

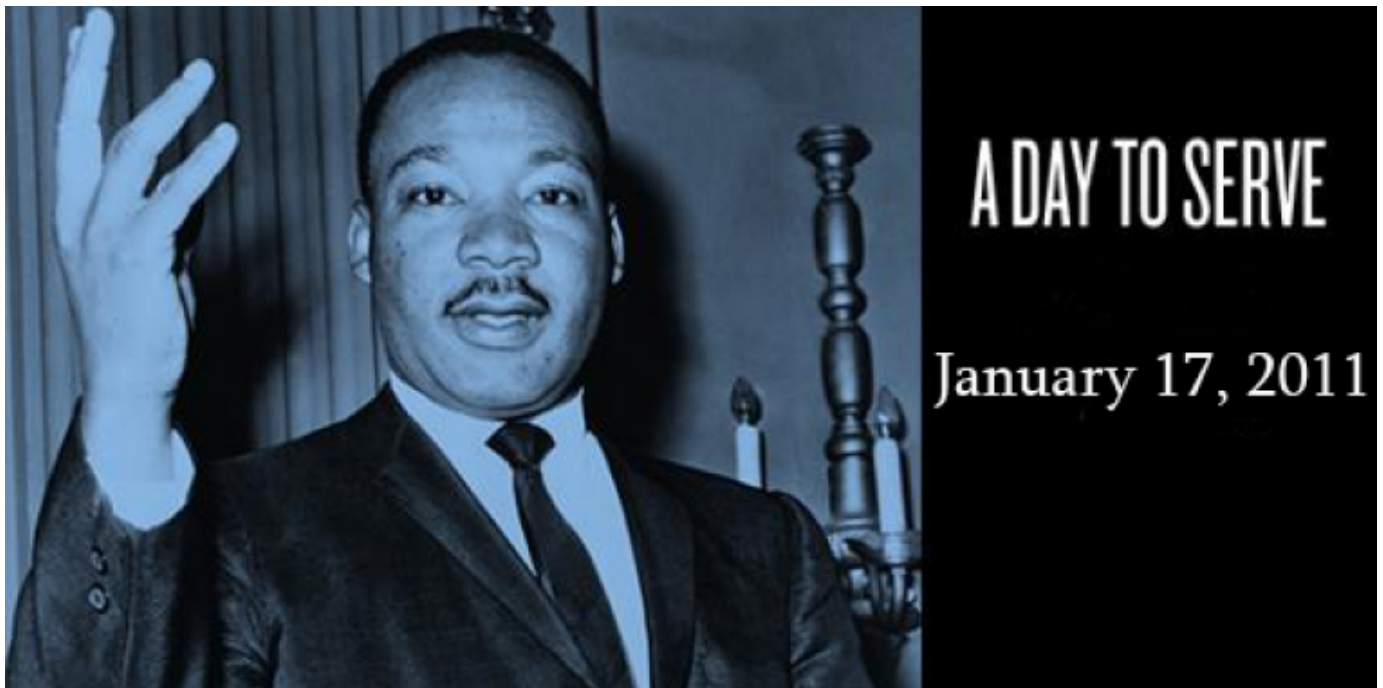


NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Ruben Diaz

Martin Luther King, Jr. 2011 Greetings

RUBEN DIAZ January 4, 2011



On January 17, 2011, 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.

It has been over forty years since Dr. King was taken from us, so quickly and so 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.

In closing, I am reminded of a sermon he delivered 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.

And this morning, the thing that I like about it: by giving that definition of greatness, it means that everybody can be great, because everybody can serve. 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.”

As we celebrate and remember the legacy of that great servant, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., I wish God's blessings on each and every one of you, my brothers and sisters.