of much of the consternation and resistance to Judge Thomas.

Mr. JACKSON. I guess to add to what Bob has said, what Reverend Soires has said, I will not cast any aspersions on the NAACP because I am a member and I have a great deal of respect for Reverend Hooks and his wife and consider them my friends. I have a number of friends that I consider my friends on the Black Caucus.

What I will say to you, Senator, in asking the question, is that we have been a proponent over the years to the victim theory. And somehow anyone who wishes to escape the victim theory based on doing some things for themselves is labeled either a Tom, an Oreo, someone that is bought off by the system.

But one thing that we must keep in mind and I remind us all the time: Those who are calling us those names are clearly benefiting from the system. They serve on the major boards of the corporations in this country. They fly around in Lear jets. They play at the best country clubs. But yet they are telling us to accept the victim.

I see myself as an African-American extremely fortunate, having served both public and private life, having made a great deal of money. In the process of doing that, you must give something back. And I think Clarence Thomas simply says: How can we best give something back?

The way we give something back in my mind is to give people hope and to work with those who are most in need. And that is our philosophical viewpoint, rather than, quote, unquote, telling them that they are a victim, that the system will ever keep them a victim, they can never hope to escape being a victim, so therefore the best avenue is to keep hollering that racism is the epitome of what is keeping us down. Yet those who tell them that will be with us at the Jockey Club tonight.

Senator GRASSLEY. Thank you.

Senator SIMON. Senator Specter.

Senator SPECTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Woodsen, let me direct my first question to you. I believe you were present when the five Congressmen testified, correct?

Mr. WOODSEN. Yes, I was.

Senator SPECTER. And the five Congressmen testified in opposition to Judge Thomas, on the basis that he was not a good role model, since he was the beneficiary of affirmative action and, once he had attained his status, he was turning his back on other African-Americans.

You have suggested that the opposition by that group was really directed in a political context, that they are the beneficiaries of having African-Americans to support the Democratic Party, as opposed to looking for a role model like Judge Thomas who, in his speeches, was very direct about wanting to bring more African-Americans to the conservative cause and more African-Americans to the Republican Party.

Are you saying that the opposition by the congressional panel was really based on Democratic/Republican politics?

Mr. WOODSEN. I think, in part, it was, Senator. It was based also, in part, as Mr. Jackson said, any black that does not characterize other blacks as being victims of white oppression and believes that