

The CHAIRMAN. Now, because we went out of order to accommodate the schedules of our colleagues on the House side, we are now going to hear from two distinguished panels, both panels supporting, and strongly supporting, Judge Thomas' nomination to the bench.

The first panel is made up of three very distinguished persons: Alphonso Jackson, the director of the Dallas Housing Authority, an authority that is probably as big as some States in the Nation; the Reverend Buster Soires, pastor of the First Baptist Church—it just says First Baptist Church, New Jersey. What city?

Reverend SOIRES. Somerset, NJ.

The CHAIRMAN. Somerset, NJ; and Mr. Robert Woodsen, president of the National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise. It is good to see you. You have been here many days during the hearing, and it is good to have you here, Mr. Woodsen.

Welcome to all of you. I thank you for coming to testify. Unless the panel has concluded otherwise, why don't we begin in the order that I have—well, you begin any way you all this. I can see they are pointing to you, Mr. Woodsen. Why don't you begin?

STATEMENTS OF A PANEL CONSISTING OF ROBERT WOODSEN, PRESIDENT, NATIONAL CENTER FOR NEIGHBORHOOD ENTERPRISE; ALPHONSO JACKSON, DIRECTOR, DALLAS HOUSING AUTHORITY; AND REV. BUSTER SOIRES, PASTOR, FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, SOMERSET, NJ

Mr. WOODSEN. Thank you, Senator. We are truly delighted to have this opportunity for you to hear from the other side of black America.

As you indicated, 60 percent of black Americans were undecided when Judge Thomas' nomination was first introduced. In recent polls, one conducted by Jet magazine, a black publication, indicated that over 60 percent of black Americans now support him after having heard him present himself.

As a veteran of the struggle for civil rights and having led demonstrations in the 1960's in suburban Philadelphia, I witnessed first hand the sacrifices that were made to end this country's apartheid system. Following the death of Dr. King, I intervened in the confrontation between rioters to restore order and organized a nonviolent means to enable those who had no voice to redress decisionmaking.

Early in that movement, it became quite apparent to me that many of those who struggled most and suffered in the struggle for civil rights did not benefit from the change once the doors of opportunity were open. This was a fact, and the leadership of the civil rights movement, a lot has been made of the position of the leadership. To what extent does it reflect popular black opinion?

Well, let me say to you, as a veteran of the civil rights movement, I can recall when the students at Orangeburg first sat down and engaged in civil disobedience. This strategy was not embraced by the leadership. In fact, they were opposed to it. It was only after it became popular did the leadership embrace it. And when Dr. King entered into Birmingham, he was not embraced by the leadership. Again, when Dr. King wrote his letter from a Birmingham

jail, when he challenged the sincerity of white moderates, the leadership at that time said that Dr. King was in danger of alienating the white support.

Again, when Dr. King—I remember, as an official with the NAACP at the time, being on the dais with Roy Wilkins—

The CHAIRMAN. You were an official?

Mr. WOODSEN. I was an official with the NAACP at the time at the local level. I led demonstrations. And I remember being on the dais when Roy Wilkins was the speaker. That was the day that Dr. King announced when he was going to join the peace movement with the civil rights movement. He was characterized by Carl Rowan as a Communist. It was the civil rights leadership that castigated Dr. King because, they said, he would weaken the civil rights movement.

But Dr. King, being the leader that he was, did not just simply reflect popular opinion or the consensus of the majority. He knew that he had the majority of blacks behind him, and that consensus drove this movement.

Again, the civil rights leadership opposed Jesse Jackson's candidacy for the Presidency in 1984. They said it was ill-advised for him to run. Eighty percent of blacks who voted supported Jesse Jackson. It was hailed by the civil rights organization at that time, the next year, as the greatest thing that ever happened to black America.

They were out of touch on those circumstances in the past, and they are out of touch today with Judge Thomas. Clearly 60 percent of black Americans having heard Judge Thomas now support him. And the reason is that there has been—there is no single black America. We talk about blacks and minorities and poor as if they are synonymous. Judge Thomas understood what some of us in the movement understood; that it is important to understand that not all black Americans suffered equally even under discrimination; that some of us were better prepared to deal with the storm of racism and discrimination.

As a consequence, you see a bifurcation of the black community today. Black families with incomes in excess of \$50,000-plus have increased 350 percent over the last 20 years while black families with incomes below \$10,000 have also increased. If racial discrimination were the sole culprit, then why are not all blacks suffering equally since only one out of six whites with a college degree works for government and three out of six blacks with a college degree work for government?

You have a proprietary interest in the maintenance of race-specific solutions, and I have prepared and submit for the record an article written in 1965, October 29, that says, "Civil Rights Gains Bypassing Poor Negroes," written by Bill Raspberry who quotes the civil rights leadership in 1965. In this article, the civil rights leadership said, "Continued emphasis on race-specific solution will never address the problems of poor blacks, that we must mount an economic development program to address their needs."

The civil rights leadership, because many of their members benefited, continues to ignore this reality and press race-specific solutions to the detriment of poor blacks. And as a consequence, some of us—and Clarence Thomas certainly is numbered in that group—

began to understand that, yes, we affirm the progress of the civil rights movement, but the strategy is insufficient, that we must now define affirmative action differently so that it exempts the sons and daughters of the panelists here and people in my—my son—I have four children. My oldest boys have a better education than most whites. They went to Wilmington Friends School, Senator. Therefore, what we believe is that if affirmative action, as Clarence Thomas has said, should be redefined to apply to low-income people, white, black, Hispanic, whatever, since we only have a limited amount of resources, that we should concentrate those resources among the people who are in crisis.

And so Clarence Thomas, I think, brings that very important perspective to this issue, and therefore should be confirmed on the Court when the issue of the future of black colleges, public-supported black colleges are being destroyed in the name of integration, and they educate most black youngsters, not Harvard, Yale, or Stanford. Therefore, there are many issues that go beyond affirmative action that we think Judge Thomas is eminently qualified to sit in judgment.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Woodsen.
Mr. Jackson.

STATEMENT OF ALPHONSO JACKSON

Mr. JACKSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I am Alphonso Jackson, the executive director of the housing authority for the city of Dallas, and a personal friend of Judge Clarence Thomas. I am here before you today to testify on his behalf.

I, too, like Judge Thomas, came from humble means, as the last of 12 children to Arthur and Henrietta Jackson. Although my mother was a high school graduate, my father was not, but he still managed to educate all 12 of his children. He taught us the value of giving back, not only to the society at large, but to the African-American community specifically.

In 1965, while a freshman in college, I left at the request of Rev. Bernard Lee, the top aide to the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, to go to Selma and be instrumental in the voter registration drive.

I also, as many others did, participated in the march from Selma to Montgomery. Furthermore, I spent the summer of 1976 working for the NAACP, at my own expense, at the request of Margaret Wilson, then chairperson, and the Rev. Ben Hooks, the executive director.

Upon graduation from law school at Washington University, in St. Louis, I then met Attorney General John Danforth, who introduced me to Judge Thomas. We have remained steadfast friends for the past 18 years, and I dare say that both of us were enriched by Senator Danforth's kindness and wisdom.

Judge Thomas is the every man we strive to be. He is intuitive, insightful and highly proficient in the law, with extremely valuable hands-on experience in public policy. He possesses keen intellect and strong values that would benefit the Supreme Court.

The Clarence Thomas I know is a self-made man, who has worked enormously hard to get where he is today. He will serve the Supreme Court well, not through quick and simplistic means,