

ABC's The View

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11:28:54 a.m. Eastern

(...)

SUNNY HOSTIN: Senator, I'm actually happy that you're here. We have some things in common. You grew up in a single-family household, single mother household. I grew up with my both of my parents, but raised in the Bronx projects amidst a lot of poverty and violence. And you were the first black senator elected in the south since the reconstruction. That would be about – I think about 114 years. Yet you say that your life disproves leftist lies.

SEN. TIM SCOTT (R-SC): Yes.

HOSTIN: My question to you is: I'm the exception, right? You're the exception. Maybe even Ms. Whoopi Goldberg is the exception. But we are not the rule. And so, when it comes to racial inequality, it persists in five core aspects of life in the U.S.: economics, education, healthcare, criminal justice, and housing. At nearly every turn, these achievements were fought, threatened, and erased, most often by white violence. You have indicated that you don't believe in systemic racism. What's your definition of systemic racism?

SCOTT: Let me answer the question that you've answered -- asked.

HOSTIN: Or does it even exist in your mind?

SCOTT: Let me answer the question this way. One of the things I think about – and one of the reasons I'm on this show is because of the comments made frankly on this show that the only way for a young African American kid to be successful in this country is to be the exception and not the rule. That is a dangerous offensive disgusting message to send to our young people today, that the only way to succeed is by being the exception. I will tell you that if my life is the exception, I can't imagine --

HOSTIN: But it is.

SCOTT: But it's not, actually.

HOSTIN: It's been 114 years.

SCOTT: So, the fact of the matter is we've had an African American president, African American vice president, we've had two African Americans to be secretaries of the state. In my home city, the police chief is an African American who's now running for mayor. The head of the highway patrol for South Carolina is an African American.

HSOTIN: Still exceptions.

SCOTT: In 1975, there was about 15 percent unemployment in the African American community for the first time in the country it's under 5 percent.

HOSTIN: 40 percent homelessness of African Americans.

SCOTT: And 50 percent of the folks in our community --

HOSTIN: 13 percent of the population.

SCOTT: You asked the question. I've watched you on the show, that you like people to be deferral and respectful. So, I'm going to do the same thing.

HOSTIN: That is true.

SCOTT: So, here's what I'm going to suggest. I'm going to suggest the fact of the matter is that progress in America is palpable. It can be measured in generations.

I look back on the fact that my grandfather, born in 1921 in Sally, South Carolina, when he was on a sidewalk, a white person was coming, he had to step off and not make eye contact. That man believed then, with some doubt now, in the goodness of America, because he believed that faith in God, faith in himself, and faith in what the future could hold for his kids, would unleash opportunities in ways that you cannot imagine.

Every kid today can look -- just change the stations, and see how much progress has been made in this country. ABC, NBC, CBS, ESPN, CNN, Fox News, all have African American and Hispanic hosts. So, what I'm suggesting is that the yesterday's exception is today's rule. For us to --

HOSTIN: So, America has met its promise?

SCOTT: No. The concept of America is that we are going to become a more perfect union. But in fact, the challenges that we faced 50 years and 60 years ago should not be the same challenges that we face today.

And here's the way you measure that. When my mother was born, about 10 percent of African Americans got a high school degree. A diploma. Today, it's over 90 percent. When you look at the income -- when you look at the income that we've had

HOSTIN: That's an HBCU stat.

SCOTT: Well, listen, an HBCU stat is a good one, because one of the reasons I took the funding for HBCUs to the highest level in the history of the country and then I helped make it permanent, is because I believe that education is the closest thing to magic in America. So, I'm about making sure that our kids have as many opportunities to succeed as possible. So, one of the reasons why --

WHOOPIE GOLDBERG: I need an opportunity to --

[Crosstalk]

I have to go to break.

[Crosstalk]

We're coming back.

SCOTT (Stands up and quips): I'm just getting started. I want all people to see the success I've had.

GOLDBERG: We'll be right back.

SCOTT: Oh, okay.

(...)

11:37:34 a.m. Eastern

GOLDBERG: Welcome back. So, you know, I sat and I listened to everything you said.

SCOTT: Yes.

GOLDBERG: And I wonder why these conversations don't seem to be held with Republicans. All of the exceptional stuff you're talking about. And one of the reasons we continue to have new exceptionalism is because every time folks make 40 steps forward they get dragged 40 steps back.

So, how do we as a nation -- because as a nation we seemingly get on the right track, and then we go backwards. You as a black man, and as one of the -- are there two black --

[Crosstalk]

HOSTIN: Senators?

[Crosstalk]

ALYSSA FARAH GRIFFIN: Three now.

SCOTT: There are three. We're still counting Cory Booker. Okay? Cory and Warnock on one side and me on the other side.

GOLDBERG: So, that's three. But you have yourself have talked about when the police stopped you.

SCOTT: Absolutely.

GOLDBERG: So, how can you get your party to stop trying to stop the progression that people are making? Because that's what I complained about when I spoke about -- I want you to come out and say, "listen, the Republicans have these issues." So -- [gestures to Scott to speak]

SCOTT: I think humans have these issues.

GOLDBERG: Yeah.

SCOTT: The issue of discrimination that I have faced, I assume you've faced as well, is an issue of the heart. It's not Republicans or Democrats. Frankly, both sides of the aisle can do a better job on the issue of race. And frankly, my side of the aisle I think is doing a fabulous job of making progress. The question is how do we measure that progress.

HOSTIN: How is that?

SCOTT: Well, let me just give you a couple examples. So, this is good news. I thought you only had one question but I'll give you the answer to it anyway.

[Laughter]

GOLDBERG: That was me talking to you so I'd love that. Should I come next to her?

SCOTT: Come on over here. Come on over here. Let's have a conversation.

[Goldberg moves to sit with Hostin, laughter]

FARAH GRIFFIN: Come on, ladies.

GOLDBERG: Sit, sit, sit.

SCOTT: Let me give you a couple of short answers as I was talking with Ana about the fact that --

ANA NAVARRO: Yeah. Your back looks pretty damn good from here.

[Laughter, Scott flexes]

SCOTT: Anyways. The truth of the matter is when you look at progress in the Senate, especially from the Republican side, African American chiefs of staff on the Republican side, the only African American female chief of staff was mine. The current only chief of staff who happens to be female is mine. When I helped to rewrite the tax code in 2017, I focused on my growing-up experience, which was a single mother. I cut her taxes. Single mothers like mine, average income around \$40,000, by 73 percent.

HOSITN: But you're only one black senator out of 50.

SCOTT: We're talking about progress here.

FARAH GRIFFIN: There's only two with the Dems.

SCOTT: There's only two on the other side. There's only two on the other side.

[Crosstalk]

So, the truth is that when you measure success and progress in this nation, one of the things you have to do is look at the statistical realities. We brought African American unemployment when we cut the taxes down to the lowest level in the history of this country for the first time under six percent. It hit 5.4 percent.

HOSTIN: But you also gave billionaires a huge tax cut, and that didn't trickle down to the working people.

[Crosstalk]

NAVARRO: But Senator, if you want to talk about statistical realities. The statistical reality that we can't even argue with is that African Americans are, what, 14-15 percent in this country.

HOSTIN: 13 percent.

SCOTT: 13 percent.

NAVARRO: And they're three percent of the U.S. Senate. That is a statistical reality.

SCOTT: That is only one statistic that in actuality has been improving significantly in the last decade. Let's take a look at the number of African Americans that have served in the Senate in the last 10 years. Mo Cowan from Massachusetts. You have Cory Booker. You have myself. You have Kamala Harris. You have Warnock.

So, the fact of the matter is that in less than the last decade we've had about half of all the African Americans who've ever served in the Senate in the last decade, which means that this nation is making

measurable progress in real time. And if we focus on that, and continue to make progress, we will fulfill the notion that this is a nation that this is a nation that can become more perfect. And what I'm concerned about --

HOSTIN: Not without fixing the structures and the systemic racism that is embedded in this country!

[Applause]

SCOTT: We don't have to agree on the fact that your definition of systemic --

GOLDBERG: Carl, go tell him. Go tell him.

SCOTT: Tell it from the mountain.

CARL (stage director): We have to go to commercial. We'll come back.

SCOTT: I think y'all have commercial break whenever I get on --

[Outro music]

(...)