



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Marisol Alcántara

Senator Marisol Alcántara Condemns Attorney General's Racist Statements about Dominican-Americans

MARISOL ALCANTARA February 9, 2017

| ISSUE: **RACE, IMMIGRATION**

Senator Marisol Alcántara (D-Manhattan) issued a statement today condemning the confirmation of Senator Jefferson Beauregard Sessions as Attorney General of the United States.

“As an immigrant to this country, a black Latina, and a Dominican American, I feel triply victimized by the confirmation of Jeff Sessions as Attorney General of the United States. On Tuesday night, the world watched as Majority Leader Mitch McConnell silenced Senator Elizabeth Warren on the Senate floor when she tried to read the words of Coretta Scott King, Martin Luther King Jr.'s late wife, opposing Senator Sessions. As King wrote: “Sessions has used the awesome powers of his office in a shabby attempt to intimidate and frighten elderly black voters”. As the U.S. Attorney in Alabama, Senator Sessions showed a criminal indifference to the civil rights of people of color in his state, and an active desire to suppress the vote among people of color. His history of approving comments about the KKK, George Wallace, and the Confederacy should be immediate disqualifiers for a cabinet-level official in the 21st century.

His bigotry is not confined to African Americans, but is somehow even more toxic against Dominican Americans like myself. In 2006, Senator Sessions completely dismissed the many

contributions of Dominican immigrants to this country on the Senate floor. His comments are below:

“Fundamentally, almost no one coming from the Dominican Republic to the United States is coming here because they have a provable skill that would benefit us and that would indicate their likely success in our society.”[1]

Besides being racist, this statement is demonstrably untrue. The contributions of Dominican Americans to the American fabric spans every sector of American life. What would fashion be without Oscar de la Renta? Who can imagine the Yankees, who, after all, play “America’s Game”, without Alex Rodriguez? Lin-Manuel Miranda, writer and star of the hit musical “Hamilton”, has brought America’s founding fathers to an entirely new audience. Dr. Juan Manuel Taveras, late Harvard professor, founded the entire medical discipline of neuroradiology. I find it disturbing that in 2017 I still must defend my community’s right to participate in the American experiment. If Attorney General Sessions no longer believes that my people have no contributions to make, I demand that he apologize for his past statements. Whether he apologizes or not, I intend to defend all communities, including Muslims, refugees, and undocumented immigrants, that the Trump administration intends to victimize, and I hope that Attorney General Sessions treats all of the people in this country, regardless of race, with equal treatment under the law.

[1] <http://www.sessions.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/floor-statements?ID=ee49e505-7e9c-9af9-731c-006d27095530>