

Barnes campaign: Statement on Martin Luther King Jr. Day

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MADISON — In celebration of Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Lt. Governor Mandela Barnes released the following statement:

“Today, as we celebrate the life and achievements of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and the movement for equality he has inspired, we find ourselves as a nation in the midst of a fight he dedicated his life to nearly 70 years ago. As cynical politicians work to undermine our constitutional right to vote, it is not enough to just pay lip service to the ideals Dr. King espoused. We must continue his life’s work by preserving our democracy and our fundamental rights. That means ending the filibuster and passing the John Lewis Voting Rights Act.

“I have never yet engaged in a direct action movement that was ‘well timed.’” Dr. King wrote those words in 1963 in ‘Letter from a Birmingham Jail,’ but they ring just as true today. His words must be our guide as we lay everything on the line in defense of the right to vote in Wisconsin and across the country.

“To those who say we must wait for a ‘more convenient season’ to protect voting rights, we must say convenience is nothing when the enfranchisement of millions of Americans is at stake. To those who say they agree with the goal but not the means, we must say no archaic procedure in the halls of Congress should overrule the fundamental right of the people to have our voices heard. To those who say ‘wait’ when they mean ‘quit,’ we must say the time to defend our democracy is, and has always been, now.

“Each and every one of us has the capacity to spark change and bend that moral arc of the universe a little more toward justice. That is what Dr. King’s journey from a Georgia minister to a national leader for civil rights has taught us. His work is far

from finished, and it is up to us now to honor his legacy with action.”