



March 27, 2018

Remembering the Death and Life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Just after 6 p.m. on April 4, 1968, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was fatally shot while standing on the balcony outside of his second-story room at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee. It was an honor to introduce and pass a resolution in the Illinois House of Representatives to recognize and commemorate the 50th Year Anniversary of the Assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The life and death of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. has given America a conscience and a guide to live up to America's 227-year-old Bill of Rights, the first ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution, ratified in 1791 and guaranteeing such rights as our freedoms of speech, assembly, and worship. Dr. King lived and died fighting for peace, fairness, and justice for all - and because he lived, America is better.

Because of Dr. King's leadership, people took it to the streets 50 and 55 years ago. On March 24, 2018, we will celebrate that it has been 55 years since Dr. King's leadership of the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. It has been 50 years since the Poor People's Campaign of 1968.

Last weekend, hundreds of thousands of Americans, including children, student activists, concerned parents and angry teachers honored Dr. King's legacy by taking a page out of his playbook to march for justice. Ordinary people of all races, religions and ethnicities took it to the streets of Washington, D.C. and more than 800 other cities across our country and the world in March for Our Lives rallies, demanding an end to gun violence.

The struggle in America fighting an unfair criminal justice system, a widening of America's income inequality, unjust tax systems, deadly police brutality, separate and unequal school systems, and racist policies impact the freedom of all Americans. We are a little more than one year removed from President Obama's White House, and America seems more racially divided.

In April 1968, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. told a group of striking sanitation workers in Memphis, Tennessee: "We've got to give ourselves to this struggle until the end. Nothing would be more tragic than to stop at this point in Memphis. We've got to see it through." King believed that the struggle in Memphis exposed the need for economic equality and social justice that he hoped his Poor People's Campaign would highlight nationally. Today, we have to reignite the Poor People's Campaign and come together to defeat the attacks on the heart and soul of the American's families.

It is no coincidence that the world is preparing for Easter, Passover and the 50th Year Anniversary of the assassination of Dr. King all at the same time. Regardless of an individual's personal religion or beliefs, Dr. Martin

Luther King, Jr.'s life and legacy is something that people of good will can bring us together around the legacy of Dr. King - for a better humanity.

Dr. King once said, "A man who does not have something for which he is willing to die is not fit to live." Christians all over the world will commemorate the death and resurrection of Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins and eternal salvation. Jewish people will celebrate Passover as a remembrance of their liberation from slavery in ancient Egypt by God and their freedom as a nation under the leadership of Moses. Whatever you believe or celebrate, why not make your life worth living by being like Moses, Jesus, or King?

Let's continue improving our lives and our communities and letting our light shine as an example in our community - like Moses, Jesus and King did for their followers.

Please join us at two events to commemorate the 50th Year Anniversary of Dr. King's Assassination on Wednesday, April 4, 2018: first, the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Breakfast to End the Heroin Epidemic on the West Side, from 8-10 a.m. at Loretto Hospital, 645 S. Central Ave, Chicago. Then, later that morning from 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., let's gather for a wreath-laying ceremony at the King Statue at 4800 W. Chicago Ave, Chicago.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'LSK', with a stylized flourish at the end.

La Shawn K. Ford
State Representative-Eighth District