

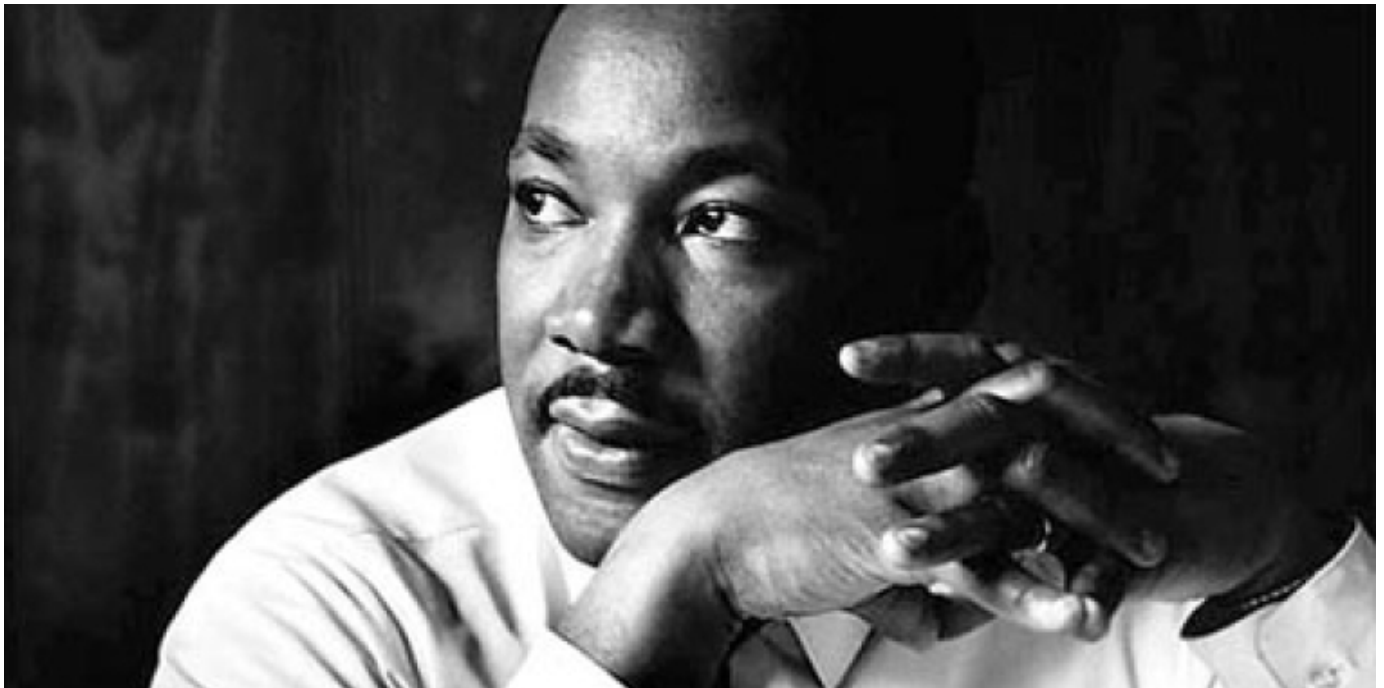


NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrea Stewart-Cousins

Remembering Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

ANDREA STEWART-COUSINS January 19, 2015



Today we celebrate the 30th Anniversary of the holiday commending the life and extraordinary achievements of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., one of our nation's most beloved and influential civil rights leaders.

For many, Dr. King's message of peace, justice and equality resonates this year in graphic ways. Amid nationwide marches, cries for criminal justice reform, and the movie "Selma," we are simultaneously reminded of how far we've come and how far we have yet to go.

We are reminded that through non-violence, courage replaces fear; love transforms hate; acceptance dissipates prejudice; and mutual regard cancels resentment. We are also reminded of the importance of personal character, faith, courage, discipline, and civic responsibilities like voting. We are called as "the beloved community" to work toward economic justice, access to quality education, and protecting and caring for our most vulnerable and the poor. We are always reminded that there is much to do.

As an African American who has personally benefited from Dr. King's tireless efforts, I am renewed by this annual celebration and the enduring power of righteousness. I am also encouraged in my work by Dr. King's admonition that "...change does not roll in on the wheels of inevitability, but comes through continuous struggle." In other words, we must always strive towards a better community.

On this and every day, I believe that if we remember and practice Dr. King's message and courage, our progeny, 50 years from now, will marvel at how far towards our great ideals America has come, and how few steps remain before fulfillment of "The Dream."