



April 4, 2018

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. – 50 Years Forward

The date, day, and time of the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of Dr. Martin L. King, Jr.'s assassination has come and gone, but the spirit of Dr. King continues to inspire a nation. We must share the spirit and remember his message, "If you can't fly then run; if you can't run then walk; if you can't walk then crawl; but whatever you do, you have to keep **moving forward**".

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.

On April 4, 2018, we gathered to lay a wreath before the statue of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. at Chicago Avenue and Mandela Road (Cicero Avenue) on the West Side. "April 4th is a special day!" said Rev. Ira Acree, Pastor of the Greater St. John Bible Church in the Austin community. "April 4, 1968 was the day a modern-day Moses was killed! A man who was so hated when he was alive because of his commitment to equal rights for all was murdered - leaving many blacks feeling betrayed once again by their country. A wave of civil turbulence and disturbance swept the country following the assassination of Dr. King, the greatest wave of social unrest experienced in America since the Civil War. Chicago experienced one of the nation's largest riots and experienced some insurmountable damage, particularly on the West Side. We have yet to recover from the immense desecration and destruction of our community. But, we are resilient and determined nevertheless to fight on! We will unify. We shall overcome!"

The West Side of Chicago's wreath-laying ceremony is a commemoration in honor of the life and death of Dr. Martin L. King, Jr. It is my hope that by doing this, this day can be a day of remembrance and a day of advocating an end to gun violence.

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.

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.

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. But, let's continue the fight for justice, as inspired by Dr. King. Let's continue improving our lives and our communities and letting our light shine as an example in our community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "LSD".

La Shawn K. Ford
State Representative-Eighth District