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OPINION

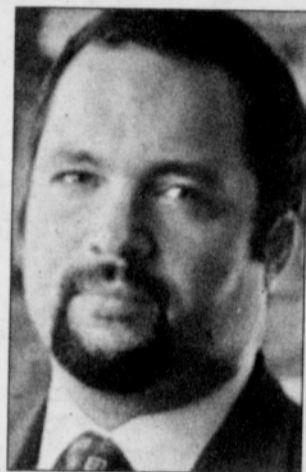
Hosting a Sequel to the March on Washington

Making history again for jobs and justice

BY BENJAMIN TODD JEALOUS

Remember the March on Washington? Aug. 28, 1963. Tens of thousands of activists on the National Mall. A preacher's son from Atlanta talking about his dream for the country.

We don't need a history lesson. Even if we weren't at the March itself - even for



those like me, who were not yet born - Dr. King's words are etched into our minds as deeply as they are inscribed in stone at the base of his memorial. The preacher's son has taken his rightful place in the pantheon of national heroes.

We don't need to watch a rerun of that fateful day. We need a sequel.

On Saturday, Aug. 24, the NAACP is co-hosting a sequel to the March on Washington for Jobs and Justice: the 2013 March on Washington. The march begins at 8 a.m., at the steps of the

Lincoln Memorial. Join us.

If this year has shown us anything, it's that the work of the 1963 march is not yet finished. Texas and South Carolina are sprinting forward with voter ID after the Supreme Court gutted the Voting Rights Act. African American unemployment has flat lined. Our children are gunned down each and every day in senseless acts of violence. Trayvon Martin lies in the ground after one such senseless act.

At the same time, our culture of civic engagement is experiencing a renaissance. In the past month, hundreds of cities held vigils and rallies to protest the Zimmerman verdict. The nation

is having a serious conversation about racial profiling for the first time since 9/11. In North Carolina, Moral Mondays has grown larger with each passing week.

We have the numbers, and we have the capacity for motivation. The question is whether we will allow ourselves to be motivated.

So join us - NAACP, National Action Network, Realizing the Dream and others - on the National Mall on Aug. 24. If you live within two hours of Washington, DC, hop in a car or on a bus - or even better, organize a bus. If you live farther away, you are still encouraged to come and be a part of history.

The 2013 March on Washington will be a people's movement. It will not be fueled by cash - it will only be energized by your decision to participate. We need you there to help us gain a critical mass of voices, and prove once again that organized people can beat organized money any time.

On this 50th anniversary of the March on Washington, we should celebrate our history, but it's more important that we never stop making history.

Meet us at the Lincoln Memorial. Join us on Aug. 24.

Ben Jealous is president and chief executive officer of the NAACP.

50 Years after Martin Luther King Jr. made History

Another march, another dream

BY ELISABETH STEVENS

It was a time of terror and trouble. In the years before and after the historic March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom of Aug. 28, 1963,



there were repeated and widespread acts of violence. In Birmingham, Ala., earlier that summer, four young black girls died in a church bombing. Near Philadelphia, Miss., less than a year later, three Congress of Racial Equality civil rights workers: Michael Schwerner, James Chaney and Andrew Goodman were murdered and buried in an earthen dam.

Nevertheless, on that hot summer day 50 years ago, an estimated 250,000 people came to Washington peacefully from all over America. They gathered downtown in the long Mall between the Capitol and the Potomac River. Around the spire of the Washington Monument, beneath the spreading trees, beside the long, quiet reflecting pool, and as close as they could get to the great, marble-columned memorial containing the statue of Abraham Lincoln, they waited.

It was there, at the broad white steps of the Lincoln Memorial that the leaders of the March had gathered. Among them were A. Philip Randolph,

director of the March and founder of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, Roy Wilkins - leader of the NAACP, Rabbi Joachim Prinz, president of the American Jewish Council, a Berlin rabbi of the Hitler era, and Walter Reuther leader of the United Automobile Workers.

One by one, leaders exhorted the listening crowd. Randolph described the gathering as "the largest demonstration in the history of this nation." Reuther pictured the March as a "great crusade to mobilize the moral conscience of America."

Rabbi Prinz warned, "bigotry and hatred are not the most urgent problems," but that "the most urgent, the most disgraceful, the most tragic problem is silence." Recalling Nazi Germany, he added: "A great people, which had created a great civilization, had become a nation of silent onlookers. They remained silent in the face of hate, in the face of brutality, in the face of mass murder. America must not become a nation of silent onlookers...."

Before and between the speeches there was music.

Marian Anderson sang. Mahalia Jackson sang. Finally, it was time for Dr. Martin Luther King to present his historic dream speech.

Beginning by describing the gathering as "the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation," Dr. King went on to warn against "drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred." He also warned against allowing "our creative protests to degenerate into physical violence." Instead, he advised "meeting physical force with soul force."

Finally, with his words resonating among the multitudes like great waves of light, Dr. King intoned: "I have a dream.... I have a dream.... I have a dream that my four children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. I have a dream...."

In the 50 years that have followed that march, Dr. King's words have echoed everywhere and inspired multitudes. Today, senior citizens who came to the march still remember. One retired octogenarian now living in Florida insists: "It was one of the most important experiences of my life."

But beyond dreams, what is the reality? What can and should be celebrated by the 50th anni-

versary March on Washington on Aug. 28, 2013?

On the Mall, not far from the Lincoln Memorial, there is a much-visited granite memorial to Dr. King dedicated in 2011. Yet elsewhere, in places such as Stamford, Fla., and Chicago, violence continues. The tragic killings of 17-year-old Trayvon Martin in Stamford and of 15-year-old Hadiya Pendleton in Chicago engender painful questions.

How can the "soul force" Dr. King recommended as an alter-

native to "physical violence" be engendered, employed, promoted? If there are answers, who has them?

Amidst contemporary pain and confusion, the dreams of Dr. King linger and inspire. To have a dream and work for it may be the only answer.

Elisabeth Stevens is the author of Ride a Bright and Shining Pony, the story of two young lovers whose lives and destinies are irrevocably and tragically intertwined with the 1963 March on Washington.

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