



## **Vision from Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. Voting Rights are Still Being Suppressed**

February has just passed, and in reflecting upon that month being designated as Black History Month, one man shows up in recent American history as a leader who stood bravely against fierce suppression of the voting rights of his people in the Solid South. That leader is Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (MLK).

Most Americans normally celebrate Martin Luther King, Jr. Day in January and are aware of the significance of Black History Month as a way to honor the contributions of Black Americans to the nation.

But there is lingering ignorance and a persisting controversy over contributions that MLK made in U.S. history. Nevertheless, one of the most significant efforts that must be remembered is that King risked his life for the rights of all Americans.

Though he did this in a number of ways, King made great strides to increase everyone's awareness of the suppression of the right of all citizens to vote despite the entrenched governmental repression in the South.

Admittedly, not just voting rights, but serious repression of human rights existed within the autocratic states of the Deep South since the days of the Civil War. However, the greatest threat to all Americans existed in the laws and regulations that governments in the South had established to restrict or repress the voting rights of their citizens.

MLK fought to secure voting rights through the Civil Rights Movement, and that battle continues today. Despite the hype about racism in the nation today, the political implications of suppressing citizens' voting rights are incredibly significant as Americans are awakening to corruption and irregularities in the electoral process in many states today.

Since the 2020 election, many citizens in several states are aware that legislators, governors and judges within their state governments are again limiting or restricting voting rights of some citizens. Americans have come full circle to the driving purpose behind the Civil Rights Movement King helped to lead.

Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. fought against institutionalized racism embedded within the city and state laws and regulations that limited or denied any remedy at the ballot box to the Black citizens and those who supported them.

King had made regional waves by late 1955 with the famous Montgomery Bus Boycott that lasted a full year until December of 1956. But even by 1957, not many Americans had heard of him.

On May 17, 1957, King traveled to Washington, D.C. to give an important speech at the Lincoln Memorial. In 1957 - years before his "I have a Dream" speech as part of the March on Washington.

King's speech at the Lincoln Memorial in 1957 was for a Prayer Pilgrimage for Freedom. He addressed 25,000 civil-rights activists about voting rights for the oppressed black population in the Deep South. King was speaking clearly about having the right to vote and the serious resistance from southern state governments to the implementation of the Supreme Court's Brown v. Board of Education ruling.

**One of his well-articulated points was:** "The denial of this sacred right is a tragic betrayal of the highest mandates of our democratic tradition. And so our most urgent request to the president of the United States and every member of Congress is to give us the right to vote."

**He went on to emphatically state:**

***Give us the ballot***, and we will no longer have to worry the federal government about our basic rights.

***Give us the ballot***, and we will no longer plead to the federal government for passage of an anti-lynching law; we will by the power of our vote write the law on the statute books of the South and bring an end to the dastardly acts of the hooded perpetrators of violence.

***Give us the ballot***, and we will transform the salient misdeeds of bloodthirsty mobs into the calculated good deeds of orderly citizens.

***Give us the ballot***, and we will fill our legislative halls with men of goodwill and send to the sacred halls of Congress men who will not sign a 'Southern Manifesto' because of their devotion to the manifesto of justice.

***Give us the ballot***, and we will place judges on the benches of the South who will do justly and love mercy, and we will place at the head of the southern states governors who will, who have felt not only the tang of the human, but the glow of the Divine.

**The words of Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. still ring true.**

Are not the realities of those restrictions upon voting rights King fought against similar to issues facing U.S. citizens of all races today?

**Let us be clear:**

**Americans are witnessing a serious showdown over voting rights once more.**

**The challenges are frighteningly similar to the ones in King's day.**

In California, long before election irregularities and the stunning outcome of the 2020 election awakened a large number of Christian, conservative and patriot organizations to take action, a

grassroots group of volunteers organized and took action against infringements of the citizens' voting rights they were observing in California.

On December 28, 2010 citizen volunteers in southern California united and formed the Election Integrity Project (EIP) to expose the California election laws, regulations, policies, and procedures that had weakened or removed integrity from the election process. On July 21, 2017 Election Integrity Project® *California* (EIPCa) was founded and EIP transitioned to EIPCa to continue the work as a 501c-3 nonprofit.

The Election Integrity Project® *California* is a non-profit public benefit corporation committed to defend through education, research, and advocacy the civil rights of all citizens to fully participate in the election process under Federal and state law.

EIPCa volunteers are not only carrying forward the torch for voting rights for all citizens in California but are still sacrificing to secure the sacred right to vote for all citizens.

May the Spirit of Martin Luther King, Jr. live on to inspire a new Voting Rights Movement to restore the Constitutional Republic.

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