



*Solidarity House*

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**INTERNATIONAL UNION, UNITED AUTOMOBILE, AEROSPACE & AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENT WORKERS OF AMERICA – UAW**

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RAY CURRY, *PRESIDENT*

FRANK STUGLIN, *SECRETARY-TREASURER*

VICE-PRESIDENTS: CHUCK BROWNING • TERRY DITTES • CINDY ESTRADA

February 1, 2022

My Sisters and Brothers,

This great union of ours and all of our UAW family, past and present, have a long and cherished legacy in fighting for the civil rights and equality of all Americans and all peoples of the world. It is one of the founding principles of our union and we have much to be proud about.

During Black History Month, we remember and salute UAW members' roles in all that we have achieved and in all that we continue to work towards. I'd like to share a few highlights here from our proud history in the civil rights movement —

- UAW members adopted a culture of equality from our first days as a union.
- Our Constitution, from our earliest days, puts a priority on our standing Civil and Human Rights committees.
- We have championed equal rights in the workplace through our more than 80 years of collective bargaining.
- The UAW integrated professional bowling in the United States and fought to end segregation in our society.
- UAW members stood with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on the Edmund Pettus Bridge to fight for voting rights.
- The UAW, under the leadership of President Walter Reuther, provided the funds for bail for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. when he was jailed in Birmingham, Alabama.
- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s first draft of his famous "I have a Dream" speech was written at Solidarity House.
- UAW members were front and center at the history-changing 1963 March in Washington for Jobs and Freedom and were present at the signing of the Voter Rights Act of 1964.
- The UAW fought to free Nelson Mandela and end apartheid, hosting him in Detroit upon his release from decades in prison.
- The UAW has been instrumental in supporting and electing minorities and those who fight for social justice and equality to Congress, state legislatures and local elected offices.

Though the list is long, our work is not complete, and we must continue to build upon our treasured past history, but the important issue for this year's Black History Month is not just remembering our

storied past but committing ourselves to never taking our foot off the gas pedal as we push to safeguard and advance civil and human rights for all.

I am constantly reminded of a quote by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. – *“Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.”*

One of the most critical battles ahead is protecting our right to vote, which has been under a staggering assault since the 2020 election. We cannot lose the historic gains we made in voter access, and we cannot let those who would silence our voices succeed. In this most fundamental of American rights, we must be vigilant.

We cannot shy from racism in our communities, in our plants and or our nation.

Each year, we hear the echo of the past in tragedies like Trayvon Martin, George Floyd and so many others. Incidents like the violence and protests in Charlottesville or Kenosha remind us that vestiges of racism, racial disparity and unrest have not gone away, and here too, we must be vigilant.

This is truly what Black History Month is about. It is not just to remind us of our past and or our past gains. It is to look at our journey and understand we are still marching hand in hand on that road to equality and fairness for all.

And if you blink. If you stop. If you coast ... we can lose it all.

So let us resolve ourselves to not letting up on the gas pedal in this journey. Let us remember this month what we have done and commit ourselves to the journey we have not finished. Let us press on and stand united in the fight for what is right.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ray Curry". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ray Curry  
President

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