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94-84 DESIGNATE THE BIRTHDAY OF MARTIN LUTHER
KING, JR., AS A LEGAL PUBLIC HOLIDAY

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HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON CENSUS AND POPULATION

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON

POST OFFICE AND CIVIL SERVICE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NINETY-FOURTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

ON

H.R. 1810

A BILL TO DESIGNATE THE BIRTHDAY OF MARTIN LUTHER
KING, JR., AS A LEGAL PUBLIC HOLIDAY

SEPTEMBER 10, 1975

Serial No. 94-84

Printed for the use of the
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94TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1810

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 23, 1975

Mr. CONYERS (for himself, Ms. BURKE of California, Ms. CHISHOLM, Mr. CLAY, Ms. COLLINS of Illinois, Mr. DELLUMS, Mr. DIGGS, Mr. FAUNTROY, Mr. FORD of Tennessee, Mr. HAWKINS, Ms. JORDAN, Mr. METCALFE, Mr. MITCHELL of Maryland, Mr. NIX, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. STOKES, and Mr. YOUNG of Georgia) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Post Office and Civil Service

A BILL

To designate the birthday of Martin Luther King, Junior,
as a legal public holiday.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

That subsection (a) of section 6103 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by inserting immediately below

“January 1, New Year’s Day.”

the following:

“January 15, the birthday of Martin Luther King, Junior.”.



CHAIRMAN

UNITED STATES CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20415

September 9, 1975

Honorable David N. Henderson
Chairman
Committee on Post Office
and Civil Service
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This is a voluntary report reflecting the Commission's views on H.R. 1810 (identical to H.R. 718) "To designate the birthday of Martin Luther King, Junior, as a legal public holiday."

The Commission fully appreciates Dr. King's significant contributions to the nation. However, we question whether the establishment of his birthday as a legal public holiday is the most appropriate way to recognize those contributions. The establishment of a public holiday in order to honor a private citizen would be contrary to long-established tradition. In fact, among our Nation's great public leaders, only George Washington has been recognized by a holiday in his honor. Even this holiday was established as much to recognize the spirit and strength underlying the beginnings of our country as to single out one individual. In this context, it should also be pointed out that even an American as great as Abraham Lincoln has no national holiday in his honor. We believe other forms of special recognition would be preferable for honoring Americans who have made great contributions to their country.

We are also concerned, especially during this time of rather substantial rising payroll costs that the cost to the Federal Government of another holiday would be in excess of \$135 million a year.

Accordingly, the Commission does not favor enactment of this legislation.

The Office of Management and Budget advises that from the standpoint of the Administration's program there is no objection to the submission of this report.

By direction of the Commission:

Sincerely yours,

J. B. Spence
Chairman

DESIGNATE THE BIRTHDAY OF MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., AS A LEGAL PUBLIC HOLIDAY

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 1975

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON POST OFFICE AND CIVIL SERVICE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON CENSUS AND POPULATION,
Washington, D.C.

The subcommittee met at 9:30 a.m., in room 311 of the Cannon House Office Building, Hon. Patricia Schroeder (chairwoman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Mrs. SCHROEDER. The meeting of the subcommittee will come to order.

This morning the subcommittee will hear testimony on H.R. 1810, a bill to designate January 15, the birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr., a national holiday. Similar legislation has been introduced in every Congress since 1968, but this is the first hearing on this legislation. Frankly, I expect that it will be a long process before final passage of this legislation, but a beginning is being made today.

To begin with, I would like to yield to the gentleman from Illinois, Mr. Simon, who has a telegram he would like to read.

Mr. SIMON. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

I received a telegram from Mr. Daniel Walker, our Governor. I would like to read it into the record.

I am sorry that my responsibilities here conflict with the new hearing date on your bill to make the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King a national holiday. I am very much in favor of this bill and wanted to testify in its behalf. We in Illinois have already demonstrated our feeling by declaring Dr. King's birthday a state holiday, and I am gratified that Cardiss Collins, Ralph Metcalfe, Paul Simon, Abner Mickva and Sidney Yates, members of the Illinois Congressional delegation, are cosponsoring House Resolution 1810.

A nation is known by the heroes it reveres, and it would be most appropriate during this bicentennial year for us to commemorate this great American.

The first witness we have here is Congressman Conyers, from the first district of Michigan.

Welcome.

STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR., A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MICHIGAN

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Chairwoman, I am submitting a formal prepared statement which I ask permission to have inserted in the record.

Madam Chairwoman and members of the committee, this is a great day. As one who approaches the subject matter of your subcommittee

in a very personal way, I am very pleased and very honored to be the leadoff witness for one of the most important and personal pieces of legislation that I have ever brought before the House of Representatives.

You see, I knew Dr. Martin Luther King personally, and this hearing can't help but cause me to share with you the impact that Dr. Martin Luther King has had upon my life. He was personally very good to me.

I first met him when he came from the South to the North to churches in Detroit where he would attempt to raise funds for the civil rights struggle. I began to talk with him. He put his arm around my shoulder, and when I embarked upon my campaign for a seat in the House of Representatives, I came to Washington with one of the very vivid memories that nothing can ever erase, with hundreds of thousands of other people for the march on Washington. I too was electrified, as all of those persons were, and as the Nation was, by this brilliant, dedicated, and gifted American who came to us in a way that was so unique and impacted upon the legislative process so strongly.

There are now Federal laws that, were it not for Martin Luther King, would not exist. He made us rethink what the Nation was all about, and he left me with a tremendous reservoir of memories and impressions that I have to share with you in this very historic setting.

He has an equally courageous wife and family who, as you know, have stood by him and carried on his work after his death. He impressed me, in short, more than any person that I have ever met in my entire lifetime.

On the Sunday before that tragic Thursday when he was taken from us, I had the great honor to meet with him with my legislative assistant, Larry Horwitz, with Mr. Harry Belafonte, and Dr. King's then assistant, Andrew Young. Martin Luther King was giving me an audience in New York about an idea that I had that would move more black Americans to participate in the political process. It was a notion about a national committee of inquiry. Dr. King had always been very cautious of involving himself in questions that were of a political nature because of the great controversy that always surrounded his activities.

Andy Young was helping me to encourage him with this idea. He finally agreed. Harry Belafonte was a great believer of this notion that we have this committee to inquire of the Presidential candidates where they stood on the civil rights questions that would be coming up in the 1968 Presidential election.

Finally, he conceded to do this, and I was so thrilled. Little did I know, as I walked out of the room that Sunday evening, that that, of course, would be the last time I would ever see Martin Luther King alive.

The support for the notion of making a public legal holiday of his birthday is one that can be measured by the increasing support that it receives every year. May I say to my colleagues on this subcommittee that I have received more mail as the originating sponsor of this bill than on any other legislative proposal. I had intended to bring over the six U.S. mailbags of mail that have come to me in the form of letters and petitions since 1968. It is enormous.

It still comes in. People still are writing, and asking, and I am sure that you and the members of this subcommittee have also received a great deal of mail and encouragement in this matter.

I think it is extremely important that we consider the fact that Dr. King's birthday is already being celebrated by hundreds of cities. Some States have officially made it a legal holiday. As many of you know, in your own areas it has been incorporated into labor management relation, contractual agreements in which this day is being officially set aside in labor management agreements.

In fact, it would not be unusual if there were a tendency for less support of this bill. But incredibly enough, every year the support grows, not only throughout the citizenry in this country, but among the Members of Congress. We now have 94 cosponsors that are asking that this committee move on this legislation.

I am very pleased to report that our former colleague, Byron Rogers, first reported this bill out of subcommittee when the Judiciary Committee had jurisdiction over this matter. It did nothing further, and it is my prayer that we will now begin to move this bill in a way that I think will reflect very favorably upon this legislative body. It is a bold step to some people. Some people are going to say, "Do you really have to take a civil rights activist and honor him?" It is going to be controversial. There are going to be people that don't want it. I think this is the time for us to do another first, and I guess posturing posthumously, this will be a first for Dr. King. Certainly he is the person to whom this great honor should fall upon in black America.

As you well know, if this legislation is passed, and I have every reason to be confident that it will, Dr. King will be the first black American to be so honored. And what could be more appropriate? You know, he gave us a theory that I have to go back and read about every now and then. He gave us a theory of nonviolence that was not just a religious message, but a message that Americans could live by and practice and implement in the struggle that marks the great quest for justice continuing even after our great leader has fallen.

Martin Luther King left a legacy. Part of that legacy are his assistants who used to come to me for legislative advice on how to move the civil rights bills. I remember so well Rev. Walter Fauntroy, his aide; Rev. Jesse Jackson, his aide; Andy Young, his personal executive assistant; and how I used to meet with them and give them advice. Now those men share the great responsibilities that fall on us as national legislators.

But his legacy goes beyond that, in my judgment, because Martin Luther King's life and death is really what this Nation is all about. His legacy, as a man of peace, as a man of justice, and as a man of brotherhood, can best be enshrined by our moving upon this legislation that is before you today. Thank you very much.

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Thank you very much.

What I hear you saying is that you really think this is one black American that really should be honored because he started a whole new way of life.

Mr. CONYERS. There is no question about it, Madam Chairman. I suppose that in your questions someone might choose to raise: "But what if Martin Luther King were not black, would he still deserve this tribute that has been proposed by nearly 100 of our colleagues?" I

would be constrained to answer in the affirmative that there is no question in my mind that the fact that Martin Luther King was a black American is incidental to the whole point of his life, his convictions, and his death.

It makes me very proud that he was black. It makes me doubly rededicated to continue after his death and in his memory. This, I think, is an absolutely imperative legislative pursuit that is before this subcommittee.

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Thank you very much. Do any of the committee members have questions at this time?

[No response.]

Mrs. SCHROEDER. I am sure we wish to thank you for your time and dedication and effort that have gone into this. We really appreciate it.

Mr. CONYERS. Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement which was submitted by Mr. Conyers follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT BY HON. JOHN CONYERS, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS
FROM THE STATE OF MICHIGAN

Madame Chairwoman and distinguished members of the subcommittee, it is with great pleasure that I begin the testimony at the first full hearings before a congressional committee on proposed legislation to make the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. a national public holiday. Without belaboring the time-liness of this historic hearing, I can say that national support for this bill has grown massively since Dr. King's tragic death in April, 1968, and includes ninety-four of our colleagues in the House of Representatives who have cosponsored H.R. 1810 through 1814. Several States officially honor Dr. King, as do innumerable municipalities and local governments. Millions of individual citizens have signed petitions demanding a day of reverence in his memory. I strongly hope that your subcommittee, and both Houses of Congress, will act with the greatest possible speed to enact this bill which, in paying homage to Dr. King's memory, will create the first and only national holiday honoring a black American.

No American more fully deserves such commemoration than Dr. King. No person ever dedicated his life so fully and tirelessly to the pursuit of equal rights for all Americans. Martin Luther King, Jr., gave his life for this struggle, and it remains for us to complete his work. Today, more than seven years after his death, "liberty and justice for all" have yet to become realities. In his best remembered speech, Dr. King eloquently described his dream for America's future. His vision remains as a guide for us today and as a measure of just how far we still have to go before we can rest.

By commemorating Dr. King's birthday, we would do more than honor a man; we would honor the spirit of love and hope which guided his life and which should inspire our efforts on behalf of the people we serve. I realize that one day cannot do justice to Dr. King's years of selfless dedication to the struggle for human rights. Yet, if on January 15th of each year, all Americans—in Dr. King's words, "Sons of former slaves and sons of former slave owners on the red hills of Georgia; farmers on the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire and the mighty mountains of New York"—stop to reflect upon Dr. King's life and efforts, we will preserve his great vision which is too often obscured by the daily demands of our own lives.

His struggle for justice was persistent and peaceful, as was his continued dedication to the goals of the brotherhood of man with true freedom and equality of opportunity for all our citizens. In recognition of his monumental work, Dr. King was awarded the Noble Peace Prize in 1964, an honor rarely bestowed on humanitarian activists.

Dr. King's tireless activities in both the North and the South were largely responsible for the landmark civil rights legislation of the sixties. For example, his campaign in Selma, Alabama, for the guarantees of voting rights contributed signally to the adoption of corrective legislation in the Voting Rights Act of 1965 which has been extended for an additional seven years. Enactment of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1968 were also partially the result of Dr. King's

efforts. Even his final effort—the poor people's campaign—symbolized the hope of many and helped bring the neglected plight of millions of impoverished Americans into sharp public focus. He could not believe that the "treasury of justice" was empty, and insisted that "we will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like water and righteousness like a mighty stream."

He and his equally courageous wife, Coretta Scott King, were among the first to actively oppose the illegal war in Indochina, rightly challenging its immoral adventurism. He clearly understood the contradiction of our sending young men to combat after teaching them as children to resolve their differences by reason and nonviolence. Not only did he call for a total withdrawal for U.S. soldiers from South Vietnam, he talked of the need to withdraw from a mentality which resorts to violence to solve human problems. He taught that this militarism, so clearly evidenced by the bloated and swelling defense budget, fosters much of the economic and social illnesses now crippling the country.

By standing up to racism and government lawlessness, Dr. King forced us to recognize the enormous gap between reality and the American ideals of equality and equal opportunity now being especially lauded during our bicentennial year. He described a pervasive system which offers crumbs to the poor while refusing to eliminate the circumstances perpetuating their poverty. Through him, we came to realize that the inherent fault lies not with the poor, but with an affluent society which exploits and consigns them to desperation.

We need a reaffirmation to continue the struggles of Martin Luther King, a day for all Americans to pause in honor of his life and contributions to mankind. We should pause, not only in respect, but also to evaluate our successes and failures in striving for the goals he set for us. To establish his birthday as a day of national recognition is an excellent way to make those assessments.

As elected Representatives of this Nation, I hope that we would indicate our esteem for Dr. King by establishing a public legal holiday observance in his honor. For the Congress to commemorate his birthday would be a gesture commensurate with the respect he commands throughout the world. Let us truly celebrate his strengthening of the humanitarian ideals which alone will insure the permanence of our society.

Chairwoman Schroeder and subcommittee members, I again urge your prompt and favorable consideration of the Martin Luther King birthday bill, and congratulate your holding these hearings here today. Thank you.

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Ms. Geraldine Boykin is our next witness, representing the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees.

STATEMENT OF JERRY WURF, PRESIDENT, AMERICAN FEDERATION OF STATE, COUNTY, AND MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES

Ms. BOYKIN. Madam Chairman and members of the committee, I am appearing on behalf of Jerry Wurf, president of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Union. I will present his statement.

The life and death of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. have a special meaning to all working people and especially to the members of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees.

Dr. King, as you know, gave his life to support a strike by sanitation workers in Memphis, Tenn., who were struggling to receive recognition of their union. This strike is remembered today by the slogan, "I am a man"—and by the fact that a fiercely antiunion city administration forced each sanitation worker to demonstrate the truth of that slogan. The sanitation workers won, and today Local 1733 of our union stands as one monument to Dr. King's commitment to human dignity.

We would be remiss not to remember, and live by, Dr. King's commitment. In the State of New Jersey, our union proposed—and the State legislature passed—a law making Dr. King's birthday, January 15, a State holiday. We urge that Congress follow the New Jersey example and make the anniversary of Dr. King's birth a national holiday.

It is difficult to believe that Dr. King would be only 46 years old were he alive today. Achieving national prominence through his leadership of the 1955 Montgomery bus boycott, Dr. King led one non-violent struggle after another for racial and economic justice. We have sorely missed his presence during these last shameful years.

In an interview published after his martyrdom, Dr. King declared:

Just as we dealt with the social problems of segregation through massive demonstrations, and we dealt with the political problem—the denial of the right to vote—through massive demonstrations, we will deal with the economic problems—the right to live, to have a job, and income—through massive protest. It will be a Selma-like movement on economic issues.

This commitment to economic justice and human dignity brought Dr. King to Memphis in March 1968, to support a strike by sanitation workers to receive recognition for their union. Responding to an appeal from clergymen, Dr. King arrived in Memphis to discover a situation where racism and antiunionism had crystallized in the refusal of the mayor to bargain with the sanitationmen's union, Local 1733 of AFSCME.

A few facts reveal why the struggle in Memphis was of such concern to Dr. King:

(1) When it rained on January 31, 1968, the Department of Public Works sent home the black workers without pay—but white employees remained on the job for a full day's wages.

(2) The next day, two sanitation workers were killed in an accident on a city truck. Their families learned once again that the workers were denied adequate safety controls, medical protection, and other common benefits.

(3) Sanitation workers were paid \$3,744. They had to complete a certain number of streets by quitting time, and, if they were several houses short, they had to finish the work without overtime pay or be docked.

Dr. King addressed a strike rally on March 18, led another demonstration on March 28, and returned to Memphis on April 2 to lead a march through the city. Two days later he was slain by a sniper.

Mrs. Schroeder and members of the subcommittee, for too long the history of the struggles of the labor and civil rights movements has not received its proper place in the national consciousness—it has been untaught in the schools and unrecorded in the mass media. As we approach the Bicentennial, it is time to recall that there was no greater American than Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who was accorded in 1964 the Nobel Peace Prize, but whose prophecies of peace and justice were not honored in his own country.

By honoring Dr. King, we honor the best in our history—and a symbol of the decency we may yet achieve.

Thank you.

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Thank you very much.

Do any members of the committee have any questions?

Mr. SIMON. I have no questions. I appreciate your testimony.

Mr. HINSHAW. Madam Chairman, I have a question.

I am trying to get a rundown on some of our national holidays. Inasmuch as we have very significant events that can be commemorated, which should be commemorated one way or another, one of the persons whom we have not recognized is Abraham Lincoln, who had a very significant impact on this country.

We do have George Washington's Birthday, and we do have Columbus Day. We do have Labor Day.

I notice in your statement that you refer to the practice already established in New Jersey and some other States, of recognizing a day in remembrance of Dr. King.

It is my understanding that there are quite a few different organizations, either by contract or otherwise, which do currently recognize Martin Luther King's birthday.

I am wondering, and I'd like a response from you as to how far we might be able to go, since we already have nine national holidays, in recognizing a very worthwhile person and event that would be proposed to us from time to time in the future.

Do you have any standards of criteria that you would suggest to the committee in evaluating these designations, or should the primary consideration be just the fact that the person was a very worthwhile person and did a lot of good for the country? For example, how do we compare this with the significance of the day we celebrate Veterans Day?

I would appreciate your comments in this regard.

Ms. BOYKIN. I don't know how the committee would go about setting up a criteria for all sorts of holidays, but I do think that this is one holiday that the committee should certainly give its fullest consideration.

Not only because—and I have to agree with Congressman Conyers that Dr. King was a black man—that Abraham Lincoln's Birthday is a holiday, but that has another significance, another connotation; but because of Dr. King's social revolution in this country.

I don't think any other man or any other event even compares with the contributions that he has made in this country. And I'm sure that history will show that.

Mr. HINSHAW. Because my background is largely with county and State governments, I have a concern about the request for another holiday from an organization such as you represent that I'd like to comment on maybe the organization Mr. Jerry Wurf represents is doing this because they would like another holiday, as opposed to the contributions Dr. Martin Luther King brought to this country.

Ms. BOYKIN. I didn't hear you.

Mr. HINSHAW. I am wondering whether the Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees is not requesting this partly out of motivation to receive another holiday.

Ms. BOYKIN. The American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees has in its negotiations a holiday that is just open to its employees. Throughout the country, they negotiated contracts with the city for their holidays, yes, but not to receive another one.

Mostly throughout the country, the holidays are not recognized by State and county, like Abraham Lincoln's Birthday. We are not trying to get additional holidays. That is just crazy.

Mr. HINSHAW. Thank you very much.

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Thank you very much. We appreciate your coming. Is Mr. John Lewis here?

Mr. Lewis, we welcome you to the committee.

STATEMENT OF JOHN LEWIS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, VOTER EDUCATION PROJECT

Mr. LEWIS. Thank you.

First, I want to thank Representative Schroeder and members of the subcommittee for the opportunity to present testimony in support of making the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King a national holiday.

It is very difficult for me to choose the right words to express my dealings with Martin Luther King, Jr., a man I came to know, love, and admire as a brother; a spiritual leader, a prophet, and as a humble person whose life has been the embodiment of love, peace, and compassion for fellow human beings.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was an inspiration to me just as he was to millions of people around the globe. When I was only 15, I saw how one man dedicated to a cause could commit himself to the struggle of no racism or segregation in the South and could forever alter the course of history.

Not long after the end of the Montgomery bus boycott, I met Dr. King, and a long and beautiful relationship began. Our paths were to cross often during the sit-ins, on the freedom rides, at the 1963 march on Washington, in Mississippi in 1964, on the march from Selma to Montgomery, during the turbulent years of black power, and in preparation for the Poor People's Campaign before his death in 1968.

As I grew to know Dr. King intimately in the course of these activities, my admiration for him grew. Dr. King was a spokesperson, not only for blacks, but for alienated human beings everywhere.

More than any other public figure in American history Martin Luther King, Jr., had the capacity to inspire and the ability to bring people together to do good: black and white; Protestant, Catholic, and Jew; rich and poor; young and old.

His life and his message was love. His weapon was truth; his method was creative nonviolence. His goal was a beloved community, a community of justice of all at peace with themselves.

Dr. King was a beautiful and articulate man. He could speak and the masses understood, and took heart, and knew that they, too, were somebody. He was a gentle man who used the teachings of our Judeo-Christian heritage and the tools of Gandhi.

His goals embodied the concept of American democracy. He taught us to resist evil and work for the good of humanity. He was far too advanced in his quest of love and peace for the violent times in which he lived, and so the violence of his beloved Nation destroyed him.

The time has come for this Nation and its people to honor the ideals, hopes, and dreams which were the guiding principles of Dr. Martin Luther King's life.

I don't think he would have had any part of this debate to make his birthday a national holiday. I think he would have been embarrassed by the honor. I think he would have been too busy in pursuit of his purpose in living to take such a holiday.

It would have pleased him to know that the leadership of this Nation, the President and Congress, and the American people are ready to pay tribute to a sincere quest for truth and put on the armor of love.

There are those who will object to the creation of another national holiday saying the cost would be too great, but we cannot be dissuaded by this feeble argument. In a nation that has spent millions of dollars and sacrificed thousands of lives in military madness, how can anyone oppose this noble proposal by saying the cost is too high?

As I come before you today, I am strongly in favor of setting aside a national holiday in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., but instead of making this holiday a national day of rest, I am calling on this subcommittee, on the U.S. Congress, and on the American people to make his birthday a living, working memorial in pursuit of his dreams.

I propose that we use this day to educate and motivate the American people to bring about justice, to rid our Nation of violence, to destroy all forms of economic enslavement, and to build a beloved community of love and peace which was his vision.

Making Dr. King's birthday a national holiday would not mean the fulfillment of our responsibility to the man, to his ideals, or to ourselves. Setting this day apart would be a step in the right direction, a small step, as we seek to eliminate and overcome all barriers that would keep us from our full potential as human beings.

So let us now honor this man of our time, a citizen of the 20th century, a man of peace whose life will continue to change the shape of human history for generations yet to come.

Thank you.

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Thank you very much.

Does anyone on the committee have questions?

Mr. HINSHAW. I don't have any questions, but I would like to commend you for the thought on page 3 of your third paragraph wherein you state, "But instead of making this holiday a national day of rest, that you make it a day of work to achieve the goals of Dr. Martin Luther King."

I think that is an excellent thought and commend you for it.

Mrs. SCHROEDER. I do, too. Thank you.

Mr. Marc Stepp.

Welcome to the committee, Mr. Stepp.

STATEMENT OF MARC STEPP, VICE PRESIDENT, INTERNATIONAL UNION, UNITED AUTOMOBILE, AEROSPACE, AND AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENT WORKERS OF AMERICA; ACCOMPANIED BY DICK WORDEN, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF THE LEGISLATIVE DEPARTMENT OF UAW

Mr. STEPP. Madame Chairwoman, members of the subcommittee, I have accompanying me today Dick Worden, the assistant director of the legislative department in Washington for the UAW.

Before I make the presentation for the International Union of the Auto Workers, I should like to have in the record for a very distinguished American, formerly the president of the Atlanta University, Dr. Benjamin E. Mays, well-known educator, who sent a letter to Congressman Conyers and asked that it be in the record.

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Certainly.

[The letter referred to follows:]

Atlanta, Ga.

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.,
Rayburn Building,
Washington, D.C.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN CONYERS: I wish I could be there in person to speak in favor of the Congress enacting a law to make January 15th a National holiday in memory of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Since this is impossible, I feel obligated to send you this message which I hope you will be kind enough to read to your committee.

I write as President of the college that Dr. King entered as a freshman and as the one from whom he received his A.B. degree. I also write as a friend of Dr. King and chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Martin Luther King Center for Social Change.

I think there can be no debate that Dr. King did more than any man in this country to dramatize the way social changes can be made without bloody revolution. His firm belief that non-violence is the only way that entrenched power can be made aware of an injustice and be moved to eradicate it. No man in this century has impressed America and the World as Dr. King to see the realization of the power inherent in ethical and moral persuasion and action. His name is respected and revered by people on the six continents. More buildings, streets, organizations are named in his memory than any man of this century.

Ladies and gentlemen, these are some of the reasons I urge you to recommend to Congress, and ask for it among your colleagues, that January 15, be declared a National holiday in memory of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.—not as a Black man, but as a great American, one who transcended race and nation and became a world leader.

Respectfully submitted,

BENJAMIN E. MAYS.

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Thank you very much.

Mr. STEPP. I am vice president of the International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW). I appear here today to present the views of the UAW on legislation to set aside the birthdate of Martin Luther King, Jr., as a legal holiday.

We in the UAW consider ourselves very, very fortunate to have the opportunity and the honor, particularly on the eve of the bicentennial birthday of this Nation, that we can appear before this body and ask that the spirit and dream of the founding fathers for a free people be rekindled by the enactment of this proposal.

Martin Luther King, Jr., is a man whose life and work is admired throughout the United States and throughout the world. It is fitting that such a great American be memorialized by a national holiday, January 15, his birthday.

Dr. King died at a young age—39—from an assassin's bullet. But he was able to see much of his work accomplished even in his young lifetime. He was the spark and the inspiration for much of the civil rights movement of the 1960's—but his work went far beyond that magnificent work.

He was a symbol of the uniquely American struggle which was the civil rights movement. He appealed to our ideals again and again.

No one can forget his letter from the Birmingham jail on April 16, 1963, when he wrote:

I guess it is easy for those who have never felt the stinging darts of segregation to say wait. But when you have seen vicious mobs lynch your mothers and fathers at will and drown your sisters and brothers at whim; when you have seen hate-filled policemen curse, kick, brutalize, and even kill your black brothers and sisters with impunity; when you are humiliated day in and day out by nagging signs reading "white" men and "colored;" when your first name becomes "nigger" and your middle name becomes "boy" (however old you are) and your last name becomes "John," and when your wife and mother are never given the respected title "Mrs.;" when you are harried by day and haunted by night by the fact that you are a Negro, living constantly at tiptoe stance, never quite knowing what to expect next, and plagued with inner fears and outer resentments; when you are forever fighting a degenerating sense of "nobodiness;" then you will understand why we find it difficult to wait.

This moral outrage was never the basis for hate or violence. To recall his words so real then is to know how much progress has occurred since he began his work in the streets of Alabama.

Nor can we forget his words from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial when a whole Nation joined in the chorus, "I have a dream." He helped set in motion this legislative course which became the civil rights laws of the 1960's.

It was altogether fitting that this great American martyr should win the Nobel Peace Prize, a prize not for what he did for minorities in the United States alone, but for what he did to raise the hopes and aspirations for oppressed people throughout the world.

In his acceptance speech, Dr. King said:

I accept this award in behalf of a civil rights movement which is moving with determination and a majestic scorn for risk and danger to establish a reign of freedom and a rule of justice.

After contemplation I conclude that this award which I have received on behalf of that movement is profound recognition that nonviolence is the answer to the crucial political and moral question of our time—the need for man to overcome oppression and violence without resorting to violence and oppression.

My union, the United Auto Workers, was one of the first trade unions to ask for a national holiday for Martin Luther King. In a resolution at our 22d convention we said:

MARTIN LUTHER KING BIRTHDAY AS NATIONAL HOLIDAY

Whereas, Martin Luther King, Jr., gave moral and spiritual leadership to all America by proving in his own life and deeds that a revolution could be created in the hearts and minds of men without violence or the threat of force.

His total dedication to the ideal of the brotherhood of all men translated it from a dream in our hearts to a living reality which is gaining in strength and power to transform the face of America. It is fitting that he be commemorated for future generations as one of the great leaders in the history of our nation. *Therefore, be it*

Resolved: That this 22nd Constitutional Convention of the UAW calls upon the government of the United States to declare the birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr., a national holiday to celebrate the ideals for which he lived and died.

Dr. King's work is uniquely American. He was a church pastor who believed that the Christian gospel was meant to be lived and realized here on Earth. He refused to hate. He was never bitter. He called upon the best in people. He helped to wipe out the last vestiges of segregation which had cursed our land since the first slaves set foot on America.

His doctrine of creative nonviolence was hard for many to understand, but in a Nation which still worships violence it would be appropriate for the man of peace, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., to be remembered each year throughout.

Dr. King was posthumously given the UAW's Social Justice Award at our 1970 convention, and I quote that award:

Dr. Martin Luther King, spiritual giant, crusader, America's moral conscience. He dreamed of people of all races walking hand in hand in the solidarity of their common humanity.

He dreamed that love and compassion would overcome the violent forces of man's inhumanity to man. He dreamed of the day when all men would be free, free at last.

We who share his dream, who walked with him in friendship and solidarity in Washington, in Detroit, in Selma, in Jackson, Miss., who wept at his untimely bier, commit ourselves to continue the struggle to build his dream—a dream of a world of peace, a world of brotherhood, a world of social justice. In his spirit we shall overcome.

In making the presentation, the late UAW president, Walter P. Reuther said of Dr. King:

Martin Luther King will stand in history as a giant among the giants. Martin Luther King had great inner strength, a deep commitment to the belief in man and brotherhood, in justice and freedom.

He like no man in America believed so deeply that his was like the faith of Mahatma Gandhi, who rocked the British empire not with the might of armies gathered on the battlefield, but with the power of the belief in the worth and dignity of each human being.

Martin Luther King was a most successful disciple.

This has been a violent nation. Martin Luther King thought that he might help this nation find itself and find the path away from violence to understanding and from understanding to brotherhood, and from brotherhood to peace and from peace to human fulfillment. This was the special genius of Dr. Martin Luther King.

This is a time of great national cynicism, of spiritual and moral fatigue. It is a time when people have lost faith in institutions of all kinds. Young people are suspicious of the political process, of the system.

These are reasons why a national holiday in the name of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., is appropriate at this time. Such a national holiday would remind us, young and old alike, that the system can work, that the system does work, that even against great odds, human progress is possible.

We live in a time of uncertainty and drift. One out of every four black Americans is suffering from prolonged unemployment. We still have school segregation in many of our urban northern cities. Black Americans all too frequently earn less doing the same jobs than their fellow white Americans. And black income is less than white income.

Dr. King's work is a source of national pride to both black and white citizens who see in him living proof that we can find answers to the riddle of inequality. As we move through the rest of this century, we should pause each year to rethink the meaning of Dr. King's work and faith in our country, and do our utmost to live up to his ideals, the ideals upon which this Nation was founded.

The struggle of black Americans is part of a larger struggle to attain equality in our society. And it is a struggle which has been successful in many aspects. We have a plural society in which many different

racess, religions and ethnic groups play a part. We are unique in this respect among all the nations of the world, sharing as we do a common language and adhering to the same set of constitutional rules and laws.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was a person who understood all of this, who never flinched from his moral duty to make our ideals come alive. He is a perfect symbol for past and future generations to remember that the American creed must be lived in our daily lives, and must be renewed with each generation.

January 15th, a national holiday to remember Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.—American saint, American patriot, American black, American humanitarian; a man all Americans can be proud of; a man all the world knows as the essence of what is best about America; and above all a man of peace.

Thank you very much.

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Thank you very much.

I certainly appreciate your outline of the history of your union, not just Martin Luther King, but you feel very strongly about the model he set for the period of time. I thank you for taking time out.

Any questions from anyone?

Mr. BRODHEAD. Madam Chairwoman, I just wanted to say that as the person who has the privilege of representing Mr. Stepp in the U.S. Congress, I am very pleased to see you here today, sir, and I salute you for your most eloquent statement.

I apologize for not being here earlier, but I had some people from the United Automobile Workers Union in my office. For that reason, I was late getting here, and I'm sorry to have missed your statement.

I want you to know I share your feeling completely. It is my hope we will be able to make Martin Luther King's birthday a holiday as soon as possible.

Mr. SIMON. I have to leave in a little while. I wish I could tell you it is the UAW members I have to meet in my office. [Laughter.]

Along with others who have testified here today, I had the privilege of knowing Dr. King. I was a very young State legislator and he asked me to speak at the second anniversary of the bus boycott in Montgomery.

I like the tone of your statement, frankly, that it is not only that we are paying tribute to a man, but we are paying tribute to the ideals and hopes that should be living parts of this Nation.

I think a national holiday here would do more than just pay tribute to a man. I think it would also, as you know, mean something to minority Americans. But I think it says something to all Americans and I like the tone of your statement.

Mr. STEPP. Thank you.

Mr. HINSHAW. Mr. Stepp, I was very impressed with the statement by the previous speaker, Mr. Lewis, that instead of making it a national holiday of rest, make it a working memorial.

I read your statement very closely before you started, and a thought prompted by your comments—and by Mr. Lewis, has evolved in my mind, and I would like to get a reaction from you.

We have nine legal holidays. There are two persons that are recognized by virtue of the national holidays. One of them is Washington, who was the first President of the country, and the other is Columbus, who is reputed to have discovered this Nation.

The rest of the holidays commemorate—Thanksgiving Day, Labor Day, New Year's Day, Christmas Day, that type of thing, although Christmas is a day recognizing the birth of Christ, so it can be said that perhaps we honor three persons, in that respect.

I am sure as this country proceeds we are going to have many more distinguished persons. As was pointed out by Mr. Lewis, there would be those who would object to the creation of a holiday for the birth of Dr. King and put forth in advance the argument of cost, which I think is not relevant.

There are those who object to a holiday simply because, as Congressman Conyers pointed out, he is black, and this also is irrelevant and should not be the type of thing we should consider as a negative reason in creating a holiday for a distinguished American.

The thought has evolved in my mind of creating a national holiday somewhere along the way which could serve as an achievement day or something along that line, and then the Congress would be faced with the chore of deciding who would make up the list of distinguished Americans we would honor as part of that day.

We would have specific persons on that list, recognizing as we proceed as a Nation that we cannot have national holidays for every important event, for every important person, though we have to recognize at some point that there are important persons who have significantly changed the course of history.

I'd like your comments on this thought that has just evolved in my mind of having a Distinguished Americans Day.

Mr. STEPP. I would distinguish between that suggestion as Distinguished Americans Day in terms of what we are proposing here, a national holiday for Dr. King: pretty much what Congressman Simon just mentioned that the spirit of the Nation, the spirit that was present at the beginning of this Nation, with all of the trials and tribulations down through the years up until 10, 15 years ago, truly that spirit, in terms of the man, Martin Luther King, was rekindled through the efforts of the consciousness of this Nation whereby it reflected itself throughout the world.

I think that is the measure that ought to be applied in terms of whether or not we ought to have a national holiday for Dr. King as opposed to some other suggestions as noble as they may be.

I think that if America in the world is to exist and still to be appreciated throughout the world, the whole concept of a free people, that we proclaim to be, can better be represented in that manner, because that person in the farflung corner of the Earth, I am sure somewhere through the media has heard of Martin Luther King, and during that period of time and about this Nation.

I am sure, further, that persons in the farflung corners of the Earth have heard about Martin Luther King's suggestion on peace for all men and dignity for all men and all women.

It seems to me the embodiment of that kind of thrust, based on what we thought was really the dream 200 years ago, would better be articulated and expressed if it were done for that period that was developed, for not only Martin Luther King, not only for this country, but for everyone.

But to have that specific thought and that specific appreciation for the farflung persons of the world to be lost among many, would seem

to me that would be the thing we would not want for the Nation and what it represents.

Mr. HINSHAW. I thank you for your observation on the idea.

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Mr. Stepp, I have one question.

I have talked to different members of the Black Caucus about this one. I am interested in your viewpoint.

As a child growing up in the South, we had many people who celebrated Emancipation Proclamation Day in June, and there were people who have said because we tend to celebrate events rather than people in this country, first Washington and Columbus, that maybe we should look to the Emancipation Proclamation.

I have a very negative opinion of it. I thought it was one day in the South on which we honored the Emancipation Proclamation, 1 day out of the year.

I think that was my childhood hangup. I wonder if you have any viewpoint on that versus Martin Luther King's birthday.

Mr. STEPP. Surely in the whole pagentry of this idea that the Emancipation Proclamation itself, and that which floods to that day, is one that mankind can appreciate where one moves from slavery to freedom.

I guess in the whole history of man, that occurrence is one that is to be appreciated. I would not want to get in the position to debate either/or.

Personally, I can see no reason why we shouldn't have both: Martin Luther King, in terms of the spiritual aspects that I mentioned, and the Emancipation Proclamation for all people who came from slaves to free persons.

I hadn't thought about that in terms of either/or, but off the top of the head, if that is not the unwise thing to say, I wouldn't want to get in the debate, because both are extremely important occurrences of man.

Mrs. SCHROEDER. I am sure it is something we will have to think about when we start making a final decision. It was a negative repression in the South. It would be one day that they would live through segregation.

I tend to lean toward Martin Luther King because it seems to make emancipation more real. It is something we should think about. That will be pointed out as we get closer to deciding.

Mr. STEPP. May I state one slight difference.

The proposal of Martin Luther King, the spirit of what he talked about, can be applied to every man and human dignity. Every individual, irrespective of his or her identity, racial, religion, and what-not, it can touch every single one. That is the great plus.

Mrs. SCHROEDER. He stands for a much wider concept. That is true, I agree.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Brown, from the National Urban League, is the next witness.

STATEMENT OF RONALD H. BROWN, NATIONAL URBAN LEAGUE

Mr. BROWN. I am Ronald H. Brown, director of the National Urban League.

I appreciate the opportunity to testify this morning on a matter that we consider of great importance; that is, we wholeheartedly support and endorse the enactment of H.R. 1810.

We can think of no American more fitting of such a tribute. Consequently, we can think of no time more appropriate than the present to pay homage; no individual who contributed so much to the masses of people in this country and around the world.

It is in the interest of the proponents of peace and justice everywhere that we recognize an individual whose life was committed to these ideals. In so doing, we reaffirm our belief in a commitment to the constant pursuit of peace, justice and good will among all people.

As we approach the 200th birthday of this Nation's struggle to secure the fundamental freedoms of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, it is appropriate that you not only consider, but move swiftly to enact this legislation.

It is appropriate because Dr. King sought those same freedoms for blacks, other minorities, and, often forgotten poor white Americans as well. Those freedoms are guaranteed and too often taken for granted by the majority of the population.

It is appropriate because, despite the many contributions of black Americans to the struggles to insure the permanency of democracy, these contributions have for too long been omitted from, or downplayed in the chronicles in which we recapitulate those struggles.

For despite the legislative equality achieved by blacks in this country, we have yet to reap the fruits of real equality. Black Americans have long suffered and continue to suffer from one of the most dramatic and inexplicable paradoxes of American society: the inconsistency between the realistic principles of our democracy and the realism of its practices.

Too many of us still suffer the after effects of a vast gap created by the hope-inspiring promise of the great American dream and the ultimate nonfulfillment of that commitment. In effect, we are often still the forgotten people. After three centuries of struggle, frustration, and triumphs intertwined with setbacks, black Americans still have not been assured in any definitive manner whether they are, as in the 30-year-old words of the Swedish sociologist, Gunnar Myrdal, a liability or an opportunity.

We in the Urban League say it is time to recognize and acknowledge the fact that black Americans are indeed an opportunity. We say it is time to fulfill the promise of real equality. We say it is time to rectify the errors of the history books.

Finally, we say it is time to take this long overdue step in recognition of a truly great American and the ideas for which he stood.

That completes my statement.

I would like to add a very brief, personal remark.

First, I think that all of us who objectively look at the situation in this country now must realize we are in a state of crisis in the area of race relations. I think this has happened for a number of reasons.

The principal one, in my belief, is that we have had a virtual absence of national leadership on this issue. A virtual absence of the kind of leadership, the kind of moral leadership, that I think brought us through the 1960's with great progress.

It seems to me that because of this, and a number of other exacerbating factors, we find ourselves in a crisis alarming to us. There are a number of things we have to look at.

The resurgence, as unbelievable as it may seem, of the Ku Klux Klan, not only in the South. We read in the Washington Post last week about a young black couple moving into a Maryland home and having ugly racial epithets written on the car of someone visiting.

We heard the day before yesterday of the firebombing of the birthplace of John F. Kennedy. We see what has happened on the streets of Boston, Louisville, and many other streets in the country.

It is my belief that enactment of this legislation is even more critical than it has been before. I think there needs to be some sign, some signal from the Congress, from the United States, indeed from the White House, that people do still care; that there still is interest and concern in achieving racial justice in this country.

I think those signs are long overdue, and I think this certainly would not be the end of the problems. Certainly not a panacea, certainly not the answer to all the problems, but would be that sign, that much needed first step toward reassuring the American people that there is hope, that there is the kind of hope for racial justice and equality that many people believe there was in the 1960's.

I am not only talking about black people, but white people as well, who need that signal of hope from the leadership of the country.

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Also female people. One of the things you pointed out is the frustration of people in our city. Because Denver has gone through a lot with its schools and yet we have had a lot of good. It has been quiet.

And so nobody cares for communities that care and do have leadership and have been able to work without troops and guns lined up along the curves.

It doesn't seem to make the kind of news that people want anymore. If you were reading just newspapers you would think that everybody was like the few people in Boston, overreacting so violently.

I think you made a very good point. Anything we can do to turn around the image that everyone sees would be very helpful. Thank you very much.

Mr. DeWolf, welcome to the committee.

STATEMENT OF L. HAROLD DE WOLF, LAKELAND, FLA.

Mr. DeWolf. Madame Chairperson, honorable members of this committee, it is a privilege and honor to appear in this cause.

When Martin Luther King, Jr., earned his Ph. D. degree in the graduate school of Boston University, I served as his major advisor and the first reader of his dissertation. We continued our friendship after his years in Boston and I was frequently with him and his family in the remaining years of his life.

In his home and office I worked with his wife and his secretary to sort the personal and organizational papers accumulated during most of his career and shipped 17 filing cases full to the archives of Boston University. Through all these relationships I became especially familiar with his life and thought.

Dr. King was a truly great person. Intimate acquaintance with him in his home, in his church and under the pressures of daily overwork, intense controversy and peril deepened my impression of his greatness.

There are four reasons why I urge the memorializing of his life by setting aside the anniversary of his birth date as an annual national holiday.

First is the fact that the Martin Luther King Day would symbolize the great contributions which black people have made to our national life.

Black slaves were brought to our shores before the Mayflower sailed. Their cultural roots were severed and they long faced almost insurmountable obstacles impeding their efforts to get an education.

Yet, they have contributed to the United States of America not only their hard toil on which many economic achievements have been built, but also remarkable scientific discoveries and inventions, the enrichment of our music, art, and spiritual life, stirring athletic feats and much pleasurable entertainment. Surely, in our annual calendar we can make room for one day on which to center our acknowledgment of these contributions.

At the end of his tragically shortened life, Dr. King was forming a promising alliance which included Spanish-speaking and American Indian minorities. His birthday could be fittingly used to celebrate gratefully the gifts of all our ethnic minorities, some of which have been absorbed in our general culture and others of which await recognition and appropriation.

We have talked too much of the American melting pot. Too often we have demanded that the original inhabitants of this land, the formerly enslaved black people and the latest comers from Latin America and Asia give up their special identities to be melted into the sameness of a common white Anglo culture.

What we need is not a melting pot, but a symphony. If the American symphony is to attain its proper splendor, there must be occasions for stressing the variety of the instruments and themes as well as its overarching unity. You have in the bill before you the opportunity to take an important step in the composing of such a symphony.

My second reason is that a Martin Luther King Day would constitute an annual recommitment in modern terms to the national purpose declared at the founding of this republic—that is to secure equal rights of all our people to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

My last 3 years have been devoted fulltime to research and writing on a subject which has long elicited my special interest and attention, namely crime and justice in America. Both the President's Commission which reported in 1967 and the National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals reporting in 1973 emphasized the importance of extending significant opportunities to all our people.

Alienation breeds crime. People who feel, either as groups or as individuals, shut out from full community with other people are prime candidates for crime. Some corrupt politicians and some exploiting men of wealth alienate themselves and commit white collar crimes or direct criminal syndicates. But several millions of our citizens want desperately to be accepted fully into American life and opportunity and end their alienation.

I beseech you to pass the bill before you and send a signal to all these people that the Government of the United States is committed to such acceptance.

A third reason for supporting this bill is to renew the personal unselfish idealism of countless American youth, some not so youthful anymore.

There are two contrary traditions in this country struggling to possess the soul of America. On the one hand is the tradition of community spirit, generosity, tolerance, and loving kindness—truly America the beautiful. But vying with it is a dread heritage of ruthless, selfish aggressiveness, impatient vindictiveness and violence.

For 200 years most of our people have been saved from the worst consequences of the selfish, vindictive, violent tradition by the unclaimed spaces available. From the earliest days of colonial settlement we have used space to insulate ourselves from people we could not tolerate or who treated us badly.

Now we are running out of space. We must either learn to curb our aggressive selfishness and live in tolerant harmony with each other, even in our crowded cities, or be torn apart by crime and strife.

In the middle years of the 1960's something wonderful happened in our universities and especially in our law schools. Many thousands of young Americans turned their backs on lucrative careers which beckoned and chose their work with motives of service.

What caused the change? The largest single influence was the eloquent voice of Martin Luther King and the movement he led. Again and again he stirred the conscience of young people to devote their lives to serve rather than to make wealth or power the supreme goal.

To have a part in establishing justice became more important to them than personal affluence and security. They filled the ranks of the Peace Corps, later of Vista; they enlisted in Government service; and they worked abroad under auspices of educational foundations and the churches. They also brought into more conventional business and professional work a refreshing motive of service above self-seeking.

When Dr. King was assassinated, many of those young people persisted on their idealistic course. But others became discouraged and turned to lesser goals. The universities became hotbeds of riotous confrontation, at first for noble purpose but with violent method and later for all kinds of trivia. Then most of the student bodies settled back into a kind of disillusioned business as usual.

We need an annual occasion to rekindle the fires of idealism first set ablaze by Martin Luther King, an occasion to recall and celebrate his clarion calls to the nonviolent crusade for justice and brotherhood.

Finally, we need to recall that Dr. King persuaded thousands of embittered, angry people to renounce violence and work for change within the system. He was a patriotic American. In speech after speech, he recalled passages from Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, the Declaration of Independence, and the Constitution.

The people who knew him best understood well his love of country despite all its injustice. I was in the congregation of Ebenezer Baptist Church one Sunday morning when, at the close of an evangelistic service, his father led in observing the birthday of the martyred leader. Patriotic songs were sung, and the procession to the nearby tomb was led by the bearer of an American flag.

In recent years it has become popular for young black people who see how much remains to be done to speak with scorn or sadness of the total failure of the civil rights movement. Riding the buses he desegregated, using public accommodations he opened, getting jobs, and securing educational scholarships they would not have had if he had not lived and died for them, they talk about his failure!

Some of them are now violent rebels deep in crime. Others are only talkers, long in the rhetoric of hate, but short in effort. Many who have avoided these destructive escapes have simply sunk into disillusioned passivity. They do not even cast the ballots purchased for them at so great a price, let alone working to use the electoral process for justice.

We need the sharp focus of a national day to tell the story of great successes won by this patriotic American. New generations of Americans, whatever their race or native tongue, need to learn that working within the system and challenging it to live up to its declared purpose, Martin Luther King won more victories for justice and brotherhood than all the violent revolutionaries together.

I urge you to lead in support and passage of this bill. Send a pledge down the future to be renewed every year, that the dreamer of American justice and world brotherhood could be killed and yet the dreamer and the dream still live in power. Tell all future generations that the power of the dream will live so long as men and women of faith work and sacrifice to make the dream come true.

Thank you.

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Thank you, Mr. DeWolf. We appreciate you taking the time and having concern and care to comment. Thank you.

We now ask Congressman Andy Young, from the Fifth District of Georgia, to join us.

We welcome you. It is a delight to have you here this morning.

STATEMENT OF HON. ANDREW YOUNG, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF GEORGIA

Mr. YOUNG. Thank you very much, Madame Chairwoman and my distinguished colleague from California. Let me thank you very much for proceeding with these hearings on what right now may not seem to be such an important issue.

I know that with the pressing crises, with the problems of our economy, and the great issues which affect this Congress, a birthday celebration seems to be rather insignificant. And yet I would contend that Dr. DeWolf put his finger on it very well—that one of the reasons why we are able to face this period of such great tension, and a period where we do have massive unemployment, and still have an amazing amount of order and stability in this society is the precedent established by Martin Luther King throughout his work in the 1950's and 1960's.

I would contend that Martin Luther King gave this Nation the possibility of a rebirth of meaning and purpose for some 50 million Americans who had not yet understood and appreciated the full meaning of the American dream. Those, basically, are the poor, and they are poor of all colors.

I don't think of Martin Luther King at all as a black leader. He was a leader who awakened the conscience of this Nation and reminded us that we could not continue to live half slave and half free, and that there were still many people in slavery economically, educationally, and people in poor health. At the time of his death, he was preparing to bring to Washington thousands of poor people of all races and colors, to say to the American people that these, too, are your citizens who are desperately in need of aid.

One of the outgrowths of his action was the whole Great Society program, and those programs we found passed in the 1960's are really the basis of the order and stability that we have in our society now.

The other thing is, and I would say at this point in time, even more significant, the perspective of Martin Luther King as a peacemaker. He won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964, and was one of the first Americans to realize that the war in Vietnam was not in the interest of this Nation.

He was also a forerunner of recognition and trade with the Soviet Union and the Peoples Republic of China.

I think that the stability we see on a world basis, and the potential for an economic solution to international crisis, is in good measure the result of the kind of statements that he made and the direction which he gave to this country.

Finally, I would say that this Nation has never done enough for its peacemakers.

It is important to have a holiday for a black person, but I have been reading some early American history, and lately kind of celebrating the Bicentennial a little bit, and realize that when Thomas Jefferson made the Louisiana Purchase he, in fact, averted war with France, and yet there is no place in our history where we celebrated that. There is no place in history where we celebrated averting a war with Russia during the Cuban missile crisis. We have not done enough for our peacemakers.

Reading Robert Kennedy's book, "Thirteen Days," it almost reads like a blueprint of the decisionmaking pattern of solutions to problems without violence that we worked out in Birmingham and Selma, and other places in the civil rights movement.

So I would say Martin Luther King, as a peacemaker, is a role that needs constant reference in our society, and that there is much more here to his work and mission than we have yet to appreciate. And the further we get from his life, the more we are willing to appreciate, and able to appreciate how much it did mean for him to let us know that we could heal the problems of race and class without violence.

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Thank you very much. I know how very close you were to Dr. King.

I think you made an excellent statement pointing out how important he was as a tremendous leader in this country and was also black. The reason he should be honored is not just because he was black, but because he was a tremendous leader in the country.

Mr. YOUNG. We tend to forget that this country was in a state of silence and social paralysis as a result of one of our colleagues on the other side, Senator Joseph McCarthy. There was no movement among the American people in 1955 when Martin Luther King started.

Now, we see a women's movement; we see the awakening of consumer and citizens' participation in government, public interest law firms, as well as a kind of citizens' advocacy corps in just about every area of American life, patterned after the movement that he developed out of Montgomery.

Mrs. SCHROEDER. One of the things he reminds us as political leaders is, whether domestically or internationally, you can't have political freedom if you have some people involved in economic servitude of any kind. Whether formal or informal, you can't have the great masses to participate in political freedom.

Mr. HINSHAW. I want to thank my colleague, Congressman Young, for appearing and putting insight into the situation.

I can't help but notice you have all drawn the parallel between Dr. King and the leader of another country who also believes in nonviolence, and the constructive efforts and accomplishments that can be brought about by nonviolence in pursuing the goals and dreams.

I think one of the things that I well remember about Dr. King is his expression, "I have a dream"; and I think as far as this country is concerned, if we ever lose sight of the fact that we ought to have dreams for all persons, this country will cease in its greatness.

I think Dr. Martin Luther King, in essence, caused a real awakening among Americans, among all ethnic groups, as well as all levels of economic affluence.

He will long be remembered in this country, probably for as long as this country lives. He made his mark in his country. I know you were very close to him and his movement.

I think you're exactly right: we have to remember persons for peace which they have brought about, and we, I believe, probably will not recognize the greatness and accomplishments of Dr. King for decades and decades to come.

Mr. YOUNG. It is encouraging that many, many States and municipalities have recognized this day and are already celebrating it.

Mr. HINSHAW. I think one of the significant things, one of the previous witnesses indicated there have been some recognition of that in at least one State. As I understand, there are organizations already recognizing his birthday.

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Thank you very much, Congressman Young, for being with us.

Mr. Chuck Morgan?

Welcome, we are delighted to have you with us.

STATEMENT OF CHUCK MORGAN, DIRECTOR, CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION

Mr. MORGAN. I have no prepared text.

I am a director of the Washington office of the Civil Liberties Union.

Prior to my tenure here, I was for 8 years director of the southern office of the American Civil Liberties Union in Atlanta, and prior to that for 8 years, a practicing attorney in Birmingham during tumultuous and good times.

Today I speak for myself rather than the ACLU.

I believe it is possible for us to understand the significance of Dr. King and the need to confront the Congress with this piece of

legislation that allows its Members to say that they approve or disapprove of a holiday named for him.

In 1963, John Kennedy was assassinated. In 1968, Bob Kennedy was assassinated. In 1968, Dr. King was assassinated. In 1972, George Wallace was shot down. In 1973, Spiro Agnew copped a plea. In 1974, Richard Nixon fled office.

For large segments of the American people, each of these leaders embodied their hopes. People don't relate to Government through Congress or any other structure, whatever political scientists tell us. They relate to Government through individual citizens who embody their hopes and dreams.

Martin King was the last person who embodied for blacks in this country, the hope. Robert Kennedy was the last person in American politics who could bridge the gap between blacks, blue-collar workers, and whites.

Richard Nixon entered office in 1969, and on his inauguration day proceeded to assassinate hope. He said that in his own words. He was opposed to a revolution of rising expectations; he was opposed to the rhetoric which didn't produce. So he attempted to diminish us.

He developed with our present U.N. Representative, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, a doctrine called benign neglect. He invoked the "Southern strategy" so the laws Congress passed, as is traditional in this country, would not be enforced.

Today, the whirlwind of that "Southern strategy" cuts like a saber across South Boston, Denver, and other places and sections of the country. No southern person I know, white or black, segregationist or integrationist, ever really believed it would be different in the Nation.

But what Martin King embodied was hope.

What the Congress embodied during the years was the ratification of what Martin King—then tens, hundreds, thousands, and tens of thousands of citizens in this country—did. They put themselves on the line, and they confronted a Nation predominantly white.

That Nation reacted in a manner which approved legislation passed in 1964 and 1965. When the Nation ratified the movement, the Congress followed, but the leadership was not here in Congress. It was with the people where it always is, and where it was from the civil rights movement through the impeachment movement.

The essence of Martin King's life is wrapped up in the contrast between 1,308 pages of the White House transcripts, which it has recently been my displeasure to again read. In the edited version of those pages, the leader of this Nation, the assassin of hope, not one time spoke of the public good. Not one person around him spoke of the public good.

Today, and soon, in the investigation of Intelligence agencies, we will see some in the Senate attempt to destroy the reputation of a great American now deceased, Martin King, who always opposed war, including the philosophy of the cold war.

I can remember in the 1950's, in Birmingham, shortly after I left law school, Birmingham was not a left-wing place. Martin King wouldn't take a position even then against those who the House committee accused as being Communists.

At each turn of his life, he rejected pragmatism and cold war liberalism, which, unfortunately, our Congress has not done. Through-

out that life of his, he moved forward subject to being listened to, lied about, and even killed.

In 1,308 pages of the White House transcript, there was not one reference to the public good.

But whoever listened to Dr. King, publicly or privately, they heard of a life dedicated to "tell them I tried to feed the hungry; tell them I tried to clothe the poor; tell them I tried to help somebody."

This is one way for the Congress to honor the values we want in American life when there is so much dishonorable around us.

Thank you.

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Thank you, Mr. Morgan. You are always very eloquent. Thank you very, very much. We appreciate you taking the time.

Mr. William Barndt?

We are glad to have you with us.

STATEMENT OF WILLIAM BARNDT, DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE PERSONNEL AND ASSISTANT TO THE CHAIRMAN, FIRST PENNSYLVANIA CORP.

Mr. BARNDT. Thank you.

I am William H. Barndt, assistant to the chairman and director of corporate personnel of the First Pennsylvania Corp. in Philadelphia.

Each year since the assassination of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, the anniversary of his birth has been marked in communities throughout this country by tributes to his unwavering dedication to the equality of all people. Formal ceremonies recalling his legacy of a single American society have initiated in churches, community agencies, educational institutions, and the like.

Recently, increasing number of small businesses in the Philadelphia area where First Pennsylvania Corp. is headquartered, have joined in memory of Dr. King by closing their doors on January 15. The time for major American business to add its voice to the call for official recognition of this great civil rights leader is long overdue.

In late 1974, First Pennsylvania Bank, the largest commercial bank in Philadelphia and the 19th largest in the country, urged the passage of a bill in the Pennsylvania Legislature which would have declared Reverend King's birthday a statewide holiday.

Management was particularly aware of the significance of this day to our growing minority employee work force—itsself a tribute to Dr. King and the efforts of countless other individuals who struggled for equal opportunity in employment as well as all other areas.

The bill was subsequently revised in the Senate to establish January 15 as a "commemorative" day rather than a legal holiday. Prohibited by banking regulations from closing independently and yet motivated by the belief that Martin Luther King's work demanded highly visible tribute, we granted each employee a personal leave day to be taken at any time during 1975 in honor of Dr. King's civil rights achievements.

A letter from the bank's president to our staff of approximately 4,300 requested that each individual reflect on Dr. King's dream—a dream in King's words "deeply rooted in the American dream"—and expressed hope that we could individually and institutionally soon transform that dream to reality.

We considered our action to be an interim step, taken with the hope for official governmental initiative another year. That is why we are here today in support of House bill 1810.

In April 1963, over a decade ago, Reverend King suggested that when his followers sat down at lunch counters, "They were in reality standing up for the best in the American dream." His nonviolent and yet direct action forced us to confront the fact that this country's dream of equality and freedom had been a realizable dream for everyone but minorities, and motivated legislation to correct centuries of social and economic injustice.

A celebration of the 200th anniversary of our independence would be incomplete without official symbolic tribute to a man who so clearly and correctly challenged America to live up to the ideals on which it was founded. Thank you.

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Thank you very much, Mr. Barndt. Thank you for taking the time.

Is Walter Huntley here?

STATEMENT OF HON. MAYNARD JACKSON, MAYOR OF ATLANTA, GA., REPRESENTED BY WALTER HUNTLEY, SPECIAL ASSISTANT

Mr. HUNTLEY. Chairwoman Schroeder, distinguished members of the committee, my name is Walter Huntley. I am a special assistant to Mayor Maynard Jackson of Atlanta, Ga.

Mayor Maynard Jackson sincerely regrets that it was impossible for him to come to Washington.

However, as an Atlantan, I am pleased to represent the mayor here and to urge, on behalf of the mayor and the entire city of Atlanta, the passage of the bill establishing the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., as a national public holiday.

It is very difficult to find an adequate way to honor a profound humanist like Dr. King. His life had such a dramatic effect on all our lives that our testimony would not begin to express the love and appreciation we feel for this man who strengthened the very fabric of our lives.

Dr. King was the kind of man whose life was more than an example to people all over this Nation and world. His life was an inspiration. His life was a challenge to each of us to examine our own lives and to make a conscious decision to be more than concerned about the conditions of our fellow men and women. He ignited our rededication to the struggle to end the racism, sexism, and militarism that stifled and retarded our growth as a people and as a nation.

Let us remember that Dr. Martin Luther King taught us to struggle—for liberation is a struggle—for human rights, and that we must continue to seek freedom and justice for the entire Nation.

Mayor Jackson, the people of Dr. King's home, Atlanta, and I urge you to pass this bill. Thank you very much.

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Thank you very much. We appreciate you bringing greetings from Atlanta.

I believe there are no further witnesses.

We appreciate everyone's attendance. Thank you very much.

The meeting is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:30 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

