

Commission on Human Rights

KY Human Rights Commission Executive Director urges public to commit to ending discrimination

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Kentucky Commission on Human Rights Executive Director John J. Johnson is celebrating Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day by calling on Kentuckians to renew their commitment to ending discrimination and achieving true equal opportunity for all Kentuckians.

He delivered his call to action in a keynote speech to elected officials, students, faculty, and community members at Somerset Community College's Martin Luther King Jr. Unity Breakfast Friday, January 18.

"We should use occasions like this to recommit ourselves to rid America of the violence, hatred, bigotry, and inequality that remains in our nation," said Johnson. "Those of us who pause to honor Dr. King's birth and life must leave here with a greater determination and commitment to make real the promise of democracy in this town and throughout our state," he said.

Noting that Dr. King's influence, "reached from the greatest corridors of power in this world – to the smallest communities and hollows like those in rural Kentucky," Johnson also reminded attendees of Dr. King's direct ties to Kentucky; specifically, his participation in a historic 1964 march to the state capitol in Frankfort, calling for an end to segregation in the Commonwealth.

On Sunday, January 20, Johnson brought his message to parishioners and community members at a Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday church service in Middlesboro, Kentucky. There, he highlighted some of Kentucky's most pressing civil rights issues: access to high-quality education for all children; protections for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender individuals; restored voting rights for individuals who have committed felonies; and solutions to poverty and unemployment.

The Kentucky Commission on Human Rights is the state authority that enforces the Kentucky and United States Civil Rights acts, which make discrimination illegal. The Kentucky Civil Rights Act protects people from discrimination in the areas of employment, public accommodations, housing, and financial transactions. It prohibits discrimination on the bases of race, color, religion, national origin, disability and gender. It additionally protects people on the basis of

familial status in the area of housing, which covers families with children in the household under age 18-years old and covers women who are pregnant. The bases of age, 40-years old and over, and tobacco-smoking status, are protected in the area of employment. It is against the law to retaliate against any person who complains of discrimination to the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights.

For help with discrimination, contact the commission at [1.800.292.5566](tel:1.800.292.5566). The TDD telephone number is [502.595.4084](tel:502.595.4084). Visit the website at kchr.ky.gov.