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Sen. Eastland Hits Critics Of Rehnquist

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Senator James O. Eastland (Dem-Miss.) said yesterday that two witnesses opposed to the Supreme Court nomination of William H. Rehnquist were guilty of "character assassination."

Eastland, chairman of the Judiciary Committee, leveled the charge at Joseph Rauh, spokesman for the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, and Clarence Mitchell, representative of the NAACP.

The two quoted reports of possible connections between Rehnquist and the rightist John Birch Society at Rehnquist's confirmation hearing earlier this week.

"When presented with the personal affidavit of Rehnquist, categorically denying that he was ever a member of the John Birch Society, Rauh and Mitchell insinuated that Rehnquist should not be believed and that his unequivocal denial could suggest that he had some connection with the group," Eastland said in a 21-page rebuttal of several statements the two made in oppsing Rehnquist.

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