



ANNOUNCEMENT:

Why The Hope Center is Supporting a Hunger Strike on MLK Day

January 16, 2022

Over the weekend we [received a note and invitation](#) from our board member [Michael Sorrell](#), the longest-serving President in the 146-year history of Paul Quinn College. On Monday, in recognition of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday, he and other national leaders are participating in a one-day hunger strike.

[The strike is in solidarity](#) with 25 faith leaders who have been without food since January 6, 2022. They are striking to bring attention to the need for Congress to protect every American's right to vote by passing meaningful voter rights legislation. Last week the [door was slammed shut](#) on federal legislation to create new protections for access to voting. Martin Luther King Jr.'s family is calling for no celebration of MLK Day [without action on voting rights legislation](#).

As an organization—and as a fellow movement aligned with the values and vision behind the strike—we are collectively supporting this initiative. Tackling voter suppression and students' basic needs insecurity are a part of the same struggle. Inequities at both the state and federal levels are hampering progress on both.

As we launch #RealCollegeHBCU on Thursday, we are reminded of the commonalities of these struggles. They are interwoven.

As our upcoming report notes, two-thirds of HBCU students experience basic needs insecurity. We need a systematic approach to tackle these inequities and to build an ecosystem of basic needs support for students. Like Michael Sorrell writes in our report, "the numbers point to not an HBCU problem or an African American problem. These numbers speak to an American problem. One which if allowed to go unchecked will compromise the future of too many talented citizens."

We invite our community to individually participate in the strike. We realize that could look different for each of you: you might decide to participate in the hunger strike, post about the initiative on your personal social media accounts, or call your state representatives.

"We're working to restore the very voting rights protections my father and countless other civil rights leaders bled to secure," King's eldest son, Martin Luther King III, [told NBC News](#) earlier today. "We will not accept empty promises in pursuit of my father's dream for a more equal and just America."

Neither will we.

You can read Michael Sorrell's full note and invitation below.

On Monday, in recognition of Dr. Martin Luther King's Birthday, Paul Quinn College, Wiley College, Huston-Tillotson University, Virginia State University, Clark-Atlanta University, Benedict College, Bennett College, Edward Waters College, and a host of national leaders like the President of Spelman College Dr. Mary Schmidt Campbell, Dr. Bridget Burns of the University Innovation Alliance, and Byron Sanders of Big Thought will be engaging in a one-day hunger strike.

This action is being taken in support of the coalition of 25 faith leaders (including Paul Quinn Trustee Rev. Dr. Frederick Douglass Haynes, III and former Paul Quinn Trustee Rev. Dr. Jamal Bryant) who have been without food since January 6th. These leaders are doing this to bring attention to the need for Congress to protect every American's right to vote by passing meaningful voting rights legislation.

What can you do?:

- 1) Join us. Twenty-four hours without food is a small price to pay to voice your concern about protecting everyone's right to vote. If you do this, please post about your decision to join us across your various social media channels. Your post can be a video or a statement.
- 2) Support us. You can do this by amplifying the hunger strike of the 25 clergy by posting about it on social media or the old-fashioned way - word of mouth.
- 3) Contact your senator or congressman and express your feelings about passing a national voting rights act.

Thank you, in advance, for your support. #nationbuilding2022