



NEWS RELEASE
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U.S. Commission on Civil Rights Remembers the 50th Anniversary of Selma, Alabama “Bloody Sunday” March

Washington, DC -- The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights commemorates the 50th anniversary of the “Bloody Sunday” march that took place in Selma, Alabama. On Sunday, March 7, 1965, 600 marchers, led by now Congressman John Lewis, fellow Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) activists, and activists from the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), attempted to march from Selma to Montgomery, AL in protest of Selma’s intransigence to black voting. As the unarmed marchers came to the Edmund Pettus Bridge, they were attacked by Alabama State Troopers and local police with tear gas and billy clubs. The televised images of the brutal attacks and two subsequent Selma-to-Montgomery marches galvanized support for the end of racial discrimination in voting.

This became a defining moment in the civil rights struggle and catalyzed public awareness and federal action in support of the movement. On August 6, 1965, President Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act into law with John Lewis, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks and other civil rights leaders in attendance.

Chairman Castro stated, “As we observe the important milestone of the 50th anniversary of the March in Selma, we commend those who in the spirit of Selma continue to protect and defend voting rights today. We must renew our efforts to protect the franchise in the spirit of those who crossed the Edmund Pettus Bridge that Sunday five decades ago.”

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The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights is an independent, bipartisan agency charged with advising the President and Congress on civil rights matters and issuing a federal civil rights enforcement report. For information about Commission’s reports and meetings, visit <http://www.usccr.gov>.