

Human Rights Week centers on jobs, education, equity

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Fifty years after the historic March on Washington, the Minnesota Department of Human Rights is presenting a week of events centered on jobs, education and equal opportunity memorialized in Dr. Martin Luther King's iconic "I Have a Dream" speech.

During Minnesota Human Rights Week, Dec. 2 - 6, the Department will feature events focused on equity and employment for minorities, women, people with disabilities who -- in the words of Dr. King -- are still holding a promissory note, and still seeking "the riches of freedom and the security of justice."

A cornerstone of the week is the Department's Human Rights Symposium, an all-day conference on Dec. 5 focusing on employment, public policy, and criminal justice. The conference features a series of workshops on issues such as voting rights, criminal background checks, equal pay, Minnesota's Olmstead Plan and other topics that continue to present challenges to achieving Dr. King's vision of freedom and equality.

On Friday Dec. 6, the Department recalls the goals of the 1963 march with an event shining a light on the struggle to ensure employment opportunities for people with disabilities. A Statewide Video Conference on the Strategic Advantages of Hiring People with Disabilities will bring together employers and members of the disability community to discuss successes in disability employment, and challenges that remain.

The week will feature a number of noted guests, sharing their perspectives on the progress made in the decades since Dr. King's words rang out from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial decades ago, and the unfinished business of ensuring America makes good on its promise of justice for all. One special guest is Kimberly F. Price, Vice President, 3Mgives and 3M Foundation, who speaks on Monday at a Diversity and Inclusion summit for state government senior executives.

For Minnesota's youth, Commissioner Lindsey will recognize the finalists in the Department's "I Have a Dream" video competition. The competition invited young people from across the state to create short videos on what the ideals of Dr. King's dream mean to them in their lives today. As part of Human Rights Week, Commissioner Lindsey will congratulate the winners, and their videos will be published the web.