

THE 48TH ANNIVERSARY OF ASSASSINATION OF REV. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 11, 2016

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, this year, the nation observes for the 48th year, the anniversary of the assassination of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Each year on this day, Americans remember the life and legacy of a man who brought hope and healing to America. Fatally shot at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee, on Thursday, April 4, 1968, at the age of 39, Dr. King was rushed to St. Joseph's Hospital, where he was pronounced dead at 7:05 p.m. that evening.

He was a prominent leader of the Civil Rights Movement and Nobel laureate for Peace who was known for his creative use of nonviolence and civil disobedience. Our hearts continue beating, rejoicing his enduring legacy, and knowing that nothing is impossible when we are guided by the better angels of our nature. The incident of domestic terrorism that took the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s life, reminds us of his belief, "that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality. This is why right, temporarily defeated, is stronger than evil triumphant."

Dr. King confronted the risk of death and made that recognition part of his philosophy. He taught that murder could not stop the struggle for equal rights. His inspiring words filled a great void in our nation, and answered our collective longing to become a country that truly lived by its noblest principles. Yet, Dr. King knew that it was not enough just to talk the talk; he had to walk the walk for his words to be credible.

And so we commemorate on this day a man of action, who put his life on the line for freedom and justice every day. We honor the courage of a man who endured harassment, threats and beatings, and even bombings. We commemorate the man who went to jail 29 times to achieve freedom for others, and who knew he would pay the ultimate price for his leadership, but kept on marching, protesting and organizing anyway.

Dr. King once said that we all have to decide whether we, "will walk in the light of creative altruism or the darkness of destructive selfishness. "Life's most persistent and nagging question," he said, is "what are you doing for others?" Strikingly, when Dr. King discussed the end of his mortal life during one of his last sermons, "I've Been to the Mountain Top," on February 4, 1968, in the pulpit of Ebenezer Baptist Church, even then he lifted the value of service upward as the hallmark of a full life, remarking: "I'd like somebody to mention on that day, Martin Luther King, Jr. tried to give his life serving others. I want you to say on that day, that I did try in my life . . . to love and serve humanity."

We should also remember that the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was, above all, a person who was always willing to speak the truth. There is perhaps no better example of Dr. King's moral integrity and consistency than his criticism of the Vietnam War, waged by the Johnson Administration; an administration that was otherwise a friend and champion of civil and human rights.

Martin Luther King, Jr. was born in Atlanta, Georgia on January 15, 1929. His youth was spent in our country's Deep South, then run by Jim Crow laws and the Klu Klux Klan. For young African-Americans, it was an environment even more dangerous than the one they face today. Nonetheless, a young Martin managed to find a dream; one that he pieced together from his readings, including the Bible, classics, philosophical literature, and just about any other book he could get his hands on. Not only did those books allow him to educate himself, they also allowed him to work through the destructive and traumatic experiences of blatant discrimination, and the discriminatory abuse inflicted on him, his family, and humanity.

The life of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. that we honor today, could have turned out to be the life of just another African-American who would have had to learn to be happy with the limitations of his circumstances—with only what he was allowed. He learned however, to use his imagination and his dreams to see right through those "White Only" signs—to see the reality that all men, and women, regardless of their place of origin, their gender, or their creed, are created equal. Through his studies, Dr. King learned that training his mind and broadening his intellect effectively shielded him from the demoralizing effects of segregation and discrimination. Dr. King was a dreamer. His dreams were a tool, through which he was able to lift his mind beyond the reality of his segregated society and into a realm where it was possible that white and black, red, yellow and brown, and all others live and work alongside each other and prosper.

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. however, was not an idle daydreamer. He shared his visions through speeches that motivated others to join the nonviolent effort to lift themselves from poverty and isolation and create an even better America where equal justice is a fact of life. In the Declaration of Independence in 1776, Thomas Jefferson wrote, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all Men are Created Equal."

At that time and for centuries to come, African-Americans were historically, culturally, socially and legally excluded from inclusion in the institutional execution of that declaration. Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" Speech, delivered nearly 53 years ago, on August 28, 1963, was a clarion call to each citizen of this great nation that still echoes today. His request was simply and eloquently conveyed—asking America to allow its citizens to live out the words written in its Declaration of Independence and to have a place in this nation's Bill of Rights.

Provoking that clarion call, the 1960s were a time of great crisis and conflict. The nightmares of Americans were filled with troubling images that rose like lava from volcanoes of violence and the terrors that they had to face, both domestically and internationally. The decade bore the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Vietnam War; and Americans were left to cradle the assassinations of President John Fitzgerald Kennedy, Malcolm X, Senator Robert F. Kennedy, and the man we honor here today.

Dr. Martin Luther King's dream helped us turn the corner on civil rights. Set in motion with Rosa Parks and the Montgomery Bus Boycott, enduring 381 days, ending only when

the United States Supreme Court ruled that discrimination, on account of race in the field of interstate public transportation, was unconstitutional. The dream whisked forward into the hearts of those aggrieved in Alabama's Bible belt and the minds of Selma citizens organizing and peacefully marching for suffrage on March 7, 1965—a march that ended with violence at the hands of law enforcement officers, as demonstrators crossed the Edmund Pettus Bridge.

Dr. King used nonviolent tactics to protest against Jim Crow laws in the South, organizing and leading demonstrations for desegregation, labor and voting rights. When the life of Dr. Martin Luther King was stolen from us, he was still a very young man, only 39 years old. People remember that Dr. King died in Memphis, but few remember why he was there. On that fateful day in 1968 Dr. King came to Memphis to support a strike by the city's sanitation workers. The sanitation workers there had recently formed a chapter of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees to demand better wages and working conditions for themselves.

The city, however, refused to recognize the union and when the 1,300 employees walked off of their jobs, the police broke up the rally with mace and police batons. Resultantly, union leaders summoned Dr. King to Memphis. Despite the danger he might face, entering such a volatile situation, it was an invitation he could not refuse—not because he longed for danger, but because the labor movement was deeply intertwined with the civil rights movement, for which he gave so many years of his life.

Moments before his murder, Dr. King went out onto the balcony of the Lorraine Motel in Memphis and standing near his room, he was struck at 6:01 p.m., by a single .30-06 bullet that James Earl Ray fired from a Remington Model 760 Gamemaster, completing the assassination. The killing sparked outcry and riots across the country, in addition to stimulating political support for passage of the Gun Control Act of 1968.

For some, Dr. King's assassination meant the end of the strategy of nonviolence. Others in the movement reaffirmed the need to carry on his work—as the nations' work—continuing the tradition of nonviolence. That night in Indianapolis, shortly after discovering that Dr. King had been murdered, New York Senator Robert F. Kennedy, campaigning to gain the presidential nomination to represent the Democratic Party, who himself would be murdered in Los Angeles two months later, addressed an angry, heart-broken, shocked, and horrified audience in a predominantly black neighborhood of the city.

The Chief of Police in Indianapolis advised Senator Kennedy that he could not provide protection and was worried he would be at risk in talking about the death of the revered leader. Robert Kennedy saw something more powerful though and, channeling Dr. King's spirit, decided to go ahead. Standing on a flatbed truck, he spoke acknowledging that many would be filled with anger as rumors of riots palpated in listeners' hearts. He said: "For those of you who are black and are tempted to be filled with hatred and mistrust of the injustice of such an act, against all white people, I would only say that I can also feel in my own heart the same kind of feeling. I had a member of my family killed . . . killed by a white

man." The Senator said that the country had to make an effort to, "go beyond these rather difficult times," and needed and wanted unity between blacks and whites, and asked the audience members to pray for the King family and for the country.

The death of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., will never overshadow his life. His legacy as a dreamer and a man of action stands strong. It is a legacy of hope, tempered with peace. It is a legacy not quite yet fulfilled. I hope that Dr. King's vision of equality under the law is never lost to us who, in the present, toil in times of disparities of inequity. For without that vision—without that dream—we can never continue to improve on our collective human condition.

For those who have already forgotten, or whose vision is already clouded by the fog of complacency, I would like to recite the immortal words of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.:

"I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former shareholders will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day, even the State of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but for the content of their character.

I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day down in Alabama with its vicious racists, with its Governor having his lips dripping with words of interposition and nullification—one day right there in Alabama, little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers.

I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together."

Positioning the nation to accept a bold call to action to address the wrongs of slavery, "separate, but equal," boycotts, assassinations, and Black power—he gave a much longed for voice to the history of uprising that drove global civil rights forward. Dr. King's dream did not stop at racial equality; his ultimate dream was one of human equality and dignity. He believed that freedom and justice were the birthrights of every individual in America. His dream became the dream of a people, documenting their collective challenges and struggle toward change; a hope to achieve a more perfect Union.

The powerful words of his beloved widow Coretta Scott King remind us that, "Freedom is never really won; you earn it and win it in every generation." Were he alive today, I believe that Dr. King would embolden us to acknowledge that this story and struggle, that started many centuries ago, continues today—with you. His, is an American story, and it is for us, the living, to continue that fight today and forever, following the great spirit that inspired the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

TRIBUTE TO BRUCE AND RUBY BENTLEY

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 11, 2016

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Bruce and Ruby Bentley of Macedonia, Iowa on the very special occasion of their 50th wedding anniversary. They were married in 1966.

Bruce and Ruby's lifelong commitment to each other and their family truly embodies Iowa values. It is because of Iowans like them that I'm proud to represent our great state.

Mr. Speaker, I commend this great couple on their 50th year together and I wish them many more. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating them on this momentous occasion.

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate of February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Tuesday, April 12, 2016 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

APRIL 13

- 9:30 a.m.
Committee on Environment and Public Works
To hold hearings to examine the role of environmental policies on access to energy and economic opportunity. SD-406
- Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
To hold hearings to examine America's insatiable demand for drugs. SD-342
- 10 a.m.
Committee on the Judiciary
To hold hearings to examine EB-5 targeted employment areas. SD-226
- 10:15 a.m.
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies
Business meeting to markup proposed legislation making appropriations for fiscal year 2017 for military construction, Veterans Affairs, and related agencies. SD-124

- 10:30 a.m.
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Department of Defense
To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2017 for the Missile Defense Agency. SD-192
- Committee on the Budget
To hold hearings to examine budgeting for outcomes to maximize taxpayer value. SD-608
- 2 p.m.
Committee on Armed Services
Subcommittee on SeaPower
To hold hearings to examine Marine Corps ground modernization in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2017 and the Future Years Defense Program. SR-232A
- Special Committee on Aging
Business meeting to consider proceedings relating to Mr. J. Michael Pearson's failure to appear. SH-216
- 2:15 p.m.
Committee on Foreign Relations
To hold hearings to examine ending sexual abuse in United Nations peacekeeping. SD-419
- Committee on Indian Affairs
Business meeting to consider the issuance of a subpoena to Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Gina McCarthy, to testify before the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, on April 22, 2016, in Phoenix, Arizona; to be immediately followed by a hearing to examine to examine S. 2205, to establish a grant program to assist tribal governments in establishing tribal healing to wellness courts, S. 2421, to provide for the conveyance of certain property to the Tanana Tribal Council located in Tanana, Alaska, and to the Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation located in Dillingham, Alaska, S. 2564, to modernize prior legislation relating to Dine College, S. 2643, to improve the implementation of the settlement agreement reached between the Pueblo de Cochiti of New Mexico and the Corps of Engineers, and S. 2717, to improve the safety and address the deferred maintenance needs of Indian dams to prevent flooding on Indian reservations. SD-628
- Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies—2016
Organizational business meeting to consider an original resolution authorizing expenditures for committee operations and committee's rules and procedure for the 114th Congress. S-219
- 2:30 p.m.
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development
Business meeting to markup proposed legislation making appropriations for fiscal year 2017 for energy and water development. SD-124
- Committee on Armed Services
Subcommittee on Strategic Forces
To hold hearings to examine ballistic missile defense policies and programs in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2017 and the Future Years Defense Program. SR-222