

WASHINGTON, DC - The U.S. House of Representatives today unanimously passed a [resolution](#)

observing the 40th anniversary - April 4, 2008 - of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD) delivered the following statement on the House floor.

"Mr. Speaker, forty years ago this Friday, Martin Luther King, Jr. was murdered. He was an American prophet. He called us to love justice, to love our brothers and sisters of every color. He spoke the truth. But on April 4, 1968, he was taken from us.

"In this flawed and fallen world, hate and rage and violence will have their day. But if we can find even a sliver of good in that crime, it might be this: Dr. King died on a balcony. An open place. A public place. Dr. King showed us-he proved with his own body-that a just cause is worth dying for.

"It's worth living for, too. This resolution-even though I'll vote for it wholeheartedly; even though, I trust, it will pass unanimously; even though it's offered by my good friend John Lewis, who 'toiled, and wrought, and thought' with Dr. King-is just words on paper, unless we match it with resolution in our lives.

"Our conduct, our actions, are the only honors we have worth giving. These words on paper take on value when, and only when, they spur us toward what Dr. King called 'a committed life.'

"After the autopsy, which showed that his 39-year-old body held the strained and tired heart of an elderly man; after two brown mules pulled his casket in a wooden cart through the streets of Atlanta; after tens of thousands assembled to put him to rest-Dr. King spoke at his own funeral.

"The loudspeakers played a tape of one of his old sermons, and these were the words that echoed through the Ebenezer Baptist Church:

'I don't want a long funeral...

'I'd like somebody to mention that day that Martin Luther King, Jr., tried to give his life serving others.

"I'd like for somebody to say that day that Martin Luther King, Jr., tried to love somebody. I want you to say that day that I tried to be right on the war question.

'I want you to be able to say that day that I did try to feed the hungry. And I want you to be able to say that day that I did try in my life to clothe those who were naked.'

"We can say all of it, with truth, about Martin Luther King, Jr. - a great American, a great leader, and a great man, just like the sponsor of this important resolution.

"May we do our best to live by their example."

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