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OPINION

When women speak out for all

By Susan Quinn, Joyce Antler, Megan Marshall, Frances Malino, Lois Rudnick, Judith Tick and Roberta Wollons | FEBRUARY 17, 2017

AS SCHOLARS of women's history, we are aware of times in our past when advocates for women's rights and advocates for black rights competed against one another. But not this time. We need look no further than Elizabeth Warren's historic silencing on the floor of the Senate last week. A white woman rose to read the words of Coretta Scott King, words that reminded us of the racist history of the new attorney general, Senator Jeff Sessions, who, as US attorney in Alabama, "used the awesome power of his office" according to King, "in a shabby attempt to intimidate and frighten elderly black voters."



HANNA BARCZYK FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

For us biographers, the electrifying moment when Senator Mitch McConnell silenced Elizabeth Warren recalled another proud moment in women's history, the day in 1838 when Angelina Grimke took the podium at the

Massachusetts Legislature and became the first woman in US history to address an American legislative body. The subject then, as in the case of Elizabeth Warren, was the rights of African-Americans — in that case, specifically, “the great and solemn subject of American slavery.”

“I feel that I owe it to the suffering slave,” Grimke told the Assembly, “and to

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