

Bigotry and Senate Republicans

Letter to the Editor, [Brunswick Beacon](#), 04.21.22

George W. Bush coined the phrase “soft bigotry of low expectations” to describe the practice of not expecting members of a minority to meet the same standards of behavior expected of others. An example is the Republican minority in the U. S. Senate.

They used Ketanji Brown Jackson’s confirmation hearing to accuse her of supporting their invented bogeyman, Critical Race Theory. The Republican National Committee even posted a graphic on Twitter, crossing out Jackson's initials "KBJ" and replacing them with "CRT." They offered no evidence apart from her skin color.

And nobody expected them to behave any better, even though she is one of the best qualified nominees in recent history. Nebraska Sen. Ben Sasse said she “has impeccable credentials and a deep knowledge of the law.” Sasse voted “No.”

Missouri Sen. Roy Blount said, “She is certainly qualified, got a great personality, I think will be a good colleague on the Court.” Blount voted “No.”

South Carolina Sen. Lindsey Graham called her “a person of exceptionally good character.” Graham voted “No.”

North Carolina Sen. Thom Tillis said, “There is no doubt that Judge Jackson is well qualified. I was impressed with her knowledge, her composure, and her character.” Tillis voted “No”, he said, because she refused to answer questions about expanding the Supreme Court. That’s transparently false. Trump nominee Amy Coney Barrett also refused to answer that question and Tillis voted to confirm her.

The fact that three Republicans voted “yes” doesn’t excuse the 47 who voted “No.” It makes them indefensible. Yet no one expected those 47 Republicans to confirm her, despite their recognition of her “impeccable credentials,” “exceptionally good character” and “deep knowledge of the law.”

Lowering the bar on what we expect from Republican senators is an especially pernicious form of the soft bigotry of low expectations. It excuses and rewards obstruction. Even worse, it whitewashes bigotry and permits it to fester.

Kristine Garrity
2nd Vice Chair, Brunswick County Democratic Party
Leland