OPINION

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Honor King and Follow his Agenda

Continue struggle against injustice

BY JUDGE GREG MATHIS

honored by the numerous pa-

In Columbus, Georgia thou- live on, not only as a celebra-

Jesse Jackson, Dennis Hayes, interim president of the NAACP, and many others in the march for justice on behalf of Kenneth Walker. Thousands of people from Columbus and Atlanta, Georgia came Dr. King would no doubt be together to honor Dr. King by marching for justice on behalf rades, dinners, and celebrations of Kenneth Walker. In addiheld throughout the past holiday tion to providing support for honoring his birthday. He would his wife, daughter, and mother, also be proud of those who we were able to add momenmarched for justice in his name. tum to the fight for justice on Indeed many chose to celebrate behalf of Kenneth and so many the King holiday by continuing other victims of police mishis legacy of struggle against conduct and racial profiling.

The spirit of Dr. King should



The spirit of Dr. King should live on, not only as a celebration, but also as inspiration for our continuous struggle against injustice.

sands marched for justice over tion, but also as inspiration for the killing of Kenneth Walker our continuous struggle against by a country police officer. Kenneth Walker was an unarmed African-American killed in a police traffic stop over a day celebration. year ago.

The officer was fired from his job after it was determined he had no legitimate reason for shooting the law abiding husband and father. Yet, several months after being fired from his job for the shooting, the county's grand jury refused to indict him for the crime. Currently, federal investigators are reviewing the case as man of the Rainbow PUSHa possible civil rights violation. Excel Board and a national Hopefully, they will issue an in- board member of the Southern dictment.

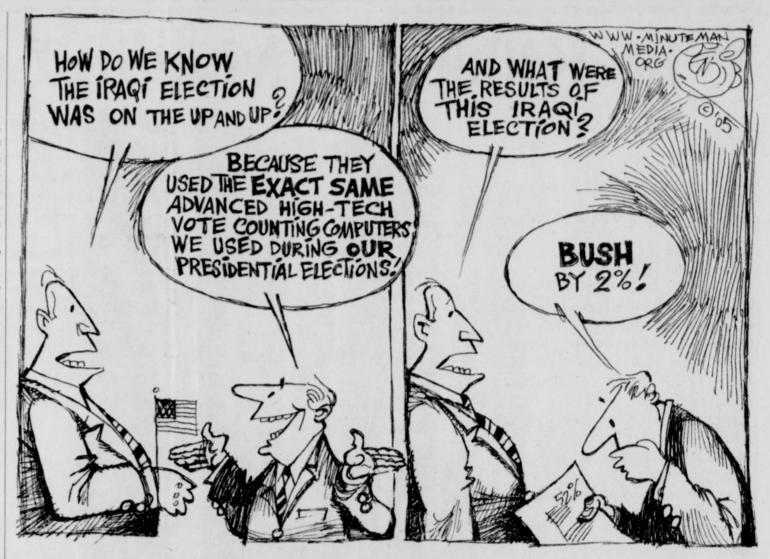
I was privileged to join Rev. ence.

injustice. Dr. King died as a martyr for the cause of justice and equality, not just for a holi-

We must not only honor him, we must follow his agenda.

George W. Bush and many right wing war-mongering political conservatives are now honoring Dr. King but work against everything he represented. Let us distinguish ourselves by following Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Judge Greg Mathis is chair-Christian Leadership Confer-



Decent Standard of Living Gone Astray

Tie minimum wage to salaries in Congress

BY HOLLY SKLAR

Did you know that raising the minimum wage was a demand of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom where the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. gave his "I have a Dream" speech?

King, A. Philip Randolph and

They didn't dream that four hour.

decades later, the value of the ers find themselves in poverty. Congress earned nine times the minimum wage would go down as the cost of housing, food, that four decades after the health care and other necessilion Americans would be below Homelessness Survey" that 17 the official poverty line — far below a decent standard of living. They didn't dream that four decades later, the black poverty rate would still be triple that of whites.

other leaders of the 1963 march minimum wage was \$7.80 an Most Americans want to raise its citizens - not just black demanded "a national minimum hour, adjusting for inflation in wage act that will give all Ameri- 2004 dollars. Today's minimum cans a decent standard of liv- wage prescribed by federal law is far lower - just \$5.15 an

In "Where Do We Go From Here?" King wrote, "There is nothing but a lack of social vision to prevent us from paying an adequate wage to every earn 15 times as much. American citizen whether he be a hospital worker, laundry worker, maid or day laborer."

The minimum wage reached its peak value in 1968, the year King was assassinated. Today's \$5.15 minimum wage is 41 percent less than 1968's inflationadjusted minimum wage of \$8.78.

Full-time, year-round minimum wage workers made \$18,262 in 1968, adjusting for inflation. Today's full-time mini-\$10,712 a year. The minimum ers. wage sets the wage floor. As the floor sinks, millions of work-

Certainly, King didn't dream March on Washington, the U.S. ties went up. They didn't dream Conference of Mayors would that four decades later, 36 mil- find in its annual "Hunger and percent of the homeless were employed, as were 34 percent Lewis, a leader of the March of adults requesting emergency food assistance.

job should keep you out of ernment that its first concern At the time of the march, the poverty, not keep you in it. should be the basic needs of

pay of minimum wage workers. Now, they earn 15 times as much. To reverse that growing gap, Congress should tie their pay raises to raises in the minimum wage.

Georgia Congressman John on Washington, has said if King were alive, "he would be in the Most Americans believe a forefront of reminding the gov-

At the time of the 1963 March on Washington, members of Congress earned nine times the pay of minimum wage workers. Now, they

the minimum wage signifi- Americans but all Americans

minimum wage was last increased, while approving no ingressional pay rose to \$162,100way up from \$133,600 in 1997. That \$28,500 congressional pay a decent standard of living." hike is more than the total earn-

on Washington, members of for All Of Us."

- for food, shelter, health care, Yet, Congress has had seven education, jobs, livable inpay raises since 1997, when the comes and the opportunity to realize their full potential."

Congress and the White creases for minimum wage earn- House should stop taking a holiers since then. This month, con- day from King's dream and enact, "a national minimum wage act that will give all Americans

Holly Sklar, a longtime mum wage workers make just ingsoftwominimumwagework- journalist and activist, is coauthor of "Raise the Floor: At the time of the 1963 March Wages and Policies That Work

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