

Why the King memorial is important to America

Written by Congressional Black Caucus Foundation
Wednesday, 07 September 2011 13:43

"We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of Now." ~ Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. ~

Rain, storms and a hurricane may have delayed the dedication of the King memorial, but nothing will stop this historic monument from becoming a part of the American landscape. While smaller celebrations, including the opening gala and the interfaith service were held to mark this historical occasion, the nation looks forward to the main event – the unveiling of the first memorial on the National Mall in honor of a person other than a president and the first in honor of an African-American. As a distinguished champion of human dignity and freedom, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s defining leadership throughout the civil rights era continues to impact individual lives and humanitarian efforts in our country and around the globe.

August 28 marks the forty-eighth anniversary of Dr. King's historic "I Have a Dream Speech," delivered during the March on Washington. The "dream" has yet to be fully realized by many African Americans, who continue to comprise disproportionate numbers of the jobless, experience disparate health indicators, and many of whom continue to live in poverty; yet others have experienced an improved quality of life thanks in large part to Dr. King's vision and his commitment to improve the human condition for all, particularly African Americans. The magnitude of the change wrought by Dr. King's work and the civil rights movement is remarkable. He embodies the work of so many who made critical sacrifices as they challenged America to actualize the ideals of the Founding Fathers espoused centuries before.

At the CBCF, we remain committed to the principles of Dr. King by devoting our work to developing leaders, informing policy and educating the public. Our goal is to continue to carry his message and the torch to increase the presence of African Americans on Capitol Hill, in corporate boardrooms and in nonprofit and grassroots organizations alike and to end national and global disparities in employment, health and in other areas.

Committed to developing tomorrow's leaders, we will honor Dr. King's legacy by "continuing to march" under the banner iLead|iServe at this year's Annual Legislative Conference and challenge Americans to join in our work to lead and serve in their homes, communities and on a national level.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s likeness is now frozen in time on America's National Mall as a monument to history, its stone material representing the permanence of his impact rather than the fossilization of his ideals. The monument reminds us that the dream is still alive, but the struggle is far from over. We are on the cusp of a greater America...let the King monument be a reminder to each of us to continue his work for a better America, now. The Congressional Black Caucus Foundation proudly salutes the legacy and achievements of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and commends the Alpha Kappa Alpha Fraternity for their leadership on this important project. We stand ready to continue his work.

Learn more about the state of Black America and what it means to you during CBCF's 41st Annual Legislative Conference (ALC) from September 21-24 in Washington, DC. The Health and Wellness Issue Forums and Braintrusts will feature panels, discussions and solutions to address issues facing African American's today. To find out more and to register for ALC visit

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us @ www.alc11.org

Meanwhile, what can you do? Get involved, share your thoughts with your member of Congress and the White House and voice your opinion. When citizens are informed, engaged and active participants in moving the country in the right direction, our nation is that much stronger.