CONGRESSIONAL RECORD—SENATE

October 7, 1999

Currently, more than 5,000 have died and more are dying each day. In my office, I have been visited by courageous hemophiliacs who say, 'I never know if I will ever see them again.' This population has been decimated, Mr. President, and the personal tragedy is unspeakable.

We must fully fund the Ricky Ray Relief Act. The Senate version of the Labor-HHS-Education bill appropriates $50 million out of the $750 million needed to fund the Ricky Ray Trust Fund, and that is certainly better than the inadequate level of the other body, but it is a far cry from the level needed by the hemophilia community. Members of this community never anticipated the one-time compensation from the trust fund, intended to assist with staggering medical bills, to improve the quality of their lives, would turn out to be a pay-out to their estates.

You need only to speak to some of my constituents, like Therese MacNeill. She has told me how, at the age of 39, the hardship she has experienced in coping with the tragedy of losing one son to AIDS and caring for another who is HIV-positive. Terri MacNeill will let you know in no uncertain terms why we must fully fund Ricky Ray to help families who for years were storing HIV-infected blood product in their family refrigerators next to the lettuce and milk, and now are struggling under mountains of medical bills.

Other countries have recognized the plight of hemophiliacs who were infected by poorly screened blood. Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Italy, and Switzerland are just some of the countries which have established compensation programs. Italy, Germany, and Switzerland are just some of the countries which have established compensation programs. Italy, Germany, and Switzerland are just some of the countries which have established compensation programs.

Mr. President, let me conclude by saying that I am heartened by the response of my friends, the distinguished Senator from Pennsylvania, Senator SPECTER, and the able Senator from Iowa, Senator LINTON, in crafting this legislation. They have risen to an incredible challenge in the funding of programs designed for AIDS care, research and treatment, and I remain committed to work with them during this year and in the future to push some of the great work that remains to be done, especially in regard to HIV prevention programs and the Ricky Ray Trust Fund.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Wednesday, October 6, 1999, the Federal debt stood at $5,654,882,977,504.81 (Five trillion, six hundred forty-two million, eight hundred ninety-seven thousand, five hundred four dollars and eighty-one cents).

One year ago, October 6, 1998, the Federal debt stood at $5,596,217,000,000 (Five trillion, five hundred thirty-six billion, two hundred million).</s>
its history when there was a color test on nominations.

The reason why I say rule XVIII was not violated in that case, I believe, although the Senator from Vermont may have walked up to the line—he did not cross it—is because he said “I am hopping.” I, therefore, will not make any comment on this point on that.

It concerned me deeply that those comments were made. I want to say for the record, and it is interesting because I spoke to at least a dozen colleagues who voted the same way I did, in opposition to this nominee—not that it matters—who did not even know what race Mr. White was. I didn’t know. I had no idea, and I had numerous conversations about this nominee over the course of several weeks and months, as his nomination was pending. I never knew what his race was nor would I care because I wouldn’t want to look, frankly. What difference does it make? It doesn’t make any difference to me.

This went further than the Senate floor, which is quite disturbing. In the Washington Post today is an article, “Deepening Rift Over Judge Vote, Minorities Confirmed At a Lower Rate.” That was the Washington Post story. Very prominently pictured in the article is a picture of Ronnie White, and in addition, Senators Ashcroft and Bond. There is an implication there that I don’t like.

In the article, we have Governor Mel Carnahan, who happens to be the opponent of Senator Ashcroft in the election in Missouri for the Senate, who said:

“Judge White is a highly qualified lawyer and judge and the [death penalty] figures were nominated by Senator Ashcroft to undermine him.” Carnahan said.

Then it got a little worse from the Chief Executive of the United States of America. I want to point out, if President Bill Clinton were Senator Bill Clinton, and he said what I am about to read in my view, he would have violated rule XVIII. That is why I bring it up. Here is what the President said about all of us who voted against Mr. White’s nomination:

Yesterday’s defeat of Ronnie White’s nomination for the federal district court judgeship in Missouri was a disgraceful act of partisan politics. The Republican-controlled Senate is adding credence to the perceptions that they treat minority and women judicial nominees unfairly and unequally.

That basically is a direct attack on all of us and our motives, basically accusing us of being—the implication is that we do not treat minorities fairly, and that we discriminate against women as well.

That came from the President of the United States.

I will also quote from an article in the Washington Times today in relation to J.C. Watts, the most prominent African American Republican in the Congress of the United States, who was also deeply offended, as he should have been, by these remarks. It is interesting what Chairman Watts of the House Republican Conference said. This is J.C. Watts talking:

“It is fascinating to me that racism often is defined, not by your skin color, but by your ideology.”

I said Mr. Watts, the lone African Republican in the House, in a luncheon with editors and reporters at The Washington Times.

He said further:

Unless you’re a Democrat, it’s OK to do it to black Republicans. But don’t do it to a black Democrat.

Then it is racial.

It really is troublesome to me that we create these barriers between us.

President Clinton said:

[By voting down] the first African American criminal defense attorney on the Kansas State Supreme Court, the Republican-controlled Senate is adding credence to the perceptions that they treat minority and women judicial nominees unfairly.

But anyway, it is troubling to me that these kinds of things happen. I voted against the nominee because of his views on some issues. I spoke to this on the Senate floor on the same day. I am quoting myself now:

In the case of Justice White, who now serves on the Supreme Court in Missouri, he has demonstrated that he is an activist, and has a political slant to his opinions in favor of criminal defendants and against prosecutors.

It is my belief that judges should interpret the law, and not impose their own political viewpoints.

That is why I voted against Ronnie White.

Prominent law enforcement people in Missouri were also opposed to him, and said so, as Senator Ashcroft made very clear.

It is troubling to me that this issue raises questions in some people’s minds about what happens to be African American. I thought really we would get beyond this. It would have been nice if the President of the United States had said: Ninety-two percent of the minority nominations that have come through this Senate have been confirmed, most of them unanimously without even a recorded vote.

I would have been nice if the President said that was pretty good on the part of this Senate, instead of singling out one who had not been confirmed for, I believe, good reason.

One of the things you find out in the Senate, if you stay here long enough, is that you probably have said something somewhere along the line you would like to take back. I am going to say up front regarding my colleague from Vermont, I do not impugn his motives, but it is interesting that Senator Leahy did not vote to confirm Clarence Thomas. He voted against Clarence Thomas, a very prominent member of the Supreme Court who happens to be African American—a man I was proud to support. I did not hear the President mention any of us who voted for Clarence Thomas, an African American.

The reason is very simple: Clarence Thomas is a conservative. That is the reason.

I would never impugn my colleague’s motives for voting against Clarence Thomas. I assume he voted against Clarence Thomas because he was a conservative, he did not like his politics, did not like his views on abortion and other issues. I believe that.

I say, without any hesitation, if my colleague were here on the floor now, I would look at him and say: Absolutely, I believe you, that is your motive, and no other motive.

There was also another vote in 1989 in committee, for a gentleman by the name of William Lucas. Lucas was President Bush’s pick for Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights. He happens to be African American. Lucas’s nomination never got to the Senate floor. The vote in Judiciary was 7-7. The Senator from Vermont voted no. Again, I would never use the issue of race to say that was the reason for his vote. I would not even imply it.

So I think it is important that we move beyond this, stop this divisiveness, and give people the benefit of the doubt, and particularly Senator Hatch who so many times has brought nominees whom you and I—I would say to the Senator in the Chair, I myself have often disagreed with Senator Hatch on some of the nominations he has brought, but he has brought them forth I think probably more fairly than he should have in terms of the nominations he brings forth.

So to throw that blanket over 54 individuals who voted the way they did, or even to imply it, is unfortunate.

So I say, to set the record straight, I am going to vote against a person who I think is an activist, who does not represent the views that I believe should be on the court, no matter what the color, and, most frankly, without knowing the color if I can help it because I do not think it matters. It is unfortunate in this case that we came to that.

Mr. President, I want to touch on one other issue before we close up the Senate.

THE PANAMA CANAL

Mr. SMITH of New Hampshire. A few days ago, on October 4, I indicated that there were 88 days until the Panama Canal would be turned over to the Chinese to the Panamanians and ultimately into the hands of the Chinese Communists. That was October 4.

Today is the 7th, so we have 87, 86—85—we are down to 85 days before the canal is closed, will be turned over to the Chinese. I have a chart here on which I will put some stickers to cross those days off. The days go fast. I point out that we are going to see this canal in the hands of a nation that does not