



LAW SAYS
IN FREEDOM
WE ARE
BORN -
IN FREEDOM
WE MUST LIVE

END
SEGREGATED
RULES
IN
PUBLIC
SCHOOLS

WE
DEMAND
VOTING
RIGHTS
NOW!

VOTING
RIGHTS
NOW!

WE
MARCH
FOR
JOBS
FOR ALL
NOW!

DEMAND
DECENT
HOUSING
NOW!

WE
MARCH
FOR
JOBS
FOR ALL
NOW!

AN END
TO
FIRST
BORN
CITIZENSHIP
LAW!

CITIZENSHIP
LAW!
NOW!

1

00:00:01,439 --> 00:00:09,500

Fifty years ago today, on July 2, 1964 -- one month after I graduated from segregated C.A.

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00:00:09,500 --> 00:00:14,869

Johnson High School in Columbia, SC -- one of the last remaining legal barriers to equal

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00:00:14,869 --> 00:00:20,930

opportunity in America was toppled when President Lyndon Johnson signed into law the most sweeping

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00:00:20,930 --> 00:00:25,840

civil rights legislation since the post-Civil War Reconstruction Era.

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00:00:25,840 --> 00:00:33,430

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 outlawed discrimination in such areas as voting, public restaurants,

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00:00:33,430 --> 00:00:39,960

employment and education on the bases of such characteristics as race, color, religion,

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00:00:39,960 --> 00:00:42,210

national origin and gender.

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00:00:42,210 --> 00:00:48,199

It was a pivotal moment in the nation's on-going struggle to right the wrongs of the past and

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00:00:48,199 --> 00:00:54,040

it ushered in an era of diversity and inclusion that in the last half-century has literally

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00:00:54,040 --> 00:00:57,940

transformed the face of America, and the face of NASA.

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00:00:57,940 --> 00:01:04,519

I ask that you join with me and the entire NASA family in pausing today to reflect on

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00:01:04,519 --> 00:01:10,080

the many changes that have taken place in our country and in NASA since the passage

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00:01:10,080 --> 00:01:13,900

of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

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00:01:13,900 --> 00:01:18,180

Before the passage of the Civil Rights Act, which was originally proposed by President

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00:01:18,180 --> 00:01:25,820

John F. Kennedy before his 1963 assassination, some of us could not eat in the same restaurants

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00:01:25,820 --> 00:01:29,220

or go to the same movie theaters as whites.

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00:01:29,220 --> 00:01:33,920

Some of us were forced to go to separate and unequal segregated schools.

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00:01:33,920 --> 00:01:36,870

Some of us were denied the right to vote.

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00:01:36,870 --> 00:01:41,340

Some of us could not even apply for the same jobs as whites.

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00:01:41,340 --> 00:01:45,640

Today, America is a very different place and so is NASA.

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00:01:45,640 --> 00:01:51,820

There is more opportunity...more diversity...and more hope for the future because of the struggles

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00:01:51,820 --> 00:01:59,140
and sacrifices of people like John F. Kennedy,
Lyndon B. Johnson, Martin Luther King, Jr.,

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00:01:59,140 --> 00:02:05,380
Congressman John Lewis, Fannie Lew Hammer,
Rosa Parks and so many other foot soldiers

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00:02:05,380 --> 00:02:07,640
of the Civil Rights movement.

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00:02:07,640 --> 00:02:13,660
NASA was created as a Federal agency in 1958,
at a time when the struggle for civil rights

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00:02:13,660 --> 00:02:16,710
and racial equality was intensifying.

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00:02:16,710 --> 00:02:21,580
Much of the new agency was located in the
racially segregated south which brought us

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00:02:21,580 --> 00:02:26,310
directly into the path of the civil rights
movement and although it took a while for

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00:02:26,310 --> 00:02:32,380
NASA to fully open its doors to people of
all races, genders, and walks of life, we

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00:02:32,380 --> 00:02:35,900
have made great strides over the years.

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00:02:35,900 --> 00:02:41,310
Much of our progress is due to the hard work
and dedication of our Office of Diversity

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00:02:41,310 --> 00:02:47,410

and Equal Opportunity at Headquarters and the diversity champions and managers at each

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00:02:47,410 --> 00:02:49,120

of our Centers.

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00:02:49,120 --> 00:02:55,170

Today, African Americans and other minorities are playing critical roles in everything we

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00:02:55,170 --> 00:03:04,220

do -- as scientists and engineers, administrators and managers, analysts, astronauts, educators,

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00:03:04,220 --> 00:03:06,380

communicators and more.

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00:03:06,380 --> 00:03:12,060

Like the rest of America, our greatest mission -- to "build a more perfect Union" -- is not

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00:03:12,060 --> 00:03:13,770

yet complete.

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00:03:13,770 --> 00:03:20,150

As President Lyndon Baines Johnson reminded us 50 years ago today, "This Civil Rights

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00:03:20,150 --> 00:03:26,690

Act is a challenge to all of us to go to work in our communities and our States, in our

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00:03:26,690 --> 00:03:34,390

homes and in our hearts, to eliminate the last vestiges of injustice in our beloved

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00:03:34,390 --> 00:03:35,390

country."

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00:03:35,390 --> 00:03:42,209

Thanks to every single one of you in our NASA-contractor family for being good stewards of NASA's commitment