

# FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **State Rep. McClendon Celebrates MLK Day**

*Representative Ruth Jones McClendon Recalls MLK Legacy and Support of Voting Rights*

(San Antonio)--State Representative McClendon will march with family and constituents in the largest Martin Luther King, Jr. Day March in the nation. Pursuant to a resolution unanimously passed in the Texas House of Representatives by Rep. Helen Giddings of Dallas, the Texas House of Representatives will not meet on Monday, January 15, 2007, in observance of Martin Luther King Day.

This Monday, Americans across the nation will recognize and celebrate the life and accomplishments of Dr. King in various ways. Rep. McClendon will begin the day hosting a breakfast with family, friends, and elected officials. Attending the breakfast will be **Linda Chavez Thompson, Executive Vice President of the national AFL-CIO** in Washington, D. C. She is the first person of color to hold an executive office of that union.

At 10:00 a.m., the group will participate in the largest MLK March in the nation and celebrate the 20th anniversary of the City of San Antonio's Martin Luther King Commission. The Commission was founded by former Mayor Henry Cisneros and the first chairperson of the Commission was Ms. Aaronetta Hamilton Pierce.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. is best known as a leader of the civil rights movement. His nonviolent actions highlighting injustice earned him the Noble Peace Prize, the youngest recipient ever of that prestigious award. Since 1983, Americans have officially acknowledged his achievements and celebrated the principle of equality on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

Although President Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 over 40 years ago, civil rights issues continue to be debated in the Texas House of Representatives. In the current session, Rep. McClendon plans to fight for equality in the spirit of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

**"Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was one of the most important leaders of his era and his embrace of right over bigotry and injustice still inspires us all to do the right thing today,"** said Rep. McClendon. **"His drive to overcome war, racial injustice, and economic inequality is an inspiration, and his legacy is a great testament to true American values"**

**"Dr. King encouraged Americans to join together and address the most important issues facing our country,"** said Rep. McClendon. **"He fought to strengthen communities, ease poverty, and acknowledge the dignity and respect that all people deserve. Most**

**importantly, Dr. King fought for equality and succeeded in making America a more perfect union."**

This session, Rep. McClendon plans to combat legislation that would limit access to the ballot box, a problem many minorities still face today. A bill which would reduce participation of minority voters was defeated during the last legislative session but is expected to make another appearance this session. Guaranteeing that all Americans have equal and easy access to the polls was one of Dr. King's main objectives, and his work led to the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The act aimed to eliminate all barriers to Southern blacks' right to vote. Rep. McClendon is committed to protecting the rights of all Texans by protecting the current voting process and preventing obstacles that would make voting more difficult.

**"Dr. King fought for equality, and we must follow his example,"** said Rep. McClendon.

During the current session, Rep. McClendon will continue her work ensuring equal health services and education for all Texas youth. He hopes to increase funding to the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). CHIP is designed to help eligible children gain access to a full range of health services, including regular checkups, prescriptions, hospital visits, and more. In addition, Rep. McClendon will continue to fight to improve public schools and help stimulate economic development in urban and rural neighborhoods.

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