

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Senators Laud Dr. Martin Luther King Ahead Of Commemoration

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On Friday, senators issued press releases with statements commemorating Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy, ahead of official celebrations on Monday. We've include them below:

Dr. King was decades ahead in his thinking as we now enjoy the rights and liberties that he fought for. We have come a long way as a people, even as we celebrated the final State of the Union Address by the first ever black president of this county a few days ago, but our struggles are far from over and we have to do more and be more to exude the real essence of Dr. King's dream. -- Senator Kenneth Gittens.

Dr. Martin Luther King once said that, 'Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.' We cannot remain silent about the recent violence that has plagued our territory, and we cannot be silent about the underlying social and economic causes that are largely responsible for the atmosphere of violence and crime. -- Senator Jean Forde.

Those who stood up defiantly against injustice at the forts at East End on St. John and in Frederiksted or during the Fireburn of 1878 are linked as kindred spirits to freedom fighters at the bridge in Selma or bus boycotters in Montgomery or in the assassin's blood on the Memphis hotel porch in 1968.

We are the heirs of their courageous sacrifice. And every time we stand up against injustice and brave insults, intimidation and injury, when we raise voices against wrong by telling truth to power we send ripples of hope to the powerless. Standing strong in the face of withering abuse and threats in an effort to right wrongs is the cause of this and every generation. We must never permit retreat into the not-so-recent past of human rights, religious, gender and political tyranny. -- Senator Janette Millin Young.

Let this year be a revival of our commitment to achieving social justice through nonviolent means and investing our efforts to enrich our community. And as you celebrate the holiday on Monday, January 18th, be sure to reflect upon what you can do to make a difference and create your own legacy. -- Senator Marvin Blyden.

Dr. King was born Jan. 15, 1929, in Atlanta. After entering the ministry, he moved to Montgomery, Alabama where he became the pastor of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church. There, he began making his mark during the civil rights movement. By 1963, he had delivered his famous "I Have a Dream" speech at the March on Washington and had been named Time magazine's Man of the Year. In 1964, he won the Nobel Peace Prize. Four years later, on April 4, 1968, Dr. King was killed by an assassin's bullet at the Lorraine Hotel in Memphis.