

Civil Rights

Impact of the Pilgrimage on Members of Congress **Reverend Doug Tanner, Founder and Chief Advisor, Faith & Politics** **Institute**

How the congressional pilgrimage to Selma affects those who participate.

Interview recorded May 15, 2013.

I think it has a significant, unquestionably significant impact on some Members who become very seriously involved with us. And including John and Amo, you know, they—I think that it has served John well as a vehicle to be who he is, and in this setting, which you don't get to do by chairing a committee, or to be in a leadership position, in particular. And the ones who are part of the reflection group that's helped them stay grounded, they'll tell you that. I think it has raised the visibility of the civil rights movement considerably, and has taught the spirit of it, and has raised some awareness of the religious roots of it, and of nonviolence—disciplined nonviolence as an expression of that, and as a tool, instrument, philosophy that has a great deal of potential well beyond, you know, the civil rights movement. So, there's been a good educational component that way. I think we have, at times, provided effective occasions for people to get to know each other across ideological and party lines, who wouldn't otherwise. Lord knows, it'd be nice to say that, you know, it's had an impact on that front now. If it has, it's not easily visible. But it is—you plant seeds, and you don't—I think one of the things about faith is that you don't do it because you're looking for the result right away, you do it because you have faith that if you could do—you're faithful to what you're being called to do, it'll be fruitful at some point, in some way.