

Senator HEFLIN. Senator Specter may have some questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Oh, I beg you pardon. I was told by the staff that they were ready to break. I am really sorry.

Senator SPECTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask one very brief question of each witness.

The CHAIRMAN. Please.

Senator SPECTER. Dr. Jenkins, you were here and heard the testimony of the last panel, I believe.

Mr. JENKINS. Yes, I was.

Senator SPECTER. Because I know you have been patiently waiting. There were some very strong testimony given by Mr. Julius Chambers on behalf of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, and his essential position was that George Thomas was not qualified by comparison to all of the 48 nominees who have been seated in the Supreme Court, and he took strong exception to Judge Thomas' views on education cases and voting rights cases, saying that Judge Thomas had dismissed major decisions which had protected African-Americans without regard to the historical background.

If you have any comment or something to say on behalf of Judge Thomas on those issues, I would be—I think the panel would be interested to hear them.

Mr. JENKINS. Senator, I would simply say to you that I am here this evening because I find in the technical sense no reason to question Judge Thomas' capabilities, and, in fact, worthiness to sit on the Supreme Court, one.

Two, I think there is a great deal of misinformation, and perhaps even confusion, in terms of his interpretation or his view on various issues that have been discussed here today. But I do know clearly that in 1983 at Clark College in Atlanta, GA, he gave a very moving speech about his concern for the survival of historically black colleges and universities, and he talked about the need to not only protect those institutions, but he talked about the need to enhance them so that they could continue to do the valuable job of turning out black professionals in our society.

And I am here this evening, sir, as a college president to actually support that concept, because I believe that what we do is the very best example of self-help. We are—we were there and we were born because at some time in history we were not allowed to attend the historically white institutions. And, in that best spirit, we organized and established the historically black colleges and universities.

So, in a real sense I believe that our continued existence is the shining example of self-help and helping America to solve its problems.

Senator SPECTER. Ms. Thomas, the comments made by Mr. William Lucy, president of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, went to the issue of affirmative action. And Mr. Lucy was critical of Judge Thomas on the ground that Judge Thomas was not helping the group of African-Americans by refusing group help but only interested in individual, specific cases of discrimination.

And I would be interested if you agree with Judge Thomas who generally opposes affirmative action, and how you would assess that position of Judge Thomas' in terms of the interest of the African-American community.