The original documents are located in Box 4, folder “1/15/75 - Film Clip For Martin Luther King's Birthday” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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MARTIN LUTHER KING'S BIRTHDAY

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 15, 1975
ON THE FORTY-SIXTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BIRTH OF DOCTOR MARTIN LUTHER KING, JUNIOR, IT IS APPROPRIATE TO REVIEW THE PROGRESS OF THIS NATION IN SECURING CIVIL RIGHTS FOR ALL OUR CITIZENS.

It is impressive but not perfect.

record.
MANY OF THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CHANGES DOCTOR KING ENVISIONED AS A CIVIL RIGHTS LEADER ARE NOW TAKEN FOR GRANTED.

BUT PROGRESS IS NOT COUNTED BY PAST SUCCESS; WE MUST CONTINUALLY RENEW OUR COMMITMENT TO THE CAUSE OF JUSTICE AND EQUALITY.
DOCTOR KING HELPER LED THE WAY TO PASSAGE OF THE VOTING
RIGHTS ACT OF 1965. I SUPPORTED THE ORIGINAL ACT AND ITS
FIVE-YEAR EXTENSION IN 1970. THIS LAW HAS HELPED TO OPEN
OUR POLITICAL PROCESSES TO FULL CITIZEN PARTICIPATION -- AND WE
MUST SAFEGUARD THESE GAINS THROUGH ANOTHER FIVE-YEAR EXTENSION
OF THE ACT.
I have directed the Attorney General to forward to the Congress later this week draft legislation for such an extension.

I believe the right to vote is the foundation of freedom and equality. It must be protected.
DURING HIS LIFETIME, DOCTOR KING RECEIVED THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE AND NUMEROUS OTHER AWARDS. BUT SHORTLY BEFORE HIS DEATH SEVEN YEARS AGO, HE SAID HE PREFERRED TO BE REMEMBERED NOT FOR THOSE HONORS, BUT FOR SERVICE TO HIS FELLOW MAN.

DOCTOR KING IS REMEMBERED AS HE WISHED -- AND HIS MEMORY CONTINUES TO INSPIRE HOPE FOR AMERICA. WE MUST NOT LET HIS WORK DIE -- THAT WILL BE OUR HIGHEST TRIBUTE OF ALL.

END OF TEXT