

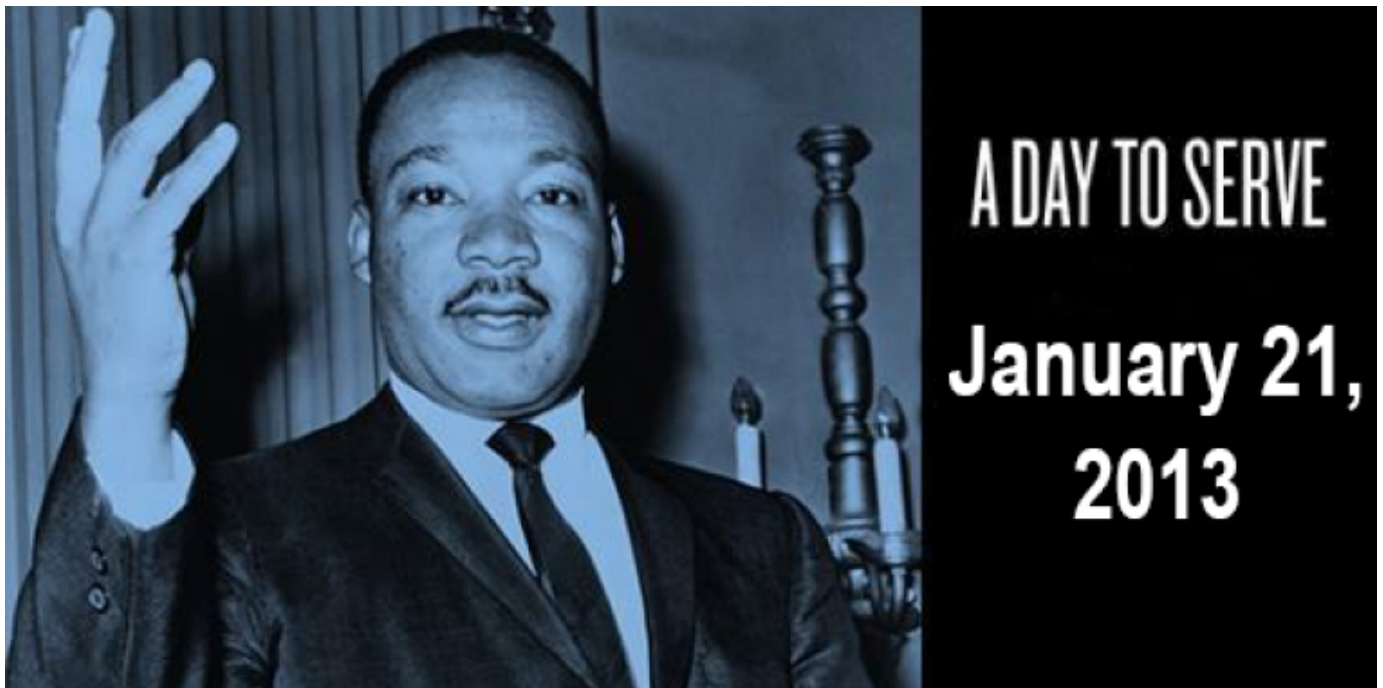


NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Ruben Diaz

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Greetings, January 2013

RUBEN DIAZ January 18, 2013



On January 21, 2013, we celebrate the life and legacy of the Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King, Jr. I extend warm greetings to my African-American brothers and sisters and all people of good will who follow Dr. King's example.

This year we have an additional reason to celebrate. President Barack Obama's public inauguration will also take place on January 21, 2013. Americans will have the opportunity to celebrate the legacy of one great American with the promise and enthusiasm of another, both on the same day!

On April 4, 1968, Dr. King was taken from us, much too quickly and much too violently. Yet, the manner in which he left us is not what I wish to dwell on today. Rather, I believe it is important to reflect on the lessons he left us, the lessons of his life and the lessons of his legacy.

His life was a life lived in service to others. His life was a life lived calling for an end to the injustice caused by racial inequality, the injustice caused by poverty, and the injustice caused by war. He did not witness an end to these injustices in his lifetime.

That is his legacy to us. In our time and in our day, right here and now, we are called to end the injustice of racial inequality, the injustice of poverty, and the injustice of all war. We are the heirs of Dr. King's legacy. We must not falter in our efforts.

I am reminded of a sermon Dr. King delivered, just two short months before his untimely passing, at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia on February 4, 1968:

“And so Jesus gave us a new norm of greatness. If you want to be important—wonderful. If you want to be recognized—wonderful. If you want to be great—wonderful. But recognize that he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. That's a new definition of greatness. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and your verb agree to serve. You don't have to know about Plato and Aristotle to serve. You don't have to know Einstein's theory of relativity to serve. You don't have to know the second theory of thermodynamics in physics to serve. You only need a heart full of grace, a soul generated by love. And you can be that servant.”

I am also reminded of the words spoken by President Obama in his first inaugural address:

“For we know that our patchwork heritage is a strength, not a weakness. We are a nation of Christians and Muslims, Jews and Hindus — and non-believers. We are shaped by every

language and culture, drawn from every end of this Earth; and because we have tasted the bitter swill of civil war and segregation and emerged from that dark chapter stronger and more united, we cannot help but believe that the old hatreds shall someday pass; that the lines of tribe shall soon dissolve; that as the world grows smaller, our common humanity shall reveal itself; and that America must play its role in ushering in a new era of peace.”

As we celebrate two great Americans, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and President Barack Obama, and their messages of service and a more peaceful world, let us imitate them in our deeds and in our actions. I wish God’s blessings on each and every one of you, my brothers and sisters.