

Statement honoring the life and work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and encouraging the continued commi

Written by Mike Honda
Friday, 15 January 2010 13:14

Earlier today, I entered the following statement into the record regarding Martin Luther King, Jr. I wanted to share them with you all:

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.Res. 1002, honoring the life and work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and encouraging the continued commitment to Martin Luther King, Jr. Day as a national day of service. Through the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Day of service, we honor Dr. King's noble vision of equality and message of compassion.

Dr. King preached peace in the fight for equality, shaking the foundations of segregation with love for others, even those who sought to oppose his vision. His unyielding commitment to non-violent resistance anchored his messages, and his "I have a dream" speech changed America and sparked a movement that embraced civil rights, justice, equality and human dignity for all. This is a movement that we must continue to fight for and protect.

We have celebrated considerable successes due to Dr. King's Dream. Housing, schools and transportation are now accessible by all Americans. Indeed, in 2008 Americans took another great step toward realizing Dr. King's vision by electing America's first African American president, Barack Obama. These achievements were not easily won, but Dr. King's Dream has proven resilient and it has persevered.

As a Representative of Silicon Valley, one of the most ethnically diverse areas of the country, I appreciate Dr. King's message of equality. As Chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC), I recognize the great strides that have been made since Dr. King sparked the historic civil rights movement, and CAPAC has continued to vigilantly ensure equal opportunity remains accessible to all. For his vision and sacrifices, we owe Dr. King a great debt of gratitude for his service and leadership to our nation, and there is no better way to express that gratitude than through our own personal service to the nation.

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service will serve to remind Americans that we should all take the time to contribute to our communities. This day continues to pay tribute to the life and actions of a great man, as we continue to foster brotherhood and service amongst our friends, neighbors, and communities. Since its designation as a federal holiday in 1994, Americans have Dr. King's birthday to act on his ideals. It has been a day to improve lives, bridge social barriers, and change our nation into the "Beloved Community" that Dr. King had hoped to see during his life. Thanks in part to the commitment we have shown to honor Dr. King, the Day of Service continues to grow in popularity as a chance for citizens, business leaders, and public officials alike to contribute to their communities. In 2009 alone, over 13,000 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service projects occurred throughout the nation, honoring the Dream of Dr. King.

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I am pleased that the constituents of California's 15th District have answered this call to service as a tribute to Dr. King's life. Constituents of all backgrounds volunteer to remove graffiti, pick up litter, improve parks, and engage in other activities that aim to selflessly improve the world around them. Though each individual's effort may be small, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service provides the medium to combine an individual's energies with those of his or her neighbors. The resulting collaboration is an impactful and tangible celebration of Dr. King's messages.

As we near the day of remembrance, we must recognize that the fight goes on. Dr. King's Dream embodies an ideal for our nation to pursue – Americans of all ethnicities and creeds, living together with dignity and hope. To admire Dr. King's life requires us to follow his legacy. Let us honor his life by working together to continue to build an America where every child enjoys all the privileges of equal opportunity and freedom.