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LDF Reflects on 60th Anniversary of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

This week marked the 60th anniversary of the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (CRA). The CRA, signed into law on July 2, 1964, by President Lyndon Johnson, enacted key protections to forbid discrimination and promote equality for all.

Among other transformational provisions, the landmark civil rights legislation prohibited discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin in public places and in employment, and declared the integration of schools and public accommodations.

The passage of the law would not have been possible without the courage, dedication, and resolve of many predecessors who laid the legal framework and led national protests to push our country forward. In collaboration with then-President Lyndon Johnson and Congress, LDF founder Thurgood Marshall, LDF attorney Constance Baker Motley, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Representative John Lewis, and many champions of the movement, worked to create and codify the legislation.

In response to the anniversary, LDF President and Director-Counsel Janai Nelson issued the following statement:

“Sixty years ago, Congress recognized that only the reach of sweeping civil rights legislation could address the injustices and inequities that continued to plague our country. After the Supreme Court struck down earlier civil rights statutes, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 has done muscular work to transform our education system, workplaces, and public accommodations. Today, we need additional legislation that is equally transformative to further expand civil rights for a modern society. We also have a mandate to fully enforce this historic law that emanated from the Reconstruction Amendments and continues to hold us to our constitutional ideals.”

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Founded in 1940, the [Legal Defense Fund \(LDF\)](#) is the nation’s first civil rights law organization. LDF’s Thurgood Marshall Institute is a multi-disciplinary and collaborative hub within LDF that launches targeted campaigns and undertakes innovative research to shape the civil rights narrative. In media attributions, please refer to us as the Legal Defense Fund or LDF. Please note that LDF has been completely separate from the National Association for the

Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since 1957—although LDF was originally founded by the NAACP and shares its commitment to equal rights.