

From: Hayden Grooms
To: 'Exner, Michele (Scott)' <Michele_Exner@scott.senate.gov>
Date: 2/9/2017 3:55:20 PM
Subject: RE: ICYMI: Sen. Scott speaks on Rule 19, Jeff Sessions, tolerance, race and moving forward as an American family

I was hoping that I could get access to a video file so that I can edit the file to a 2-3 minute video that we can share on our social media sites.

From: Exner, Michele (Scott) [mailto:Michele_Exner@scott.senate.gov]
Sent: Thursday, February 09, 2017 3:46 PM
To: Hayden Grooms
Subject: FW: ICYMI: Sen. Scott speaks on Rule 19, Jeff Sessions, tolerance, race and moving forward as an American family

Hi Hayden,

Here is the speech. Sorry it took so long!

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Subject: ICYMI: Sen. Scott speaks on Rule 19, Jeff Sessions, tolerance, race and moving forward as an American family

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February 9, 2017

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ICYMI: Sen. Scott speaks on Rule 19, Jeff Sessions, tolerance, race and moving forward as an American family

Washington — Yesterday, U.S. Senator Tim Scott (R-SC) delivered a powerful speech on the current discussion about race and his support for Senator Jeff Sessions to be the country's next Attorney General. Click on the link to watch entire speech. Full transcript is available below.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NzIq2yv4O4c&feature=youtu.be>

Full transcript:

Thank you, Mr. President. Before I get into my speech regarding Senator Sessions, I want to talk a little bit about what occurred last night.

First, there is no doubt in my mind that the letter written by Coretta Scott King could, and perhaps should be read, by each and every member of this chamber. Regardless of if you disagree with her conclusions, her standing in the history of our nation means her voice should be heard.

What I took issue with last night and the true violation of Rule 19 in my eyes were the remarks shared last night originally stated by Senator Kennedy, not Coretta Scott King.

Senator Kennedy.

Whether you like it or not, this body has rules, and we all should govern ourselves according to the rules.

Last night, there was no doubt that emotions were very high, and I'm not necessarily happy with where that has left us today.

The Senate needs to function. We need to have comity in this body if we are to work for the American people.

This should not be about Republicans and Democrats. It's not about us. It's about the American people.

And if we remember that point as we move forward, our nation will be able to heal where we hurt. We'll be able to disagree without being disagreeable.

This should be the norm, not a unique experience in public discourse. Before I decided to give this speech, I had the privilege last night around midnight of having to sit in that chair, Mr. President, and preside.

And my good friend, Cory Booker, was making an eloquent presentation about where we are on issues of race in this nation. He was talking about the South. He was talking about the pain and the suffering, the misery. And today as I want to share my thoughts on Jeff Sessions and how I've come to my conclusion, I thought it was important for me to not try to persuade people, but to simply inform, because this issue is not the issue simply about our next attorney general.

This is really an issue about all of us. Not all of us as senators, but all of us as members of the American family.

This is an issue that digs deep to the core of our souls, deep into the core of our nation, deep into who we can be, who we should be, and how we will get there.

So my objective here as I speak will not be to somehow persuade the other side that your decision is wrong. I don't think that is my responsibility or my intention.

My goal isn't even to persuade those who believe that Jeff Sessions will not be a good U. S. Attorney General, that they're wrong.

I simply want to share information. I want to share facts. I want to share, as Paul Harvey used to say, "the rest of the story."

Because if you read the news reports, you walk away with a clear picture based on facts but not necessarily a clear picture based on truth.

There has been a distortion in many arenas, in many echo chambers about who he is and why I support him.

My good friend, Cory Booker, last night spoke about a true American hero, John Lewis. And John Lewis is an American hero. I know that this may or may not be popular with everyone in the chamber or everyone in America on the conservative side or the liberal side, but the reality of it is simply this:

He was beaten within an inch of his life so that I would have the privilege not to stand in the chamber, but to vote, to simply vote.

We should all thank God for the sacrifices of men and women so that people like myself and Cory Booker and Kamala Harris would be allowed one day not to simply vote, but to serve in the most unique, powerful and one of the most important legislative bodies in the world today.

It is sacrifices of men and women of color who fought against injustices.

I stand, we stand as a nation on the shoulders of these giants.

And I know that I don't have to remind my mother or my family, but just as a reminder to those who are listening to the conversation that when I leave the United States Senate one day, I'm still going to be black, an African-American.

Black every day, black every way, and there's no doubt.

This is an important part of the conversation, because 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. And I want to get to that in just a few minutes.

God in his infinite wisdom made me black, born in Charleston, South Carolina, for a purpose. I am blessed to be who I am, and I'm equally blessed to be a Charlestonian.

Our country, the south, and specifically my state has suffered through difficult and challenging times around the issue of race.

My grandfather who passed away at 94 years old last January, knew a very different south.

I remember listening to him about his experiences of having to step off of a sidewalk when white folks were coming. He learned early in life never look a white person in the eyes. He was in his 40's in the 1960's. His whole life view is paradigm, was painted with a broad brush.

Separation, segregation, humiliation and challenges.

It was in my home city of Charleston where the Civil War began.

It was in my home city of Charleston where nearly 40% of all the slaves that came to America would come through Charleston, South Carolina.

It was a Charlestonian who came up with the concept written into our constitution, three-fifths of a man.

Charlestonian.

It was also Charlestonians who in 2010 had a choice between Strom Thurmond son and a young – I use that word liberally – young African-American guy named Tim Scott.

And the evolution that has occurred in the south could be seen very clearly on this day in Charleston, the very first shots of the Civil War -- Charleston.

They gave me the privilege of representing them in congress over the son of Strom Thurmond.

Over the son and the namesake of one of the most popular governors in South Carolina, Carol Campbell Jr.

I thank God that the South Carolina that I have come to know, the south that I've had the experience to enjoy is a different south.

It is a different Charleston than my grandfather knew in his 94 years. But my life has not been one of privilege and promise. As I said just a few nights ago, born in a single-parent

household, living in poverty, nearly flunked out of high school.

I've been called everything that you can think of from a racial perspective. Good, not too often. Bad, very consistently. So I understand that there is room for progress. There is a need for us to crystallize what we're fighting about, who we're fighting for, and how we're going to get there.

This is an important day and an important issue.

The U.S. Attorney General is perhaps one of the most important decisions I will make about the cabinet of President Trump.

I'll tell you that for me, this has been a challenging journey, one that I've not taken lightly because as I said earlier, I'm going to be black when I leave this body. So when I think about some of the comments and some of the challenges for Jeff Sessions around the 1986 judicial process, around the trial of the kkk, and the trial of the Turner family, an African-American couple that were defendants that he brought to court.

I've heard it and I wanted to know more about what it is we're talking about, not by reading it in the paper but by calling folks in Alabama, and understanding with new eyes who Jeff Sessions is; not the guy I serve with but the guy who will have the most powerful position in law enforcement.

I wanted to know firsthand who he is before he was nominated and how he would respond in a room filled with African-American leaders.

Myself and my best friend in Congress, Trey Gowdy have held for a very long time throughout South Carolina, meetings with African-American pastors and leaders coming together with law enforcement to try and bridge the gap that is obviously -- bridge the gap that obviously exists between law enforcement and African-American leaders.

I brought Jeff Sessions down to see from a distance how he interacts with these African-American pastors, and hear the tough questions on Walter Scott and other issues. So that I could have an appreciation and affinity for how the justice department, under his leadership, would act.

I take this responsibility seriously.

I wonder if my friends in the chamber have had a chance to see what others think; not the political echo chamber, not the organizations but everyday people.

So I had that experience and I'll tell you that without any question, the conclusion that I've drawn, it's pretty clear conclusion. I'm glad that I dug into the issue. I'm glad I took the time to know Jeff sessions the best I can from what I've read from 1986, what I saw in my home city of Charleston with the provocative history on race.

We are at a defining moment in our country, not because of the U.S. Attorney -- or the

attorney general. Not because of the debate we're going through in this body, but because our country is being pulled apart from extremes on both ends.

This is not healthy for our country.

Too often too many particularly on the right are found guilty until proven innocent on issues of race, issues of fairness.

I say that because as I think about some of the comments that have come into my office over the last several weeks, that I'm used to being attacked.

If you sign up to be a black conservative, the chances are very high you will be attacked. It comes with the territory. And I've had it for 20 years, two decades.

But my friends and my staff, they're not used to the level of animus that comes in from the liberal left that suggests that I somehow are not helpful to the cause of liberal America, and therefore I am not helpful to black America.

Because they see those as one in the same.

I brought some of the pages of chats that I have from folks --actually the comments I get from Twitter about my support of Jeff Sessions.

Mr. Tracy Johnson, @tracyj sends in Uncle Tim Scott. Everyone in South Carolina who happens to be a left-winger knows that Tim Scott is an Uncle Tom. S. is documented, S is not for Scott. It is for fertilizer.

@sscott says a white man in a black body, Tim Scott backs Jeff Sessions for Attorney General.

My chief of staff, the only -- until three weeks ago, the only African-American chief of staff in the United States Senate out of a hundred is the Chief of Staff for a Republican.

The second African-American Chief of Staff in the United States Senate is the Chief of Staff of a Republican.

Yet they say of my Chief of Staff, she's "high yella," an implication that she's just not black enough.

I go on to read from folks who wanted to share their opinions about my endorsing Jeff Sessions.

You are a disgrace to the black race.

Anthony Burnum at @burmanr says you are an Uncle Tom Scott. You're for Sessions. How does a black man turn on his own? Anthony B. from @politicalart says senator Tim Scott is not an Uncle Tom. He doesn't have a shred of honor. He's a house Negro like the one in Django.

He also writes -- I guess Anthony Burnum has been fairly active recently on my Twitter feed. I'm a complete horror. A black man who's a racist against black people. Big Uncle - Uncle Tom piece of fertilizer. Think for yourselves. You are a disgrace to your race.

I left out all the ones that used the "N" word. Just felt like that would not be appropriate.

You see, what I'm surprised by just a smidgen is that the liberal left that speaks and desires for all of us to be tolerant -- all of us to be tolerant do not want to be tolerant of anyone that disagrees with where they are coming from.

So the definition of tolerance is that all Americans -- isn't that all Americans experience a high level of tolerance. It's that all Americans that agree with them experiences this so-called tolerance.

I'm not saying this because it bothers me because frankly as I said, two decades of this, you don't necessarily get used to it but you don't find yourself as offended by it all.

I just wish that my friends who call themselves liberals would want tolerance for all Americans, including conservative Americans. I just wish that my liberal friends who are self-described liberal would want to be innocent until proven guilty and not guilty until proven innocent.

So back to my findings on Jeff Sessions.

I brought Jeff sessions to Charleston, to pastors and you can read it in the Post and Courier, the local newspaper.

Pastors said that Jeff Sessions was warm.

And engaging.

And competent.

Now, I will say that the response from the NAACP and NAN, the National Action Network about the meeting that I had with the pastors, the African-American pastors, that it was outrageous that I would invite African-American pastors to meet with this guy. They didn't have an invitation though I invited two of their leaders. I didn't tell anyone who's coming because I wanted folks to walk in the room and make their own decisions, come to their own conclusions. They decided not to show up.

Maybe it was because a conservative invited them. I don't know why.

I wanted everyone to have a chance.

And they did.

It was interesting.

Here's some other interesting facts that I have not seen often in the press, which I think is

very important for all of us to engage into a conversation around this nation about race, and justice, to only have part of the story to me is just an unfortunate reality that we should get used to, that I haven't gotten used to, but the reality of it is 50 years ago in 1966, Senator Sessions -- I don't think he was senator at the time -- campaigned against George Wallace's wife for Governor.

As a senator, Jeff Sessions voted in favor of a 30-year extension of the Civil Rights Act.

He was one of only 17 Republicans to support the first black Attorney General Eric Holder.

He spearheaded the effort to award the congressional gold medal to Rosa Parks, an Alabama native and Civil Rights icon.

He worked as Cory Booker, my good friend from New Jersey said last night as I presided, that he and Jeff Sessions worked wonderfully well together in awarding the Congressional Gold Medal to the foot soldiers of the Civil Rights Movement in Selma, Alabama.

And here's another part of the story that just hasn't seemed to break through the threshold of our national media on Jeff Sessions' support within the black community.

I was very surprised as I started making phone calls to leaders in Alabama who were black and Democrats, what I started hearing about Jeff Sessions.

I'll start off with an Alabama native Condoleezza Rice, who is not a Democrat, but who is an Alabama native.

And she said, "Sessions has worked hard to heal the wounds in Alabama brought on by the prejudice and injustice against the descendants of slaves."

Willy Huntley, an African-American assistant U.S. Attorney under Jeff Sessions, now an attorney in Alabama, Mobile, Alabama, has known Jeff Sessions for more than 30 years and said in an interview that he's never encountered racial insensitivity from Sessions in the three decades they've known each other.

Alabama Senator and Democratic Leader Quinton Ross said of Jeff Sessions, and I quote, "We've talked about things from civil rights to race relations, and I think anyone once you begin a position like that, actually a partnership has to go aside because you represent the United States and all the people. I feel confident that Jeff Sessions will be an Attorney General that will look at it from all perspectives to just do what's right for the citizens of the United States."

Now that is from an African-American Democrat leader in the Alabama state senate, Quinton Ross.

From the former Obama Administration Surgeon General Regina Benjamin – "I think

he'll be fine. I consider him a friend. At least he will listen as Attorney General. My hope is that he will do what's best for all of the American people."

Former deputy attorney general Larry Thompson says this. Larry's 71 years old so we're not talking about folks who grew up in my new south that I talked about earlier that still we're working through it but boy, we've changed. This is a 71-year-old who says of Jeff Sessions, "he doesn't have a racist bone in his body. He says, I've been an African-American man for 71 years. I think I know a racist when I see one. Jeff is far from being a racist. He is a good person, a decent person."

Gerald Reynolds, former chairman on the U.S. Commission of civil rights – "During my discussions with Senator Sessions and his staff, it was clear that the Senator has a strong interest in ensuring our nation's antidiscrimination laws are vigorously enforced. Senator Sessions is a man of great character and integrity with a commitment to fairness and equal justice under the law."

Just a few more.

Fred Gray.

Fred Gray is an iconic figure in Civil Rights for those who may not be familiar with him. Fred Gray is an African-American Civil Rights attorney.

He represented the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

He represented Rosa Parks.

He represented the Tuskegee men who were exploited in the experiment from the government, and this is what he says.

This letter is from 2016.

"What would be more noteworthy for the State of Alabama than having an Alabamian follow in the footsteps of the late Mr. Justice Hugo Black? Previously I have expressed appreciation for your acts herein stated. I look forward to working with you in any future capacity in which the Lord permits you to serve."

That is a quote from a letter that he wrote to Jeff Sessions.

We are talking about a hero of the Civil Rights era.

We're talking about the lawyer for Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks and the Tuskegee men.

We are not talking about someone who doesn't understand and appreciate the weight and the importance of civil rights in this nation.

William Smith, who was hired as the first African-American Republican Chief Council to

the Senate Judiciary Committee by Jeff Sessions, trendsetter.

“Jeff Sessions is a man who cared for me, who looked out for me, who had my best interests in mind. So anybody who says anything different simply doesn't know Jeff Sessions.”

One last statement because this is an important one from my perspective.

So I mentioned earlier that there was a case against a couple, the Turner couple, where Jeff Sessions was the prosecutor. And the Turners were being prosecuted for some voting -- voter rights issues.

This -- and interestingly enough, what you don't hear in the news, by the way, the case was brought by other African-Americans in Alabama against an African-American couple, the Turners.

This is from Albert Turner, Jr., the son of the two defendants in that case.

‘While I respect the deeply held positions of other Civil Rights advocates who oppose Senator Sessions, I believe it is important for me to speak out with regard to Senator Sessions' personally. First, let me be clear. Senator Sessions and I respectfully disagree on some issues. That won't change when he is the Attorney General of the United States. And I expect that there will be times as it is with all politicians when we will legitimately disagree and I will be required by my conscience to speak out. I look forward to those constructive debates if necessary. However, despite our political differences, the Senator and I share certain Alabama and American values, including love of our state, its people, and our country. I have known Senator Sessions for many years. Beginning with the voter fraud case in Perry County in which my parents were defendants. My differences in policy and ideology with him do not translate to personal malice. He is not a racist. As I have said before, at no time then or now has Jeff Sessions said anything derogatory about my family. He was a prosecutor at the federal level with a job to do. He was presented with evidence by a local district attorney that he relied on, and his office presented the case. That's what prosecutors do. I believe him when he says he was simply doing his job.’

Jeff Sessions has worked on civil rights cases. The KKK murderer, Henry Hayes in 1981.

Jeff Sessions has worked with the Department of Justice attorneys, F.B.I., count investigators to solve the murder of a 19-year-old African-American, Michael Donald.

Sessions, U.S. Attorney's office prosecuted Tiger Knowles as an accomplice obtaining a guilty plea in a life sentence in federal court after hard investigative work.

Sessions shifted the case of the KKK murderer Henry Hayes to the state court where he received the death penalty, which was not available at that time at the federal level.

U.S.A. v. Benny Jack Hayes, another case against the KKK that Jeff Sessions participated in. In Conecuh County in 1983, Jeff Sessions joined in bringing the first lawsuit in the history of the Department of Justice to stop the suppression of African-American voting rights.

In the United States v. Conecuh County the D.O.J. Civil Rights Division along with Jeff Sessions sued white Conecuh County officials including the care of the local Republican Party.

Finally Dallas County, 1978.

The Department of Justice used Dallas County, Alabama, to replace or sue -- excuse me -- to replace its at-large election system and go to a single-member district so that African-Americans would have a better chance to be elected.

Jeff Sessions supported it.

The ACLU supported it. And the D.O.J. Civil Rights Division They were successful.

And finally, on the criminal justice issue...that I support.

According to Senator Dick Durbin, who said during the confirmation hearing that Jeff Sessions saved thousands upon thousands of years of black men's lives because of his push to reduce the disparity between crack and powder cocaine from 100 to 1 to where it is today.

Jeff Sessions even fought against the Bush Administration to bring that disparity down.

In conclusion, as I reflect on the brave men and women who have shaped this country, who have fought for my freedom, for me to participate fully in this republic, the greatest experiment of self-governing the world has ever known.

We have an obligation to judge a man not by the color of his skin nor by the state of his birth, but by the story his life tells and by the content of his character.

Jeff Sessions has earned my support, and I will hold him accountable if and when we disagree moving forward.

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