



Brittany Holmes · Jan 20, 2020 · 3 min read

Dr. Martin Luther King's Fair Housing Legacy: Today it is in danger.

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING'S FAIR HOUSING LEGACY

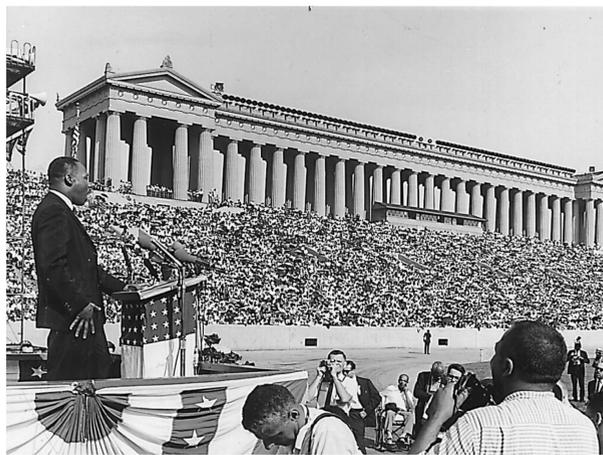
Today it is in danger.



Everyone knows about Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and his dream for racial justice and equality, but what you may not know is that he was an adamant supporter of fair housing. In fact, King spent one of his [last years in Chicago](#) fighting for fair and just housing.

"Well, this is a terrible thing. I've been in many demonstrations all across the South, but I can say that I have never seen, even in Mississippi and Alabama, mobs as hostile and as hate-filled as I'm seeing in Chicago." -Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in [1966 during the Chicago Freedom Movement](#)

Dr. King moved his family to Chicago in 1966 and helped lead the [Chicago Freedom Movement](#). His move was born out of urgency. The living conditions in Chicago for African Americans were unsafe, overpriced, and unfair. The state of the housing was [lecherous](#), "many of the apartments were rat-infested, without heat, dangerous, not regularly repaired by the landlords, and extremely overpriced." More so, African Americans experienced dangerous living conditions from nearby white neighbors that would incite riots, but [most Chicagoans... however had no idea](#) of the situation's volatility. For much of the 1940s the major newspapers, at the request of the Chicago Commission on Human Relations, would simply not report the occurrence of these riots." In addition to the horrible conditions, it was set up for African Americans to fail with [unfair lending practices](#).



MLK Jr. speaking at Soldier Field <http://imgur.com/QCIMEIP>

King held rallies in Chicago, and on July 19, 1966, 30,000 people came to Soldier Field to hear him speak about the city's housing crisis. He led the group to the city hall, where he taped [his demands](#) to the door.

Throughout the summer, King led marches through white neighborhoods where he was met with [violent white residents holding signs](#) that said, "Join the White Rebellion" and "We Worked Hard For What We Got." On August 5, 1966, while leading a group on a march, King [was hit in the head with a rock](#) thrown from the crowd. Eventually, [some of the demands were met](#) — a bank association agreed to stop discriminatory lending and the city agreed to build more affordable, fair housing in white neighborhoods.

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. continued his fight for fair housing, and racial and economic justice, until April 4, 1968, when he was murdered and on April 11, 1968, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1968, which included the [Fair Housing Act](#), in response to King's recent efforts in Chicago and outrage about his murder.

Chicago's history and the struggles for housing are harrowing. But these atrocities were not just in Chicago, it was happening all over the country. White neighborhoods were [designed and created to be white](#) and stay white. [Redlining](#), a process where neighborhoods were rated based on who lived there to determine loan eligibility, was a nationwide practice, sponsored by the federal government. Banks used these maps to determine where people were able to get loans, based on the racial and ethnic makeup, while real estate agents would only show certain houses to certain families — again, based on race. Segregation was not just desired, it was designed — [across the country](#).

Despite progress, we still face many of the same problems that King fought for during his time in Chicago. Poor living conditions, slum lords, unfair housing, and a lack of affordability continue to plague people searching for a home. In 2015, President Obama issued the [Affirmatively Fair Housing](#) (AFFH) rule to help fulfill the promise of the Fair Housing Act. It gave guidance and tools to states and local areas so they could undo the effects of segregation. But, the Trump administration now wants to eliminate the rule, attacking the most vulnerable and enabling racial segregation. This is [unacceptable](#) and works to [undermine the legacy](#) of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

This year, as we celebrate the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., we need to speak up for his vision by [standing in opposition](#) of this racist proposal from the Trump administration that dismantles what Dr. King fought for his whole life.

On the path to equality, it is essential to tear down the barriers that prevent progress. [Use your voice to fight for King's legacy now.](#)



[f](#) [t](#) [in](#) [e](#)

Fair Housing

698 views 0 comments



Recent Posts

See All

27 WAYS RACISM AND WHITE SUPREMACY IMPACT HOUSING

27 Ways Racism and White Supremacy Impa...

3,556 views 3 comments 13 likes

AFFH THE AFFH RULE

The AFFH Rule: Why the New Proposal is...

1,437 views 0 comments 2 likes

UNDERSTANDING AFFH

Understanding AFFH: What It Is and How Do...

48,889 views 7 likes