



CITY OF BELLINGHAM  
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
SETH FLEETWOOD

## MAYORAL PROCLAMATION

**WHEREAS**, as the Martin Luther King Jr. Day holiday nears, we acknowledge that voting rights were central to Dr. King's agenda, to the Southern Freedom Struggle, and to the Civil Rights Movement for justice and equality for African Americans; and

**WHEREAS**, as a result of the last election, legislation is being enacted in several states to restrict voting rights, the foundational rights of our democracy that many men and women in previous years have protested, fought, and died for; and

**WHEREAS**, at the present time two vital federal voting rights bills are stalled in the Senate, while in our community and nationwide we prepare to commemorate the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.; and

**WHEREAS**, the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, named in honor of the civil rights icon and late Georgia congressman, has been proposed in Congress to fight voter suppression and restore enforcement provisions of the 1965 Voting Rights Act; and

**WHEREAS**, the Freedom to Vote Act would establish provisions promoting voter participation, such as abolishing restrictions on voter registration, establishing Election Day as a public holiday, ensuring all states have established early voting provisions for federal elections, and allowing all voters to request mail-in ballots, among other important provisions; and

**WHEREAS**, the family of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. recently called for using Martin Luther King Jr. Day to put pressure on lawmakers to pass the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act and the Freedom to Vote Act; and

**WHEREAS**, the family of Dr. Martin Luther King, in "calling our nation's attention to securing and protecting the most sacred right of our democracy, which is the right to vote," further stated that "if voting rights are still hanging in the balance" by Martin Luther King Jr. Day, they are calling for supporters to "speak and act in a way to ensure that this nation lives up to its promise of democracy, by putting pressure on our United States Senate to bypass the filibuster and instead of taking the King holiday off, they should make it a 'day on' to pass the voting rights acts."; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Bellingham traditionally hosts and participates in Martin Luther King Jr. Day community events and activities; and

**WHEREAS**, those activities planned for 2022 Martin Luther King Jr. Day in which the City of Bellingham is involved are in alignment with Dr. Bernice King's request that the day be one of commemoration and service, a "day on" to educate, advocate and activate; and

**WHEREAS**, we support and join the King family in their efforts to move these two vital voter rights bills forward and to use the Martin Luther King Jr. Day holiday as an opportunity and a platform to do so. We refuse to stand by silent while voter rights are eroded.



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**NOW, THEREFORE, DO I**, Seth Fleetwood, Mayor of the City of Bellingham

## **CALL FOR ACTION ON VOTING RIGHTS LEGISLATION IN COMMEMORATION OF 2022 MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY BY:**

- Calling upon Congress to pass the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act and the Freedom to Vote Act, important voting rights legislation designed to promote voter participation and ensure voting rights protections for all.
- Directing this proclamation to our Washington State Congressional delegation.
- Urging members of our community to join in our call to action by contacting their Congressional representatives to insist that these two pieces of voting rights legislation be passed.
- Encouraging members of the community to join us in commemoration and service on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, this year and in years to come, making it a “day on” to educate, advocate and activate.



Signed this 7<sup>th</sup> of January 2022

Seth Fleetwood, Mayor  
City of Bellingham