

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (MD) today released the following statement in commemoration of the upcoming Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday, observed Monday, January 22:

“Nearly 40 years ago, in Memphis, Tennessee, an assassin’s bullet prematurely ended the life of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. when the civil rights leader was only 39 years old. Today, his dream lives on; and as we remember his birthday, we must reinvigorate our efforts to become the unified America he envisioned nearly four decades ago.

“It is also fitting that on this occasion we remember the recently departed who carried the torch for equality and civil rights here in Maryland. We remember Congressman Parren Mitchell – Maryland’s first African American Member of Congress – and State Senator Gwendolyn Britt, who represented Prince George’s County and passed away a little over a week ago. Both Congressman Mitchell and State Senator Britt made significant contributions to the civil rights movement, and will long be remembered for their lifelong commitment to the noble causes of justice and equality.

“While we have good reason to celebrate how far we have come in marching on towards Dr. King’s Promised Land, the inequity that he and others fought so hard against persist in our country today. Discrimination may no longer be safe in social, political and legal realms, but its shadow of poverty, ignorance, and injustice remain.

“As Dr. King said just days before his death at a rally with striking sanitation workers in Memphis, ‘Let us rise up tonight with a greater readiness. Let us stand with a greater determination. And let us move on in these powerful days, these days of challenge to make America what it ought to be. We have an opportunity to make America a better nation.’

“Forty years after Dr. King’s untimely departure, he continues to serve as inspiration for us all to change our nation, our world – and indeed ourselves – for the better.”

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