

an educational program to try to understand our Congress, our Government, and our Nation. I told them that if you really want to understand the nature of the decisions and the environment in the United States, you have to understand her domestic financial crisis. You have to understand what the Senator from Minnesota said. He talked about the fact that the bipartisan entitlement commission has shown us that within a very short period of time, just a handful of Federal programs consume 100 percent of our Treasury.

I was simply telling these foreign visitors that to have an appreciation for what is happening in the debate over the resources we devote to our national defense and to world order, to the debate over what we can make available to foreign assistance, it is being driven by this pile of 28 different budgets that are out of balance and that this generation of Americans, you and I, Mr. President, and all of our citizens, are going to be charged with dealing with this dilemma. We have known about this problem all these years, but it was always going to be somebody else to work it out. There is no generation for us to give the baton to. We are the last watch. It is you and I. We are going to make the decision, whether it is indecision or decision, on our watch that will determine what kind of country we give to the next generation.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I note the Senator from West Virginia is going to be recognized at 11. I wonder if the Senator from Georgia is going to take the full time until 11 o'clock.

Mr. COVERDELL. Does the Senator from Vermont need a moment or two? I would be glad to yield the remainder of my time—

Mr. LEAHY. I need about 2 minutes.

Mr. COVERDELL. To the Senator from Vermont.

Mr. KYL. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. COVERDELL. I am sorry; I did not see the presence of the Senator from Arizona.

Mr. KYL. I would advise the Senator from Georgia, I have about 3 minutes of remarks.

Mr. COVERDELL. Let me ask this, I say to the Senator from West Virginia. The Senator from Kentucky used about 2 minutes of the time under our control, and I wonder if I might ask unanimous consent that our time last until 11:02, and I would grant 2 minutes to the Senator from Arizona and the closing 2 minutes to the Senator from Vermont.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. KYL. I thank the Chair. I thank the Senator from Georgia.

BALANCE THE BUDGET FOR AMERICA'S FAMILIES

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, during the next few months, millions of Americans will confront the annual task of

filing their income-tax returns. What people would be startled to learn is that about 53 cents of every dollar of individual income tax they send in to the IRS this year will be required just to pay the interest on the national debt.

That is 53 cents out of every dollar that will not be available to spend on health care for children, for education, for the environment, for aid to victims of domestic violence, for law enforcement, for national defense, or for any of the other important programs that serve the American people. It is 53 cents of every dollar just to pay interest on the bills that Congress and the President have racked up in years past.

That 53 cents of every dollar does not even begin to pay down the national debt, which is increasing at a rate of \$4,500 per second—a debt that threatens our children's very future. It now totals more than \$5.3 trillion, or about \$20,000 for every man, woman, and child in the country.

Some people say that a balanced budget would mean drastic cuts in important programs. But it is really the deficit—the debt—that is savaging our ability to respond to the Nation's needs. How much more could we do for the American people if we did not have to set aside 53 cents of every income-tax dollar just to pay interest? How much more could people do for themselves if their tax bills were cut in half and they had that 53 cents to spend on their own needs?

It is really a balanced budget—not more deficits—that offers the greatest protection for the important programs our Government provides. A balanced budget will ensure that we have the money, for example, to take care of our obligations to seniors and those in need, to make streets safe for law-abiding citizens, and to make our country secure. It is, after all, those programs—those programs that are priorities for the American people—that will be funded first under a balanced budget.

Of course, setting priorities would be something new for the Federal Government. We are used to operating with a national checkbook that has had an unlimited balance. That has allowed Congress to spend as much as it wants for whatever it wants. And when you have an unlimited balance to draw from, every program is as important as the next.

But as any family knows, when you have to live within your means, you cannot have everything. The basics come first. In the context of a balanced Federal budget, that means things like Social Security, Medicare, and national security move to the front of the line.

That is what it means to prioritize. It is just plain common sense.

Most economists predict that a balanced budget would facilitate a reduction in long-term interest rates of between one and two percent. That means that more Americans will have the chance to live the American

dream—to own their own homes. A 2-percent reduction on a typical 30-year mortgage in Arizona would save homeowners over \$220 a month. That is \$2,655 a year.

A 2-percent reduction in interest rates on a typical \$15,000 car loan would save buyers \$676. The savings would also accrue on student loans, and credit cards, and loans to businesses that want to expand and create new jobs. Reducing interest rates is probably one of the most important things we can do to help people across this country. It is money in the pocket of every American.

Mr. President, we need to balance the budget. The American people want us to balance the budget. But the only way to ensure that we really get there is to pass the balanced budget amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has spoken for 2 minutes.

The Senator from Vermont is recognized.

JUSTICE CLARENCE THOMAS' FIRST AMENDMENT RIGHTS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at the end of my comments, an article in the Wall Street Journal of January 31, 1997, entitled "Black Leaders Try to Deny Thomas' Status as Role Model," be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.
(See exhibit 1.)

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, there have been a number of articles in various papers over the last couple of years about groups that tried to block Justice Clarence Thomas from speaking at various schools. I abhor this kind of activity.

Justice Thomas was nominated by the President of the United States, went through his hearing, we had a vote on it up or down, and he was confirmed. That is the major trial that he should have to go through. He has the same rights, first amendment rights, as every one of us to speak. I am proud of the fact I come from a family that made the first amendment a hallmark, in bringing up the three Leahy children. I have been in this body for 22 years, defending the first amendment from attacks from any side, and I am proud of the achievements that has brought about. But I would say that those who try to block anyone from speaking disregard the first amendment.

McCarthyism of the left is as bad as McCarthyism of the right. If some disagree with what Justice Thomas says, then let them seek their own forum to express that disagreement. Do not block the statements from being made in the first place. That is wrong. We, in this country, ought to understand that those who try to block speech, from the right or from the left, do a disservice to our Constitution, do a disservice to our country, and, most important,

they do a disservice to the diversity that makes up the greatest democracy in history.

I yield the floor.

EXHIBIT 1

[From the Wall Street Journal Jan. 31, 1997]

BLACK LEADERS TRY TO DENY THOMAS
STATUS AS ROLE MODEL

(By Edward Felsenthal)

WASHINGTON.—When Benjamin Carson, a prominent African-American surgeon, was helping organizers find an inspiring speaker to close a weeklong "Festival for Youth" in Delaware this month, he pushed for Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas.

It wasn't only Justice Thomas's exalted title and status as one of the country's highest-ranking public servants that attracted Dr. Carson. It also was his remarkable rise from poverty. The two men were acquainted through their membership in the Horatio Alger Society, a group whose members have overcome significant odds to achieve success.

But when the Baltimore surgeon issued the invitation, he never dreamed that he would set off a political firestorm. After an organized protest from a regional chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, which threatened to picket the talk, Justice Thomas backed out.

Normally, ethnic organizations are only too eager to have top elected or appointed officials visit and speak to community groups, especially young people. But the Delaware protest was the latest incident in an unusual drive against a public official by some black leaders to deny the conservative, 48-year-old justice a position as a role model within the African-American community.

UNFLATTERING COVER STORIES

Last year, after a school-board member and local parents threatened to protest, a Maryland school temporarily retracted an invitation for Justice Thomas to speak at an awards ceremony for eighth graders. Emerge, an influential magazine among the black intelligentsia, has run two unflattering cover stories on the justice, one portraying him wearing an Aunt Jemima-style kerchief, the other portraying him as a lawn jockey. His judicial decisions also have attracted unusual personal attacks, including a stinging open letter from former U.S. Judge Leon Higginbotham.

Justice Thomas, whose bitter 1991 confirmation hearings became a national spectacle because of Anita Hill's allegations of sexual harassment, is certainly no stranger to controversy. But the recent protests are extraordinary because they have little or nothing to do with the highly charged issues raised during his difficult confirmation. Instead, they have to do almost entirely with Justice Thomas's conservative views and decisions criticizing policies such as affirmative action.

While feminist groups took the lead in fighting against his Supreme Court nomination, this time the criticisms of Justice Thomas are being leveled almost entirely by other blacks. Various civil-rights leaders claim—sometimes in terms that are astonishingly abusive even by Washington standards—that Justice Thomas has betrayed his race by opposing the affirmative-action policies that his critics say helped get him where he is, and by voting with the court's conservatives on other civil-rights issues.

"If white folks want to have Justice Thomas serve as a role model for their kids, that's their business," says Hanley Norment, president of the NAACP's Maryland branch. Mr. Norment, who helped plan the protest against Justice Thomas at the Delaware fes-

tival, dismisses him as a "colored lawn jockey for conservative white interests."

DISSENTING VOICES

A number of black leaders, including national NAACP President Kweisi Mfume, have raised concerns about the campaign against Justice Thomas, and some say African-Americans should take pride in his accomplishments. "This is an embarrassment," says Michael Meyers, executive director of the New York Civil Rights Coalition. Justice Thomas "doesn't hold my views on affirmative action. He doesn't hold my views on race. But he is on the United States Supreme Court, and he's entitled to . . . respect."

That sentiment is echoed even in some seemingly unlikely places. "Of course, he's a role model," says Charles Ogletree, the Harvard Law School professor who was Anita Hill's lawyer during the confirmation hearings. His success proves "that you can come up from poverty and have a huge impact in our society."

Justice Thomas's career has engendered conflicted feelings in black America from the moment he hit the national scene as chairman of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in the Reagan administration. Although mainstream black groups such as the NAACP were worried that he was hostile to many civil-rights laws, they opted not to fight his 1989 selection to the federal appeals court in Washington. And although many of those same groups later decided to oppose his elevation to the Supreme Court, some believed that his humble origins might ultimately make him more sympathetic to their civil-rights agenda.

That hasn't happened. He has joined the court's conservative wing in ruling that it's unconstitutional to draw up voting districts primarily on the basis of race. He concurred in a 1995 ruling that put strict limits on federal affirmative action, saying such programs "stamp minorities with a badge of inferiority and may cause them to develop dependencies." He also concurred that year in a decision that curbed school desegregation, expressing astonishment that "courts are so willing to assume that anything that is predominantly black must be inferior."

Other justices participated in these decisions, too, of course. But Justice Thomas's African-American critics seem to view his role as uniquely unforgivable, and that sentiment in turn has provoked the concern about his influence on black youth.

IT DOESN'T AFFECT HIM

Justice Thomas won't comment on the Delaware incident, but friends insist he isn't ruffled. "He's been around long enough dealing with the so-called civil-rights community [that] it doesn't affect him," says Stephen Smith, a Washington lawyer and former law clerk for Justice Thomas.

After the area NAACP leaders threatened their protest, Justice Thomas wrote festival organizers to say that, while he doesn't object to "peaceful demonstrations," he didn't want to distract from the event's focus on children. Finally, says a gleeful Mr. Morment, the Maryland NAACP official, "the guy made some decision that we agree with."

Other black leaders say they too would object if the justice were invited to speak to kids in their area. It is a way of "getting his attention" to communicate that "we're disappointed with the actions that you've taken, and so therefore we can't hold you up as a role model," says Hazel Dukes, president of the New York conference of the NAACP.

It is in one sense ironic that Justice Thomas has provoked such criticism: On a court whose members are more likely to be found speaking at high-brow judicial conferences

than obscure local convention halls, Justice Thomas has shown a special interest in talking with ordinary people, particularly the young. His message is "inspiring and uplifting," says Norman Hatton, a vice principal at the Thomas G. Pullen School in Landover, Md., where the justice spoke at the awards ceremony last summer.

Indeed, even some NAACP leaders are adopting a more conciliatory approach. In a recent speech, Mr. Mfume, the national president, criticized the Maryland chapter, saying protests against Justice Thomas shouldn't rise to such a level that they impede his right to speak. "We must never rush to silence free speech," he said. "It doesn't matter how we feel about Justice Thomas."

Dr. Carson, the surgeon, adds: "Children shouldn't be forced to watch 'a bunch of silly adults . . . put people into corners and castigate them. . . . If anything is a bad role model, that is.'"

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER [Mr. THOMAS]. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING
BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the order, morning business is closed.

BALANCED BUDGET AMENDMENT
TO THE CONSTITUTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the order, the Senate will now resume consideration of Senate Joint Resolution 1, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (S. J. Res. 1) proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States to require a balanced budget.

The Senate resumed consideration of the joint resolution.

Pending:

Dodd amendment No. 4, to simplify the conditions for a declaration of an imminent and serious threat to national security.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KEMPTHORNE). The Senator from West Virginia [Mr. BYRD] is recognized.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, the measure before the Senate is a proposed amendment to the Constitution mandating a balanced budget annually. It is unconstitutional-like. I am not saying it is unconstitutional. If it is riveted into the Constitution, of course it would be constitutional. But I am saying it is unconstitutional-like in its words, which lack the vision, the simplicity, and the majestic sweep of language that we find in the Constitution. Rather, it sounds and reads like a bookkeeping manual on principles of accounting. The amendment is replete with words like "outlays," "fiscal year," "receipts," "estimates of outlays and receipts," "receipts except those derived from borrowing," "repayment of debt principal,"—words which