

The Honorable John R. Lewis
U.S. Representative of Georgia (1987–2020)

Kennedy Presidential Campaign: Part Two

The Honorable John R. Lewis explains his passion for Senator Robert F. Kennedy's presidential campaign and his decision to run for Congress after Senator Kennedy's death.

Interview recorded December 11, 2014

Somehow, during the campaign in California, you just knew he was going to win that primary because hundreds and thousands of people turning out for the motorcade, all along the way, the people reacted so well. We were sitting there watching and waiting for him to speak, and after he spoke, we saw it all on television. We all cried when we heard that he had been shot. I just got down on the floor and cried. After Dr. King was shot, I said to myself and to others, "We still have Bobby." So, I threw everything, my whole everything, body, soul, mind, into that campaign, because I thought he would be elected and he would be the next president. He would have been a great president. So, I felt at the time, that I really should run for something. I became head of the voter education project. I went all across the south, getting people to register to vote. I teamed up with Julian Bond and others, and Mrs. King and Reverend Abernathy, we traveled all—we did 11 southern states, from Virginia to Texas, getting people registered. Finally, I guess it was my time to run, and my first campaign, I lost. Wyche Fowler was in the race, who later became a Senator, so when he gave up his seat, he told me he was leaving and I should run.