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THE TRUTH UNBRIDED

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Civil Rights icon Coretta Scott King wrote the letter in 1986 urging a Republican-controlled Senate Judiciary Committee to reject then U.S. Attorney Sessions' nomination for a district court judgeship. (Library of Congress/Wikimedia Commons)

## King letter and statement criticize Sessions prosecution

By Jesse J. Holland  
WASHINGTON (AP) - Coretta Scott King would consider it an affront that Sen. Elizabeth Warren was rebuked on the Senate floor for quoting her letter opposing a federal judgeship for new Attorney General Jeff Sessions, the civil rights leader's daughter says.

The Senate's GOP majority voted to silence Warren with a highly unusual rebuke Feb. 7 as she was reading King's letter. Several male senators then stood up and read from the same letter without drawing objections.

Bernice King, CEO of The King Center in Atlanta, said her mother, the widow of civil rights icon Martin Luther King Jr., would have considered that an "affront to women."

"These actions on our Senate floor reflect the continual blight of a patriarchal order in our nation and world," she said.

In the 1986 letter and statement, King said Sessions' actions as a federal prosecutor in Alabama were "reprehensible" and said he used his office "in a shabby attempt to intimidate and frighten elderly black voters."

King's letter and statement never appeared in Sessions' hearing record in front of the Senate Judiciary Committee. Sessions was eventually rejected as a federal judge, but went on to become Alabama's U.S. senator. Sessions was confirmed by the Senate as attorney general on Feb. 8.

The NAACP, whose leaders have been arrested protesting Sessions' nomination, said in a statement it would ask Congress to monitor Sessions carefully "to ensure that the senator does what he is supposed to do to protect the vote and to end voter suppression and police brutality."

"Should Sessions prove to be anything but a fair and impartial defender of liberty and justice, our community will hold him fully accountable," National Urban League President Marc H. Morial added.

In her letter, King said a previous appointment kept her from being in Washington personally to speak against Sessions.

"I request that my statement, as well as this letter be made a part of the hearing record," she asked then Senate Judiciary Chairman Strom Thurmond, R-S.C., who was an avowed segregationist in his earlier life. She copied in Joe Biden, then Democratic senator from Delaware, who would go on to be vice president under President Barack Obama.

A scan of Sessions' hearing in front of the Senate Judiciary Committee record shows no mention of King's statement, her letter or any indication she opposed Sessions' nomination as a federal judge.

Jim Manley, a Democratic consultant and former top Senate aide, called it "unusual" that the letter would not be included. "I think it probably highlights what a flashpoint racial politics played in Sen. Sessions' nomination years ago," Manley said.

But Thaddeus Strom, former Thurmond chief of staff and chief counsel and staff director of the Senate Judiciary Committee, attributed the absence to a "clerical error."

"Certainly it wasn't by design," Strom said. "It's a perfunctory matter to include letters and statements in support and opposition to nominees and these are often submitted by senators on the committee during the hearing. Counsel for Republicans and Democrats would have reviewed the record before it was final and in this instance it appears the ball was dropped."

There was likely nothing nefarious about the letter not being included in the record, added Armstrong Williams, a former Thurmond staffer. There was no hostility between Thurmond and King during that period, said Williams, who has a photo of himself, King and Thurmond together.

While he did not remember what happened with the Sessions letter, Williams said he remembered Mrs. King successfully lobbying Thurmond to keep federal funding for the Martin Luther King Jr. national holiday, and them sitting together at then-President George H.W. Bush's inauguration.

"Mrs. King came to the conclusion that people could change, and it started with Senator Thurmond," Williams said.

King, in her statement, pointed to Sessions' prosecution of three

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## Opposition to Trump, HB2 beef up 'Moral March on Raleigh'

By Gary D. Robertson

RALEIGH (AP) - A massive crowd attended Saturday's (Feb. 11) rights rally in North Carolina's capital, beefed up by protesters energized in opposition to President Donald Trump and to a state law limiting LGBT rights and which public bathrooms transgender people can use.

Organizers of the "Moral March on Raleigh," led by the state chapter of the NAACP, has largely focused on state government during its 11 years of existence, more recently against the conservative-leaning agenda Republicans have implemented.

Saturday, Feb. 11, had a more national emphasis, particularly with the arrival of Trump in the White House. Speakers at the end of the downtown march near the old Capitol Building lamented Trump's support to repeal President Barack Obama's signature health care overhaul and Trump's hard-line stance on immigration.

Trump last month signed an executive order that barred anyone from seven Muslim-majority countries for 90 days. Although a federal court has blocked its enforcement, marchers kept the issue front and center by chanting "No hate, no fear, refugees are welcome here."

"I think it's a shame," said Laurence Brunet, 30, a Canadian researcher living in Carrboro for just over a year. "Any country is so stronger if we just accept everyone."

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Protestors at the Moral Monday March in Raleigh led by the N.C. NAACP. Ronald Parker Artijep Photography

## Scott, Senate's sole black Republican, defends Sessions



Sen. Tim Scott

By Andrew Taylor

WASHINGTON (AP) - Sen. Tim Scott, the Senate's lone African-American Republican, on Feb. 8 offered a personal and passionate defense of Sen. Jeff Sessions, President Donald Trump's embattled choice for attorney general.

Scott, a South Carolina conservative, noted the racist messages he had received since announcing his support for Sessions. He spoke of his personal experiences in introducing the Alabama Republican to African-American pastors at a racial forum in Charleston.

And he read the statements of black Alabama Democrats vouching for Sessions, who as attorney general will be the nation's top law enforcement official.

Scott said the South is still working through racial differences and said "Jeff Sessions has earned my support and I will hold him accountable if and when we disagree."

Scott read messages in which he was called an "Uncle Tom" - and worse - and said that "as I read through some of the comments of my friends on the left, you will wonder if I ever had an experience as a black person in America."

"I just wish that my friends who call themselves liberals would want tolerance for all Americans."

Scott speaks on the floor less often than many senators, but has previously given a series of speeches on race, including one last summer recalling his numerous experiences getting pulled over by police, often simply for driving a late-model car in "the wrong neighborhood."

He said liberals are quick to jump to conclusions about the actions and motives of others when it comes to matters of race.

"Too often, too many - particularly on the right - are found guilty until proven innocent on issues of race, issues of fairness," said Scott, one of three African Americans in the Senate. "I just wish that my friends who call themselves liberals would want tolerance for all Americans."

The other African Americans in the Senate are Democrats Cory Booker of New Jersey and Kamala Harris of California.

The Senate voted to confirm Sessions early Wednesday evening (Feb. 8).

## Slain Missouri KKK leader's wife held on suspicion of murder

LEADWOOD, Mo. (AP) - The wife of a Ku Klux Klan leader who was found fatally shot next to a river in eastern Missouri has been jailed on suspicion of first-degree murder.

An official at the St. Francois County Jail told the St. Louis Post-Dispatch Monday, Feb. 13, that 44-year-old Malissa Ancona is in custody. Charges have not been filed.

A family that was fishing found the body of her husband, 51-year-old Frank Ancona, on Feb. 11 along the Big River near the tiny town of Belgrade, about 80 miles southwest of St. Louis. An autopsy conducted Feb. 12 revealed he died of a gunshot to the head.

Calls Feb. 13 requesting comment from nearby Leadwood police and the St. Francois County Sheriff's Department, as well as the county prosecutor, were not immediately returned.

The Park Hills Daily Journal said investigators placed yellow police tape around Ancona's home in Leadwood Feb. 11, believing he was killed there. His safe had been broken into and the contents removed. Several of Ancona's guns were missing, police told the Daily Journal.

Washington County Sheriff Zach Jacobsen said a U.S. Forest Service employee found Ancona's car Feb. 9 on a service road near Potosi, about 30 miles from where his body was eventually found. Ancona was reported missing Feb. 10 after his employer told Leadwood police that Ancona had not shown up for work for two days.

Investigators found evidence of a burn pile near Ancona's abandoned vehicle, Jacobsen said.

Prior to the discovery of Ancona's body, Malissa Ancona told police her husband had left the state on a delivery job. She said he planned to file for divorce when he returned.

Ancona called himself an imperial wizard with the Traditionalist American Knights of the Ku Klux Klan. A website for the group includes an image of Ancona in a white hood and robe standing in front of a burning cross. The website describes the group as a "White Patriotic Christian organization that bases its roots back to the Ku