

NATIONAL

Commentary - Racism in the US Senate



Rosetta Miller Perry, publisher, *The Tennessee Tribune*, National Newspaper Publishers Foundation, Treasurer

By Rosetta Miller-Perry

This week, our young people, the nation and the world have had a chance to see both the best and worse of America in the Senate Judiciary Committee hearings regarding President Biden's nomination of the Hon. Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson to the United States Supreme Court. Jackson handled herself with extreme dignity, responding to often stupid, KKK racist irrelevant and insulting questions with detailed, thoughtful responses, and remaining respectful to Senators and Congressmen. She was often cut off in mid-answer, interrupting or refusing to let her complete responses, and just behaving with the standard contempt and animus they have for Black people in general, and in particular any Black person with a chance to reach a position of power.

For three days, including a marathon 13-hour session Tuesday, Jackson had to hear comments and answer questions from right-wing white leaning KKK racist Republicans that ranged from inaccurate to irrelevant to total mischaracterizations of both the law and her record. Sadly, many were nothing more than racist insults masquerading as policy points.

Lindsey Graham who I use to admire and respect and Ted Cruz, who was born in Canada whom I never respected his intellect, repeatedly tried to make it seem that the honorable Judge Jackson had somehow not been hard enough on child pornography. Graham also accused her of "judicial activism," ("legislating from the bench"). This is what some Republicans want when it comes to repealing abortion laws or imposing bans on transexuals, but otherwise claim to oppose.

"Every person in all of these charts and documents, I sent to jail. Because I know how serious this crime is," Jackson told Graham during an exchange about the child pornography cases. Then another ardent right-wing reactionary Josh Hawley who looks like his name sounds, tried to bring it up again, prompting Judge Jackson to say "I'll stand on my answer." She rightly told the equally ridiculous Tom Cotton, who hasn't realized that, we don't pick cotton anymore, said, "What I regret is that in a hearing about my qualifications ... we've spent a lot of time focusing on this small subset of my sentences."

In addition, Cruz tried to hammer Jackson on critical race theory questions one day and transgender issues other, while yet another GOP senator droned on about cancel culture. NONE of those things have the slightest relevance to her competence to be

on the Supreme Court, and are simply standard right-wing rhetoric designed to get support from their cadre of Trump supporters.

But while this crew of lightweights, whose ranks also include Tennessee's own stalwart Trump supporter Marsha Blackburn, repeatedly displayed conduct that reflected the absolute worse in American decorum and behavior, Senator Cory Booker demonstrated the best. Booker, a New Jersey Democrat and one of three sitting Black U.S. senators, lauded Jackson for reaching the heights of the U.S. judiciary as both a Black woman and working mother.

"It's hard for me not to look at you and not see my mom. Not to see my cousins, one of them who had to come here and sits behind you. She had to have your back. I see my ancestors and yours," Booker said. "But don't worry, my sister. Don't worry. God has got you. And how do I know that? You're here, and I know what it's taken for you to sit in that seat. "You have earned this spot," Booker added. "You are worthy. You are a great American."

Throughout his monologue, Booker cited the Black men and women who had helped pave a path for Jackson and himself. He talked about how the abolitionist Harriet Tubman was beaten before she escaped slavery, then went back to save other slaves, establishing a network of safe houses. Tubman, Booker said, would gaze at the night sky looking for a star that was a "harbinger of hope."

"I thought about her. And how she looked up, she kept looking up no matter what they did to her she never stopped looking up. And that star was a harbinger of hope," Booker said. "Today, you're my star. You are my harbinger of hope. This country's get-

ting better and better and better. And when that final vote happens, and you ascend on to the highest court in the land, I'm going to rejoice."

He also accurately depicted the tactics and questioning of Republicans. "I mean, this is a new low," Booker said of the GOP attacks, especially the claim made by Hawley that Jackson went easy on child pornography defendants. "What's especially surprising about this is it didn't happen last year [when Jackson was nominated to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit]. You were put on a court that I'm told is considered like the second most powerful court in our land. And you passed with bipartisan support. Nobody brought it up then. Did they not do their homework?"

Judge Jackson should and will be confirmed to the Court, although the Congress will continue to be dominated by backward racist white right-wing types. But at least her presence adds some balance and also finally erases another barrier to progress in this nation, the absence of a Black woman on the highest court in the land. These hearings also reveal the continual decline of the Republican Party as I have known since my deceased mother was a Republican and I sadly watch its descent into hate speeches, racist caricature and demagoguery.

Finally: People with white color can change their shade, but those of us with darker skin cannot. So, don't judge us based on our color, but do it based on our intellect.

As Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said: "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character."

Hunger Persists at HBCUs, Despite Record Federal Funding

By Nadia Ramlagan

Tennessee's six Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) collectively received more than \$131 million in the past year through the American Rescue Plan, according to new data from the Department of Education.

But another report found many students at HBCUs are missing meals or worried about having enough food.

Terrell Strayhorn, provost and senior vice president for academic affairs at Virginia Union University and director of the Center for the Study of Historically Black Colleges and Universities, said nearly half the students surveyed reported struggling to access food and losing a job during the pandemic.

"And it's hard to feel like you belong in higher education when your

basic needs are not met," Strayhorn explained. "When you don't have enough money to pay your bills and have food, and have a place to lay your head, but you're expected to show up for biology class."

The report is based on survey data from nearly 5,000 students at fourteen public and private HBCUs. It showed HBCUs produce more than 20% of Black Americans' bachelors degrees.

Rachel Sumekh, founder and CEO of Swipe Out Hunger, a national nonprofit focused on ending college hunger, thinks states should create and expand financial aid and emergency aid options for students.

"Four states have passed something known as the Hunger-Free Campus bill, which has sent over \$70 million to campuses to fund anti-hunger programs," Sumekh reported.



Sumekh added states need federal support, and also an expansion of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) access to students in degree and nondegree career and technical programs, as well as for HBCU students enrolled in programs increasing job prospects for low-income populations.

"When it comes to basic needs,

our institutions are too underfunded and too understaffed to address the level of need on campus," Sumekh asserted.

According to the report, one in five HBCU students having trouble meeting their basic needs had received help from their college in applying for SNAP benefits. (TNS)

Meet the Black Woman CEO Helping to Qualify Thousands of "Difficult to Approve" Homebuyers

Nationwide — Lisa K. Farrell, founder and CEO of Lisa Home Mortgage, specializes in matching prospective homebuyers with the right mortgage product and qualifying applicants, even when they are considered difficult to approve. A native New Yorker and a graduate of Rosemont College, Lisa is a Federal and State licensed Mortgage Loan Originator (NMLS 946723) and is licensed and serves the states of Pennsylvania, Delaware, California, Colorado, Alabama, Louisiana, and Florida with other states pending.

Last month, her company introduced their VOE [Verification of Employment] Program as a specialty product to offer a pathway to homeownership to W2 professionals in commission-based sales and service-oriented fields.

Lisa comments, "Rental units were once a practical option. Now that renting is no longer affordable, homeownership is a better way to secure a primary residence."

Non-salaried employees such as car salesmen, hairstylists, barbers, mechanics, nail technicians, restaurant wait staff, and other W2 employees have traditionally been underserved by the mortgage industry.



Lisa K. Farrell, founder and CEO of Lisa Home Mortgage.

These people may qualify for mortgage loans through the Lisa Home Mortgage VOE Program. Lisa says she has structured this loan package for these individuals who would have experienced frustrations when looking to secure a mortgage in the past.

"Nowadays, many potential homebuyers have extraordinary circumstances that fall outside of typical approval guidelines, including an unusual pay structure and income calculations involving seasonal upticks and lulls," says Lisa. "If the homebuyer

has been with their employer for more than two years, the VOE Program at Lisa Home Mortgage may be the best funding option to qualify these W2 professionals."

In these instances, employment and salary information can simply be verified by the applicant's employer.* Tax returns, W2s, and paystubs are not required. Plus, potential homebuyers can be prequalified if they face credit challenges.

"Difficult does not mean impossible. Our team of experienced mort-

gage professionals can identify the best funding program to qualify your loan application and our network of professionals can also help clients overcome credit issues," says Lisa.

Plus, the application process is simple. Homebuyers can use their mobile device and get prequalified within hours. Thanks to Lisa Home Mortgage, homebuyers with even a lower credit score* can be pre-approved the same day. A conversation with a team member is the first step toward a financial solution. That conversation could lead to owning a dream home.

"Our goal is to get each of our clients in the home of their choice. So, if you are an employed professional and your income fluctuates from week to week or month to month, we may have solutions for you," Lisa says. "We are here and committed to offering outstanding customer service from application to closing."

For more details, visit LisaHomeMortgage.com or call (833) 835-6267. Also, follow the brand on social media @LisaHomeMortgage

* Some conditions apply. All programs may not be available in all states. Underwriting guidelines are subject to change.