



## H.Res. 1061 – Commemorating the 40th anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and encouraging people of the United States to pause and remember the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and for other purposes

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### FLOOR SITUATION

H.Res. 1061 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Representative John Lewis (D-GA) on March 31, 2008. The resolution was referred to the House Committee on the Judiciary, but was never considered.

H.Res. 1061 is expected to be considered on the floor of the House on April 1, 2008.

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### SUMMARY

H.Res. 1061 resolves that the House of Representatives encourages all Americans to:

- Pause and remember the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., on this, the 40th anniversary of his death;
- Commemorate the legacy of Dr. King, so that, as Dr. King hoped, "one day this Nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal"; and
- Remember the message of Dr. King and rededicate themselves to Dr. King's goal of a free and just United States.

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### BACKGROUND

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was born on January 15, 1929, in Atlanta, Georgia. Dr. King graduated from high school at the age of 15 and from Moorehouse College in 1948 with a B.A. Both Dr. King's father and grandfather had graduated from Moorhouse College. Dr. King later earned a Bachelor of Divinity degree at Crozer Theological Seminary, and completed his doctorate at Boston University in 1955. While in Boston, he met and married Coretta Scott.

Dr. King became the pastor of Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama, while also serving as a member on the executive board of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). In December of 1955, Dr. King led a non-violent demonstration against segregated busses, lasting 382 days. During the days of the bus boycott, Dr. King's home was bombed, and was also arrested. In June of 1956, the Supreme Court's decision in *Browder v. Gayle* declared laws requiring busses to be segregated as unconstitutional.

In 1957, Dr. King was elected president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, which was formed to provide leadership during the civil rights movement. Dr. King set the ideals for this organization to be modeled after the ideals of Christianity and peaceful techniques of Mahatma Gandhi. Between 1957 and 1968, Dr. King traveled over 6 million miles and spoke over 2,500 times to promote the cause of the civil rights movement. Over these eleven years, he 1) led a protest in Birmingham, Alabama, inspiring him to write the manifesto, "Letters from a Birmingham Jail" 2) organized demonstrations calling for blacks to be allowed to register as voters, and 3) led a peaceful march in Washington, DC of over 250,000 people where he delivered his address, "I Have a Dream." At the age of 35, Dr. King became the



# LEGISLATIVE DIGEST

HOUSE REPUBLICAN CONFERENCE | CHAIRMAN ADAM PUTNAM

1420 LONGWORTH HOB, WASHINGTON, DC 20515

[www.GOP.gov](http://www.GOP.gov)

PHONE 202.225.5107

FAX 202.226.0154

youngest man to receive the Nobel Peace Prize. When notified that he had been selected, Dr. King donated the \$54,123 award accompanying the Prize towards the efforts of the civil rights movement.

On April 4, 1968, Dr. King was assassinated while standing on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee, where he was participating in a workers rights rally for black trash collectors. His funeral services took place on April 9, 1968, at Ebenezer Baptist Church and at Moorehouse College, both in Atlanta, Georgia. In 1983, President Ronald Reagan declared January 15 to be nationally recognized as Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, making the day of Dr. King's birth a national holiday.

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## STAFF CONTACT

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For questions or further information contact Justin Hanson at (202) 226-2302.