

# A Tale of 2 Letters: What Coretta Scott King Had to Say About Immigration

A 1986 letter to the Senate Judiciary Committee written by the late Coretta Scott King opposing the nomination of Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.) to become a U.S. District Court judge made a lot of headlines Wednesday.

Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) attempted to read the letter, leading to her being censured for violating Rule XIX of the Rules of the U.S. Senate. After that, the letter was repeatedly referenced, and was eventually read into the record by Sen. Tom Udall (D-N.M.).

The letter reinforces the Democrats' narrative that Sessions is a bigot who is unprepared to rein in President Donald Trump, who is a misogynist and a bigot. But harping on that letter just might blow up in their faces by shining a light on another letter the civil rights icon wrote to another senator.

In 1991, King wrote a letter to U.S. Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) regarding a bill he had offered that would have removed sanctions against businesses that employ illegals. The letter stated:

Dear Senator Hatch:

We, the undersigned members of the Black Leadership Forum, write to urge you to postpone introduction of your employer sanctions repeal legislation until we have had an opportunity to report to you what we believe to be the devastating impact the repeal would have on the economic condition of un- and semi-skilled workers—a disproportionate number of whom are African-American and Hispanic; and until we have had the opportunity to propose to you and to our

Hispanic brothers and sisters, what we believe could be a number of effective means of eliminating the discrimination occasioned by employer sanctions without losing the protection sanctions provided for U.S. workers, especially minority workers.

The Black Leadership Forum is a coalition of the chief executive officers of the nation's oldest and largest African-American organizations and coalitions. We represent hundreds of thousands of African-American registered voters nationwide. Each of our organizations seeks the full and unfettered participation of African-Americans, other disadvantaged minorities and the poor in all sectors of our society. We have led and continue to lead the national effort to open and include into the American mainstream, "locked-out" persons of all races, ethnicities and socioeconomic strata. We find intolerable discrimination based on race, color, national origin, gender, religion, physical or mental capacity and socioeconomic condition.

While we have divergent views on the complex issue of employer sanctions, the undersigned Black Leadership Forum members and the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement are united in three aspects:

We are fully committed to the elimination of the root causes of national origin discrimination under the Immigration Reform & Control Act of 1986, as well as discriminatory impact.

We believe that there are a number of effective ways to remedy discrimination resulting from IRCA without tampering with employer sanctions. Some measures we support are contained in the Report and Recommendations of the Taskforce on IRCA-Related Discrimination and in the 1990 GAO Report on Immigration Reform, Employer Sanctions and the Question of Discrimination.

Finally, we desire to discuss with you and other members of Congress the importance of employer sanctions to the economic security of African- American and Hispanic workers.

We are concerned, Senator Hatch, that your proposed remedy to the employer sanctions-based discrimination, namely, the elimination of employer sanctions, will cause another problem—the revival of the pre-1986 discrimination against black and brown U.S. and documented workers, in favor of cheap labor—the undocumented workers. This would undoubtedly exacerbate an already severe economics crisis in communities where there are large numbers of new immigrants.

Finally, we are concerned that some who support the repeal of employer sanctions are being “discrimination” as a guise for their desire to abuse undocumented workers and to introduce cheap labor into the U.S. workforce. America does not have a labor shortage. With roughly 7 million people unemployed and double that number discouraged from seeking work, the removal of employer sanctions threatens to add additional U.S. workers to the rolls of the unemployed. Additionally, it would add to competition for scarce jobs and drive down wages. Moreover, the repeal of employer sanctions will inevitably in which most new immigrants cluster—cities which are already suffering housing shortages and insufficient human needs services.

Senator Hatch, we believe that what this country needs is not to prematurely scrap employer sanctions; but rather, we need education and training programs designed to prepare the unemployed, especially African-Americans, Hispanics and others at greatest risk, to meet the market demands of tomorrow.

While not a panacea for the nation’s illegal immigration problems, employer sanctions are one necessary means to stopping the exploitation of vulnerable workers and the undercutting of American jobs and living standards.

Prior to repealing employer sanctions, please permit us to document our case and to present to you viable alternatives to repeal.

One of us will contact you in the very near future to ascertain your willingness to delay introduction of your repeal legislation until you have had an opportunity to hear from us.

We thank you for your consideration.

If you haven't heard about this second letter in the liberal mainstream media lately, are you surprised? It would seem King's words are only relevant to a discussion when they advance the Democratic Party's political agenda and the media narrative that accompanies it.

In forcing her 1986 words into the national consciousness, while ignoring her 1991 words, their actions beg a simple question: Are they invoking skin color just to advance their own political agenda?

In an interview Wednesday afternoon with FOX Business Network's Neil Cavuto, Mrs. King's niece, Dr. Alveda King, said that letter was used to invoke emotions against the Sessions nomination. Describing her aunt as a peacemaker, she said Coretta Scott King would have given the senator credit for the civil rights actions he took as a U.S. attorney and as attorney general of Alabama.

"If she could look at Senator Sessions' record today, with integrity, she would say, 'Well, he has worked to prosecute the Klu Klux Klan, he has worked to desegregate public schools.' So, it's almost like a bait-and-switch. Stir up emotions, use the name King—my name is Alveda King—stir up people's emotions, play the race card, which is what they're attempting to do."

In a 2014 interview with Breitbart News, Alveda King said she

agreed with the sentiments in the 1991 letter. She added that illegals have a “devastating impact” on African-Americans by taking jobs away from them.

“I did go down to the border with Glenn Beck because actually I was concerned about the children,” she said. “I do not agree with open borders, and you’ve got people who take these little children, cut them up and fill them with drugs, then sew them back up and send them over here. I did want the children to be fed, I wanted them to have a warm meal and try to get them back home. I do not support open borders and I certainly agree with my aunt on that.”

In that interview, Alveda King said the African-American community needs to use the ballot to change the liberal policies that are hurting them. She said:

*We have to now in this century understand what my uncle and father talked about, which is that we are part of an equal community where everyone has an equal place in society. Giving people government handouts without dignity, that’s not working. Giving people HHS mandate healthcare with free contraceptives and free abortions, that’s not going to help people. So we want to do more. We want our children better educated. We want better education, more jobs, opportunity, so people can contribute to society—so those are our goals.*

Years before it had come to an end, Alveda King argued that President Barack Obama’s tenure would result in life becoming dramatically worse for African-Americans.

*The data is going to indicate black people lost out in every single leading economic category during the Obama years,” she said. “That’s terrible. There’s nothing that’s been done to enhance our lives but there’s all sorts of things that were done to [give us stuff] like free access to abortion, free birth control in a healthcare clinic. But that’s nothing that’s going to help us economically, intellectually,*

*physically health-wise and otherwise—there's nothing being done for us. Black home ownership is 31 percent less than the rest of the country. Poverty rates have increased from 12 percent to 16.1 percent. Income for blacks is \$20,000 less than the national average. Thirty-five percent of young blacks are out of work.*