



NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

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DOLE ENDORSES MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. NATIONAL HOLIDAY

WASHINGTON -- Sen. Bob Dole (R-Kan.) today said he would cosponsor legislation to declare January 15, the birthday of Martin Luther King Jr., a national holiday. Other cosponsors are: Sen. Charles Percy (R-Ill.), Sen. John Glenn (D-Ohio), Sen. Birch Bayh (D-Ind.) and Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.).

"Martin Luther King was a remarkable American, a man of vision whose dream of equality and brotherly love moved an entire generation," Dole said. "His efforts to eliminate prejudice and bridge the chasms of hatred in America continue to inspire millions of Americans."

Following is the text of Sen. Dole's floor statement:

Mr. President, today I join several of my colleagues in sponsoring legislation to declare January 15, the birthday of Martin Luther King Jr., a national holiday.

Today we celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the birth of Dr. King. This is a particularly appropriate day on which to initiate efforts to honor this champion of the rights of all people. On this, the golden anniversary of his birth, we should recommit ourselves to his golden dream of the brotherhood of all men. As we begin the first few hours of the 96th Congress, we should recommit ourselves to fight Dr. King's battle for equal rights and equal opportunity for all Americans.

Martin Luther King was a remarkable American, a man of vision who dream of equality and brotherly love moved an entire generation. His efforts to eliminate prejudice and bridge the chasms of hatred in America continue to inspire millions of Americans.

Despite the obstacles and hatred Dr. King encountered, he stuck to the principle of non-violence. In his struggle for brotherhood and opportunity, Dr. King held true to his philosophy of love and tolerance. He showed us that lasting social change can be achieved through peaceful protest. He reminded us that, as Americans, we must be constantly vigilant in preserving our consitutional heritage of freedom. Dr. King's dream was not simply one of racial harmony. His vision was primarily American. His goals were those of our founding fathers -- of establishing for all Americans the equal right to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

Because of Martin Luther King's unique contributions to American life, I believe it is fitting that we honor him by designating his birthday as a national holiday. It is my hope that a year from now, January 15 will be celebrated in the memory of Dr. King and his eternal vision.