

Civil Rights

Walking Across the Bridge, Together

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Why it is important for everyone to claim the history of the movement and of Selma.

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We go to Montgomery and Birmingham, as well as Selma, and we've been to some other places, too. I've been to Mississippi and New Orleans. And it's important to the South, especially, as Southern citizens, to learn to—of both races, all races—learn to know and appreciate, and appreciate this history themselves. So, to have a group of Members coming down and doing it is good. And Alabama, particularly, has done a lot of good work to claim the history, and not to run away from it, and to know that it is—parts of it are ugly, but it has made them who they are in some very positive ways.

Selma's a challenging place itself. It's easier to point to real progress in Birmingham, and Montgomery, and some other places. Selma is a tough nut to crack. And I—there's a lot of internal dissention, there's a lot of—still racial division, and there's not been the sustained effective leadership to heal the wounds there that I would hope could happen at some time. And, the challenge that I hope we can eventually help meet is to get, not just the black citizens of Alabama, but the white citizens of Alabama, claiming this history and ready to walk across that bridge together. And that's not an easy thing to get a lot of people to do. One who has just been with us from the start, and continues to be more with us as we go is Spencer Bachus. I really appreciate Spencer's support and engagement. And Johnny Isakson was with us last year too, you know, a Southern Senator from Georgia ready to identify with embracing this history, that's important. So, as their political leaders step forward, it may make more space for white folks who are a little hesitant.