

Even before Judge Jackson spoke, GOP attacked her—and she rebutted them



By Mark Gruenberg

Even before federal Appellate Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson had a chance to speak as her Supreme Court nomination hearings began, the Senate’s radical right Republicans went on the attack against her—and their barrage continued as her confirmation hearing rolled into its second day on March 22. And Judge Jackson, the first ever African American woman nominated to the Court, turned all the attacks aside.

“My view of the proper role of a judge is as a North Star,” so judges should not be speaking on hot-button political issues, Judge Jackson told the lawmakers. A justice should “stay in her lane,” and decide issues that come before her, period.

“Judges are not policymakers. We have a constitutional duty to decide cases that are before us, and within that framework, we have a duty to interpret the law, not make the law,” Judge Jackson told Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas.

That didn’t stop the Republicans, some of whom used the hearing to posture and cater to GOP white nationalists and right-wingers and to posture for expected 2024 presidential runs:

- Missouri’s Josh Hawley, the nastiest—and the senator who egged on the seditious invasion of the Capitol last Jan. 6—accused Jackson, even before the hearing opened, of going light on child pornographers. Hawley is expected to seek the GOP

presidential nod in two years.

“As a mother and a judge who has had to deal with these cases, I was thinking that nothing could be further from the truth,” Jackson rebutted on March 22. “And in every case, when I am dealing with something like this, it is important to me to make sure that the children’s perspective, the children’s voices are represented in my sentences.

“I tell them about the victim statements that have come in to me as a judge. I tell them about the adults

T H I S W E E K :

- Even before Judge Jackson spoke, GOP attacked her—and she rebutted them
- Sanders hits big oil for using invasion to price gouge Americans
- Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson backed by NEA, nation’s largest union
- The People’s World is yours — own it!
- Latinos engañados en el mapa de votantes del estado de Washington

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who were former child sex abuse victims who tell me that they will never have a normal adult relationship because of this abuse.”

- Cornyn previously said Judge Jackson coddled terrorists by defending a prisoner at Guantanamo Bay. Sen. Lindsay Graham, R-S.C., tried to lambast

The highly qualified nominee beat down cheap GOP shots on the second day of the Senate's confirmation hearings.

her for wanting to release prisoners.

Jackson deflected Graham by noting she wrote the brief, calling for trials for the Gitmo prisoners, on behalf of her clients—who, though she didn't ideologically identify them, included conservative think tanks.

- Cornyn tried to get her to comment on the court's same-sex marriage decision. "Isn't it apparent that when the court decides something that is not even in the Constitution... doesn't that create a conflict between what people may believe as a doctrine of faith and what the Supreme Court agrees as the law of the land... Who do these people think they are?"

"That is the nature of rights," Judge Jackson replied. "The rights the Supreme Court has recognized are established in its case law."

That respect for precedent, though no one mentioned it, has often been flouted by the current Supreme Court's 6-person GOP-named majority, including in key cases involving workers and unions, as well as voting rights and a woman's reproductive

rights.

Judge Jackson kept emphasizing "I decide cases from a neutral posture. I evaluate the facts, and I interpret and apply the law to the facts of the case before me, without fear or favor, consistent with my judicial oath.

"If I am confirmed, I commit to you that I will work productively to support and defend the Constitution and the grand experiment of American democracy that has endured over these past 246 years."

When she finally got a chance to speak on the hearing's opening day, Jackson, 51, both lauded the opportunity growing up in the U.S. has given her, pointed out that she knows the criminal justice system from all sides of the picture. She was a public defender, her brother is a Baltimore police officer who enlisted in the Army after 9/11, and two uncles are police officers, one of whom became Miami's police chief.

"In all cases, I am looking neutrally at the arguments of the parties," she told Cornyn.

Sanders hits big oil for using invasion to price gouge Americans

By John Wojcik

Up until now, Independent Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont has been one of the few in the Senate who has refused to accept the idea that the war in Ukraine is reason to accept the increased prices foisted on Americans by the big oil companies.

"We can no longer allow big oil companies and the billionaire class to use the murderous Russian invasion of Ukraine and the ongoing pandemic as an excuse to price gouge Americans and rake in record profits," the senator declared this week.

Progressives in both the House and Senate are now joining him in a new push for a big oil profits wind-fall tax.

The bill is seen as a definite way in which what amounts to war profiteering by the companies can be stopped. It would put a cap on gas prices and put money back into the pockets of consumers.

U.S. Rep. Ro Khanna (D-CA) and Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) introduced the bill this week, calling for a 50-percent tax on oil barons' excess profits.

A unique feature of the bill is that funds raised from the tax would actually go back to consumers who have already been thoroughly ripped off by the oil companies.

Working-class families would receive annual paybacks of up to \$360.00. Revenues from the tax would go to working-class families with annual payments up to \$360/yr.

Our Revolution, the progressive national organization that grew out of the Sanders campaigns for the presidency, has endorsed the bill and has begun a mass campaign to garner support for it.

Readers can join the movement and pressure members of both the House and Senate to sign on in support of the bill.

The new bill would tax oil barons 50 percent on excess profits.

Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson backed by NEA, nation's largest union



By Mark Gruenberg

The nation's largest union, the 3 million-member National Education Association, has strongly endorsed Democratic President Joe Biden's nomination of federal Appellate Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson to the U.S. Supreme Court.

While NEA President Becky Pringle, like Judge Jackson an African-American woman, issued a prior brief statement backing Judge Jackson, the influential teachers' group's letter was more detailed. Pringle called her nomination "a long-overdue milestone in the history of our country."

And the NEA leader emphasized Judge Jackson's rulings against federal agencies' power, exercised by GOP Trump appointees, to strip workers' rights.

Pringle is not the first African-American woman to head the nation's largest union, but Judge Jackson would be the first African-American woman on the High Court, a point the teachers' leader stressed in its letter before hearings on her nomination began.

"Judge Jackson's more than 600 rulings reflect her dedication to being a fair-minded, even-handed jurist committed to equal justice for all," Pringle wrote. "They also reflect a strong understanding of the limits on administrative agencies' authority to strip away long held workplace protections."

Pringle cited cases involving Trump's edicts designed to trash the nation's 2 million federal workers and emasculate their unions, the Government Employees (AFGE) and the Treasury Employees.

In an early 2022 federal U.S. Court of Appeals opinion involving AFGE as the lead union, "Judge Jackson reversed a Trump-era Federal Labor Relations Authority rule that made it easier for government agencies to make workplace changes without having to negotiate with public sector unions" Pringle noted. The FLRA is the equivalent of the National Labor Relations Board, for labor-management relations for the two million federal workers.

None of this came up in the first Judiciary Committee session on Democratic President Joe Biden's nomination of Judge Jackson to succeed her mentor, retiring Justice Stephen Breyer. The hearings' opening day featured Judge Jackson sitting patiently for hours, waiting to testify while the panel's 22 members—11 from each party—gave opening statements. The hearings continue through March 24.

Besides being the first African-American woman nominated to the court, and the first former public defender, Judge Jackson is the first Floridian and first former criminal defense attorney nominated since LBJ named the court's first Black justice, the late Thurgood Marshall.

And in the modern era, Judge Jackson may be the court's first former journalist. Her disclosure form to the Senate Judiciary Committee shows that in 1992-93, concurrent with getting her undergraduate degree from Harvard and entering Harvard Law School, her first job was as a Time magazine reporter—a post confirmed by her full name on its 1993 masthead.

The influential teachers' organization calls her nomination "a long overdue milestone in the history of our country."

LOCAL NEWS

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The People's World is yours — own it!

By Barbara Russum

I first encountered the Daily World, a predecessor to People's World, at a rally to free Angela Davis in 1971. An elderly Black gentleman offered me a paper and we chatted a while. I worked in the Chicago Loop and happened upon the rally. Other papers were handed out, but the Daily World was the only real newspaper. The others I looked at went in the trash.

Over the years, I became a regular reader, subscriber, and financial supporter of People's World and its predecessor editions. And I handed out thousands of papers at rallies, at factory entrances, and on neighborhood routes.

Back in March 2003, I joined the staff at the then People's Weekly World print edition. My work was mostly behind the scenes, editing, vetting, designing, and producing pages for the printer. We had a basic online presence for years, but in January 2010, we launched our daily online edition replacing the weekly print edition.

At the end of 2021, I retired from the team but never retired from being a supporter!

PW is now and has always been reader-supported, which leads me to ask: Will you support our work? We have many supporters who make small monthly contributions, and those really add up! Now, I live in a HUD senior building for low income residents, but it's not hard to set up a monthly sustainer as part of my budget. I want all of our readers to do this too!

When you support PW you join with hundreds of thousands of daily readers who are informed with valuable news and analysis, more important now than ever.

Latinos engañados en el mapa de votantes del estado de Washington

By Tim Wheeler

El estado de Washington es culpable de manipulación para negar la representación de los votantes latinos en la legislatura estatal según una demanda pendiente presentada el 19 de enero por el Fondo de Educación y Defensa Legal México-Estadounidense (MALDEF).

El abogado de MALDEF, Ernest L. Herrera, acusó que el WSRC bipartidista de cinco miembros “desafortunadamente se une a una larga lista de autoridades estatales durante los últimos 20 años que han tratado de detener el creciente poder del voto latino... Le pedimos a un tribunal federal para darles a los latinos en el estado de Washington la oportunidad electoral que la Comisión les negó”.

El Valle de Yakima incluye dos condados de mayoría latina. Sin embargo, el WSRC dibujó mapas que dispersan esta mayoría en hasta cuatro Distritos Legislativos en un plan deliberado para diluir el voto latino. Los abogados acusaron que estos esquemas “violan intencionalmente la Sección 2 de la Ley de Derechos Electorales de 1965 que prohíbe la discriminación por motivos de raza, etnia e idioma”.

Los defensores del derecho al voto presentaron una demanda acusando a la estructura de poder de Yakima de un esquema racista para excluir a los latinos a través de la votación de toda la ciudad para concejales. Un tribunal ordenó a Yakima cambiar a la votación basada en distritos. El resultado fue la elección de dos concejales latinas, Carmen Méndez y Holly Cousens en la elección del 2 de noviembre de 2010.

El escrito legal de la demanda está lleno de documentación. Gran parte de esto fue obra del Dr. Matt A. Bar-

reto, profesor de Ciencias Políticas en UCLA. Hizo una investigación exhaustiva y acusó a los mapas dibujados por dos de los comisionados como “descifrar los libros de texto de la población latina en el condado de Yakima”. Ambos mapas dividen a la mitad la población votante latina mediante la creación de dos distritos legislativos: LD-14 y LD-15. Otro comisionado dividió la población votante latina en cuatro: LD-13, LD-14, LD-15 y LD-16. Un cuarto comisionado hizo lo mismo. Ninguno de los mapas tenía una población latina de más del 34%.

La mayoría de los votos latinos en el Valle de Yakima se diluyeron al dibujar mapas que incluían grandes porciones de los condados de Franklin, Benton y Adams que son abrumadoramente blancos. Están envenenados con la supremacía blanca.

El tema fue tan polémico que la comisión no pudo llegar a un acuerdo antes de la fecha límite. Finalmente, dibujaron un mapa del Distrito 15 que es 50.2% hispano, lo presentaron a la legislatura y lo aprobaron el 16 de noviembre de 2021. Lograron esta delgada mayoría latina al incorporar partes del condado de Adams, incluida la ciudad de Othello, con una gran población hispana. El problema es que la comunidad hispana en Othello tiene una larga historia de muy baja participación electoral.

MALDEF presentó la demanda solicitando la intervención del tribunal federal para defender los derechos de voto de Soto Palmer, Alberto Isaac Macias, Brenda Rodríguez García, Fabiola López, Caty Padilla, Evangelina Aguilar, Lizette Parra y decenas de miles más.

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