



**For Immediate Release**  
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## **LDF President Calls for “Transformative Change” at 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of March on Washington**

Today, the Legal Defense Fund (LDF) joined hosts National Action Network and Drum Major Institute at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C. to mark the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom.

LDF President and Director-Counsel Janai S. Nelson issued this statement in commemoration of the march and as a call to continue its mission of transformative change:

“The March on Washington was a galvanizing force for change at a critical time in our history. We are at another crossroads,” she said. “Today, we are facing many of the same forces of obstruction that instigated a powerful demonstration of mass protest and action that became the historic March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom in 1963. The march helped pave the way to the passage of key civil rights legislation such as CRA 1964, VRA 1965, FHA 1968, and more.

“The 250,000 people who stood at these steps on August 28, 1963 marched against forces that sought to crush their pursuit of justice and equality. They were facing a system in and outside of government that denied their fundamental right to have a voice in the democratic process, limited the education of their children, refused them economic opportunities, and punished them for daring to demand the freedoms they were due.

“Similarly, in 2020, hundreds of thousands of people across the country and the globe mobilized in response to heinous acts of police violence in our nation and began challenging the systems of racial injustice that continue to drive harms for Black communities and other communities of color. In response, we’ve seen a coordinated backlash, through efforts to chip away at hard-won advancements for equality.

“Today, when critical legislation like the VRAA and FTV, issues of reproductive justice, dignity, truth, and public safety await Congress’s action, people across the country continue to exhibit the power of mass demonstration as an essential element of transformative advocacy and self-determination.

“The intensity of the backlash to the civil rights gains in the past several decades is a clear indication of the strength of the votes and voices of the majority of people in the United States when we come together for the common cause of justice. The anniversary of the march should remind all of us that we hold the power to change the direction of our nation. Popular action is part of the wind that powers our sails forward toward a more perfect union.”

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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.*