

Commission on Human Rights

Gear up for the 50th Anniversary Commemorative March to the Capitol Steps in Frankfort, March 5

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The Allied Organizations for Civil Rights, of which the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights is one of many members, proudly announces the upcoming 50th Anniversary Civil Rights March on Frankfort.

The commemorative march and accompanying rally will be from 10 a.m. through approximately noon (Eastern Standard Time), Wednesday, March 5, 2014. Gather at the corner of 2nd Street and Capital Avenue at 9:30 a.m. to line up in order to proceed to the State Capitol, 700 Capital Avenue Bay, in Frankfort, Ky., 40601.

Everyone who is proud of Kentucky's historic role in helping to end segregation in the nation and for being the first state south of the Mason-Dixon Line to have a state Civil Rights Act is enthusiastically invited to participate.

The Allied Organizations for Civil Rights was formed for the sole purpose of organizing this commemorative event and carries the same name of the group that organization the 1964 march on Frankfort. It is a collaborative network consisting of professional, educational, human rights and activist groups and individuals. The Allied Organizations for Civil Rights includes partners from all over the state. Included are the Kentucky Legislative Black Caucus, Kentucky Council of Churches, Kentuckians for the Commonwealth, the Kentucky Conference of NAACP Branches, the Kentucky Chapter of the National Association of Human Rights Workers, the Kentucky Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, the Kentucky Black Caucus of Local Elected Officials, the Fairness Campaign, the American Civil Liberties Union of Kentucky, the Kentucky AFL-CIO, the A. Phillip Randolph Institute, the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, local human rights commissions throughout the state, and representatives of Kentucky's colleges and universities.

"The Allied Organizations for Civil Rights hopes that men, women and children from all over the state who believe in continuing the justice movement will participate in the commemorative

march and rally on March 5, 2014,” said John J. Johnson, executive director of the state human rights commission.

“It is our desire to build upon the legacy that 10,000 Kentuckians left in 1964 with efforts that ultimately led to the end of legal discrimination and the Kentucky Human Rights Commission being made the state authority charged with investigating and ruling on discrimination complaints,” he said.

Johnson said the Allied Organizations for Civil Rights also hopes to place modern-day human rights at the forefront of the commemorative event by urging full voter participation and access.

The Kentucky General Assembly will be in session in March, and the event could present an opportunity for people to visit their state legislators and present to them concerns of Kentuckians who care about a variety of issues, Johnson said.

“We will be encouraging schools and colleges to bring students to participate in the event, just as they did in 1964,” Johnson said. “We hope to see busloads of students and teachers as well as human rights, religious, disability, and other activist and advocate groups,” he said.

To help with organization or to sign up to participate, contact Mary Ann Taylor of the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights at 1.800.292.5566. Or email her at AOCR@ky.gov. Allied Organizations for Civil Rights asks for as many volunteers as possible to help facilitate and to share the plan for the upcoming 50th Anniversary Civil Rights March on Frankfort on March 5, 2014, with others who may want to attend.

The historic March 5, 1964, Civil Rights March on Frankfort included more than 10,000 people who walked to the capitol to urge a law that would help end segregation by making discrimination illegal in the area of public accommodations such as stores, restaurants, theatres, and hotels. A host of Kentucky civil rights leaders, citizens of all races, and celebrities participated. Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., Rev. Ralph David Abernathy, and baseball great Jackie Robinson were among those who traveled to Kentucky to help lead the marchers to the capitol and speak to the crowd from the steps. The folk group Peter, Paul and Mary led songs about freedom. Gov. Edward (Ned) Breathitt met with Frank Stanley Jr., owner of the Louisville Defender newspaper and a key organizer of the event, other state civil rights leaders, and King and Robinson, to talk about the urgent need for a state civil rights law. The march helped build support for the U.S. Civil Rights Act of 1964 and helped result in the Kentucky Civil Rights Act of 1966.

The Kentucky Commission on Human Rights is the state government authority that enforces the Kentucky Civil Rights Act, and, through its affiliation with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development, enforces federal civil rights laws. The Kentucky Civil Rights Act makes it illegal to discriminate against

people in the areas of employment, financial transactions, housing and public accommodations. Discrimination is prohibited in all these areas based on race, color, religion, national origin, gender, and disability. In employment, discrimination is further prohibited on the basis of age (40-years and over) and on the basis of tobacco-smoking status. In housing, discrimination is further prohibited based on familial status, which protects people with children in the household under the age of 18-years old, and it protects women who are pregnant. It is also a violation of the law to retaliate against a person who has made a discrimination complaint to the commission.

For more information, contact the commission at 1.800.292.5566. For details about civil rights and commission activities, visit the website at www.kchr.ky.gov.

For news about civil rights and information pertaining to protected classes, visit the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights Facebook and Twitter sites. Link to the sites from the commission website at www.kchr.ky.gov.