

This Is What a Senator Said That Resulted in Her Being Gagged by Her Colleagues

Rule XIX of the Rules of the U.S. Senate prohibit any member from disparaging or impugning the reputation of another. {eo}

U.S. Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.), known for her frequently vitriolic speeches, learned that the hard way while railing against President Donald Trump and his nominee for attorney general, Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.). While she attempted to read from a letter submitted by Coretta Scott King in 1986, when Sessions was being considered for a federal judgeship, Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) invoked Rule XIX.

In particular, McConnell took exception to the phrase that implied Sessions had “used the awesome power of his office to chill the free exercise of the vote by black citizens.” He demanded that Warren be “in order.”

Sen. Steve Daines (R-Mont.), who was the presiding officer at the time, agreed with McConnell, ruling Warren in violation of the order and forcing her to sit down. She instead asked for permission to continue reading from the letter, which would require unanimous consent, but McConnell objected.

Warren then asked for a vote to appeal the decision but lost on a 50-43 vote. As a result, she will no longer be allowed to speak for the remainder of the post-cloture debate over Sessions’ nomination. See a video of the exchange above.

As was the case with the nomination of Education Secretary Betsy DeVos, Democrats are forcing the Senate to use the maximum amount of debate time before Sessions’ confirmation vote. That vote is currently scheduled for 6:50 p.m. EST tonight, once the 30-hour debate limit has been reached. {eo}