

John Lewis
17-Term Congressman Representing Atlanta, GA
"The Conscience of the Congress"

The son of a sharecropper growing up in rural Alabama, the late John Lewis lived in constant fear of lynching as a little boy because of signs that said "no colored boys, no colored girls." His parents and grandparents used to tell him, "don't get in trouble."

At an early age (15), Lewis was inspired to activism by the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Rosa Park's refusal to give up her seat inspired Lewis to write to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. In response, he was given a round trip bus ticket to Montgomery to meet with King, where he was nicknamed "The Boy from Troy."

When the Library of Congress opened an exhibition in Parks' honor, "Rosa Parks: In Her Own Words," Lewis said, "Rosa Parks inspired us to get in trouble. And I've been getting in trouble ever since. She inspired us to find a way, to get in the way, to get in what I call good trouble, necessary trouble. She kept on saying to each one of us, you too can do something for people. If you see something that is not right, not fair, not just, do something. We cannot afford to be quiet."

On March 7, 1965, John Lewis led more than 600 peaceful protestors across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma to demonstrate the need for voting rights in the state of Alabama. They were greeted with such brutal attacks by Alabama State Troopers that the day became known as "Bloody Sunday."

He risked his life countless times by organizing voter registration drives, sit-ins at lunch counters and was beaten and arrested for challenging the injustice of Jim Crow segregation in the South. While still a young man, John Lewis was named one of the Big Six leaders of the Civil Rights Movement. As the chairman of the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), he spoke at the historic March on Washington in 1963 at the age of 23.

Take a Stand Against Voter Suppression

Today, voter suppression is a tactic to "make America great again." Right wing Republicans acknowledge that the voting reforms Lewis dedicated his life to could be "absolutely devastating" to their agenda.¹ That's why the For the People Bill remains unsigned.

According to Jesus (Luke 4:16-18), every year is the year for freedom fighting. This assault on our voting rights is an example of spiritual wickedness in high places, (Ephesians 6:12). For us, now is a time to stand and voting rights is an issue to stand on – especially in this presidential election! Let's stand up, speak out and vote.

¹ <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/five-things-john-lewis-taught-us-about-getting-in-good-trouble/>