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MLK FREEDOM CENTER STUDENTS ATTEND CONGRESSIONAL CIVIL RIGHTS PILGRIMAGE WITH BARBARA LEE AND KAMALA HARRIS

Oakland, CA, March 9, 2022--A delegation of seventeen students and staff of the **Martin Luther King Jr. Freedom Center** attended the **2022 Congressional Civil Rights Pilgrimage** and the **57th Jubilee Bloody Sunday Bridge Crossing** in Alabama this past weekend. The students spent time in Birmingham, Montgomery and Selma with **Vice President Kamala Harris**, members of Congress and civil rights luminaries at the invitation of **Congresswoman Barbara Lee**. Founded by **Faith & Politics Institute** and the late **Congressman John Lewis**, the nearly annual Pilgrimages bring together bi-partisan members of Congress at the intersection of shared values and public service to study the impacts of slavery and truth-telling on American democracy and to learn and affirm the vital importance of the Civil Rights Movement. The students dialoged with **Congressman James Clyburn, House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, Congressman Nikema Williams and Congresswoman Terri Sewell , Rev. Jesse Jackson, the Mayors of Birmingham, Montgomery and Selma** and other elected officials from around the country in the course of the weekend.

Vice President Harris met privately with Freedom Center students in Selma on Sunday at the 57th Jubilee commemoration of Bloody Sunday, telling them, "Many of the Civil Rights fighters were really young when they started. So, it is your future and you are taking charge of it!" The commemoration was attended by Al Sharpton, Martin Luther King III, Marcus Arbery and scores of foot soldiers and local leadership, who crossed the iconic Edmund Pettis Bridge in remembrance.

Congresswoman Barbara Lee commented, "I am so proud of our students at the Martin Luther King Jr. Freedom Center for their serious engagement in our nation's Civil Rights Movement. They are the future. Better yet, they are the present for saving the soul of America. This is such an urgent time for voting rights and the defense of our democracy. We need a nonviolent movement across our nation, and these young leaders are helping to build it."

The Freedom Center delegation visited historic sites including Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham and the Civil Rights Institute, where they laid a wreath in remembrance of the victims of the 1963 bombing that took the lives of four girls. The group spent time in Gees Bend with members of six generations of quilter makers and culture bearers whose art of storytelling and history making in fabric has been passed down through centuries.

The Freedom Center students represent congressional districts CA-13, AL-07 and WA-10, where they participate throughout the school year in weekly classes with Dr. Roy Wilson, Executive Director and with Dr. Clayborne Carson at Stanford University's World House Project in deep study of nonviolence and the role of self-transformation in making social change. For more information, visit www.mlkfreedomcenter.org .

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