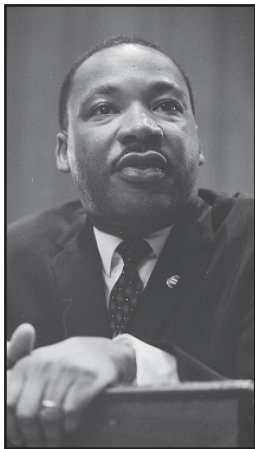


“... all types of conniving methods are still being used to prevent Negroes from becoming registered voters. The denial of this sacred right is a tragic betrayal of the highest mandates of our democratic tradition.”



Source: Library of Congress

**Martin Luther King Jr.**, a leader of the civil rights movement, from a speech given on May 17, 1957

This quote, and several more about the importance of voting, were given by Martin Luther King Jr. during the Prayer Pilgrimage for Freedom demonstration. The event took place in the shadow of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. on May 17, 1957, to mark the third anniversary of the *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) case, a landmark Supreme Court ruling that racial segregation in public schools was unconstitutional.

An estimated 25,000 people, Black and white, gathered to pray, listen to speeches, and voice their opinion about the ongoing struggle for racial equality and justice.

This event, and others like it, helped to galvanize support for subsequent actions and legislation, including the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Civil rights leaders exercised their First Amendment rights by peacefully assembling and speaking freely about changes to bring about equal rights. Can you find modern examples of people demonstrating or protesting to bring attention to a current injustice? What issue(s) are they concerned about? Do any involve voting?

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