

**OUR VIEW**

**Who's to judge?**

Bipartisanship. Is there really such a thing? We'd like to think that cooperation for the common good is something all our elected officials would strive for. Reality teaches us an altogether different lesson: He (she or they) who have power, wieldeth it with selfish interests. On Capitol Hill, Democrats and Republicans are on the brink of a partisan war over President Bush's judicial nominees, the likes of which hasn't been seen in a long time.

In one corner is the Bush camp, desperately trying to cash in on the political capital he believes was conveyed by his reelection and GOP taking control of both legislative houses—in so many aspects, such as the conflict in Iraq, Social Security privatization, and the economy, Bush is failing. Occupying the other corner is a politically castrated Democratic Party whose main form of opposition seems to be opposition for opposition's sake—which can be good sometimes, but oftentimes now, especially as the Dems routinely fail to come up with feasible alternatives.

Any common ground that Sen. Majority Leader Bill Frist, R-Tenn., and Sen. Minority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., might have found is likely to go by the wayside in the coming days as the GOP tries to push through final votes on 10 of Bush's first-term appeals court nominees, including controversial California judge Janis Brown. Democrats have vowed to go to the ends of the earth to stop Republicans, even threatening to filibuster, a parliamentary device that can only be trumped by a majority of 60 votes. In return, Frist has said he'll try to block the Dems' use of the filibuster.

In the controversy surrounding Janis Brown, re-elected to her California State Supreme Court post with 76 percent of the vote and nominated by Bush to the U.S. Court of Appeals, some pundits have suggested that Democratic opposition is both racial and political. That the Dems are worried that, as one person put it, "Clarence Thomas nominees," will siphon Blacks away from the Donkey Party. That they believe that "real" African-Americans are liberal and not conservative.

Fact is, Clarence Thomas isn't to be credited with the scant-but-growing numbers of Blacks who are voting for conservative candidates, nor should Brown's appointment be viewed strictly in racial/sexual terms (Bush kills two birds with one appointment, landing a minority and a woman). The more philosophical reason to thoroughly examine Brown is determining how she'll apply the law. History shows a rightward bent in her judicial career. Of note is her staunch support of Proposition 209, California's constitutional amendment banning race and sex favoritism by government. In a decision on a case to eliminate preferences in a public works project in San Jose, she quoted late Yale Law School Professor Alexander Bickel: "Discrimination on the basis of race is illegal, immoral, unconstitutional, inherently wrong, and destructive of democratic society." In and of itself, the statement is true. With added context, however—namely, the history behind the creation of affirmative action and the socioeconomic inequities that still exist because of bias—it's little more than pie in the sky. What's needed in this showdown over Bush's nominees is reason and insight—expediency is out of the question; some nominees have been waiting two years.

Maybe the American people should judge the judges because leaving it to our elected officials, things may get bloody before they get better. To wit: "It is time for 100 senators to decide the issue of fair up-or-down votes for judicial nominees after over two years of unprecedented obstructionism," Frist's office said in a statement Wednesday. Reid's office countered: "The time has come for Republican senators to decide whether they will abide by the rules of the Senate, or break those rules for the first time in 217 years."



**Do you have Clarence Thomas Syndrome?**

*Dora LaGrande  
Sentinel-Voice*

Since 1991 when Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas' nomination was confirmed, Blacks all across this country have disagreed with and complained about his voting record on civil rights and equal opportunity. They have called him a sell-out. They have called him a White man's nigger, an Uncle Tom, and every other derogatory term that can be used to define someone who continuously votes against issues that would be of great benefit to his own people.

Justice Thomas has always made his position very, very clear and stated that he believes decisions should be "race neutral." Thomas believes color should not be a factor when voting on issues regarding: minority set asides; affirmative action programs to achieve diversity in higher education; gerrymandering of congressional and local districts to ensure Black representation; and claims of vote dilution under Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, which was enacted to ensure equal vote for African-American and other minorities.

While many Blacks disagree with many of the justice's opinions, are they themselves guilty of having the Clarence Thomas Syndrome? Do they believe that things like selecting and voting for a candidate or the awarding of a contract should be race neutral because "The



**ON THE RECORD**  
By Dora LaGrande

only somebody that helped me get where I am today was somebody White." Are they naive or too stupid to realize that Whites have always chosen their token Black, one that they know is not going to ruffle any feathers, to promote and move that one through the ranks, which allows them to pat themselves on the back and say, "Look at what we did; we promoted one Black," or say, "We gave one Black a chance."

In 1995, Clarence Thomas in the case of Adarand Constructors, Inc. v. Federico Pena stated, "These programs that may have been motivated, in part, by good intentions cannot provide refuge from the principle under our Constitution, the government may not make distinctions on the basis of race. As far as the Constitution is concerned, it is irrelevant whether a government's racial classification is drawn by those who wish to oppress race or by those who have a sincere desire to help those thought to be disadvantaged. There can be no doubt that the paternalism that appears to lie at the heart of this program is at war with the principle of inherent equality that underlies and infuses our Constitution. (We hold these

truths to be self evident that all men are created equal and are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness.)"

In general and simpler terms, Justice Thomas was saying that decisions to provide opportunities should not be based on race and that this is clear in the Constitution and color should not be a factor.

Remember this is the same Constitution that declared Blacks only three-fifths of a person. This is the same Constitution and Declaration of Independence that was in effect when Black folks were enslaved from 1619 through 1865. And for another 100 years, while the

"all men are created equal" law was in effect, we were segregated.

Based on a meeting last week with the Caucus of African American Nevadans (a local political action committee with a platform to assess and endorse candidates in the Black community interest) they seem to share Thomas' "race neutral" philosophy.

So what's my point? The point is there is no such thing as race neutral decision-making.

This is democratic ideology and Black brainwashing that only fools fall prey to. Do you think it was race neutral when we were not able to participate in the voting process at all?

Now that we are participating as groups, we are in the process of endorsing candidates, and yet, we have taken on the political actions of Whites during reconstruction by finding ways to leave our own people out of the (See LaGrande, Page 11)

**NEVADA'S ONLY AFRICAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER**  
**LAS VEGAS Sentinel Voice**  
GRIOT COMMUNICATIONS GROUP, INC.  
P.O. BOX 10000 LAS VEGAS, NV 89110

Nevada's only African-American community newspaper.  
Published every Thursday by Griot Communications Group, Inc.  
900 East Charleston Boulevard • Las Vegas, Nevada 89104  
Telephone (702) 380-8100  
Email: lvsentinelvoice@earthlink.net

**Ramon Savoy, Publisher, Editor-in-Chief**  
**Kathi Overstreet, Associate Publisher**  
**Parker Philpot, Assistant Copy Editor**  
**Don Snook, Graphics**  
**Ed & Betty Brown, Founders**

**Contributing Writers:**  
Tanya Flanagan  
Tasha Pope  
Dianna Saffold  
Lés Pierres Streater  
**Photographer:**  
Isaac Sawyer

Member: National Newspaper Publishers Association  
and West Coast Black Publishers Association