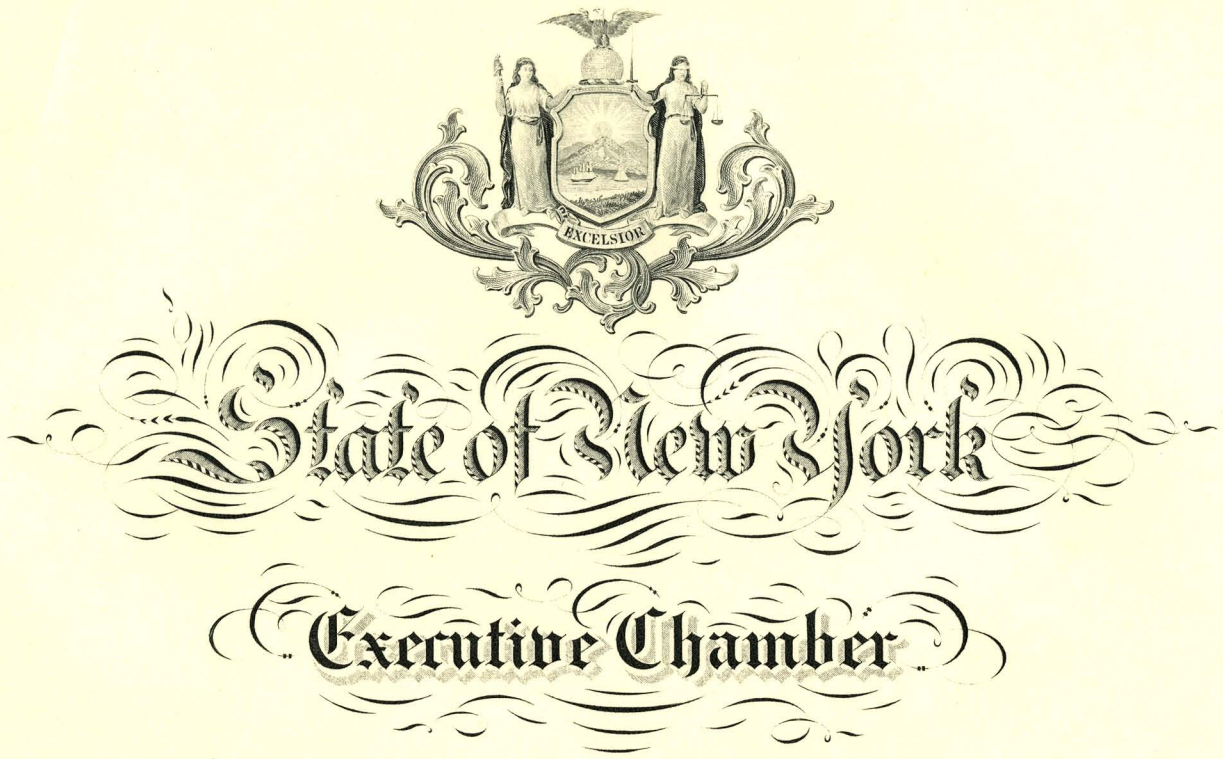


April 8, 1968

TO THE LEGISLATURE:

I am submitting this message today with a sense of urgency unrivaled by any moment when I have addressed you in the ten years I have served as Governor of our State.

A great and good and courageous American, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., is dead. We cannot honor him merely by our tears. We must honor him - and the principles for which he died - by our actions. We must take the awful event of his death as a precious and testing time to quicken the American conscience - and to inspire this conscience to rise to the summit of his spirit and his life.

His was a life of peaceful but persistent struggle for justice, for equality, and fur decency. He fought for the black citizen - to share fully in the bright promise of America. He fought for the white citizen - to prove himself worthy of the promise he held forth. The monument to the life of such a man cannot be cut in stone. It must be forged in action.

Let us, therefore, look into our hearts and ask: Will we let prejudice continue to beget poverty? Will we allow poverty to feed despair? Will we let despair tear this great Nation apart?

Your Honorable Bodies already have before you a program that says in effect: "We cannot live as a segregated people. The American dream is not divisible." This program is a call for positive action; action to educate and train those trapped in the ghetto; action to transform slums into decent communities; action to generate job opportunities; action to attract the powerful force of private enterprise to the task of urban rebirth; action to draw desirable industry and to build decent homes in our decaying core cities.

I urge you to enact these programs as testimony that this martyred American's belief in his Nation has not been in vain.

I call upon your Honorable Bodies to give urgent consideration and favorable action to these measures now before you:

1. <u>Urban Development Corporation</u>

This proposal would enable the State, in cooperation with private enterprise, to attack the root causes of poverty and slums. The Corporation could carry out massive urban rehabilitation programs, build housing, create job-producing industrial and commercial facilities, and provide complementary community facilities such as schools and recreation centers.

2. <u>Additional Urban Development Proposals</u>

The Corporation for Urban Development and Research would help provide housing and industrial facilities, and would seek to develop new methods and technologies for urban development. The Urban Guarantee Fund would provide loan guarantees to homeowners and small businessmen in ghetto areas who otherwise would not be able to obtain credit. Other proposals for amendments of the private housing finance law would encourage a greater flow of private capital into low and moderate income housing.

3. Urban Job Incentive Board

This program would provide tax credits for business firms locating in low income areas, which create new jobs for the residents of those areas and which carry out approved job training programs for its employees.

4. New York City School Decentralization

The people of the City of New York, particularly in the slum areas where student achievement is below standard, need a greater opportunity to participate in the policy making decisions affecting their schools. The Board of Regents after studying the various plans put forward, has developed a proposal to accomplish this goal. The Regents' proposal provides the framework for constructive action so urgently needed at this session.

5. Aid to Municipal Hospitals

This program would make low cost loans available for construction and modernization of municipal hospitals, which today provide the bulk of health care for the urban poor.

6. Model Cities

The model cities program is the Federal government's comprehensive approach to revitalizing urban core areas. The proposal now before you would make available State grants to cities planning programs under the Federal statute and would provide a mechanism for the coordination of all State agencies and State efforts involved in such programs.

The Debevoise Committee has recently submitted to me its recommendations for strengthening the State's efforts to end discrimination and realize equal opportunity in jobs and housing and for transforming the State Commission for Human Rights into a more effective arm of the State within the Executive Department.

I shall shortly recommend to your Honorable Bodies legislation to implement the proposals of the Debevoise Committee.

The Executive Branch shares with the Legislature the responsibility to provide a revenue program which is equitable and supportable by the people and which, at the same time will finance undeniably essential public services.

In my Executive Budget I attempted to meet that responsibility.

In your deliberations you have seen fit to reduce or eliminate many of the measures which I considered essential.

I urge restoration of the following items and stand ready to work with you in developing responsible means to finance them:

A. Educating and Training the Disadvantaged

1. Pre-Kindergarten Program

$1.75 million to help the disadvantaged pre-kindergarten child overcome the social and cultural handicaps of poverty, before he enters regular schooling.

2. Upstate Urban Education Aid

$7,500,000 to assure upstate communities of an appropriate share of urban educational aid for slum area schools.

3. Upstate Seek Expansion

$973,000 to expand Project SEEK in two additional upstate cities. SEEK is a highly successful method for identifying the able but disadvantaged high school graduate and helping him, through tutoring and financial aid, to enter college.

4. Slum Teaching Specialists

$2.5 million to begin a new program of recruiting and training teachers specially qualified to teach the disadvantaged child, to experiment with new instruction methods and to administer special urban school programs.

5. State University Urban Centers

$750,000 for two State University Urban Centers that would enable 600 students to take vocational and college preparatory courses and avail themselves of counseling and vocational guidance that these centers would provide in core city locations.

6. Correcting Racial Imbalance

$2 million to enable elementary and secondary schools to correct racial imbalance, making it possible to extend this program to an additional 900,000 pupils.

7. Project Able

$250,000 for Project Able, a program of 50 per cent aid for locally administered public school experimental programs for the purpose of identifying and developing the potential skills of educationally deprived children.

8. Council on the Arts

$383,408 to expand Council activities in urban core areas. The program is designed to bring outside performances and art exhibits into urban core areas and to encourage local participation.

9. Manpower Training

$3 million to enable 1,763 persons, such as veterans returning to disadvantaged neighborhoods, to enroll in the Manpower Training Program.

10. Work Experience for Slum Youths

$1,788,740 to continue program to provide 750 jobs for youth from slum areas in the Department of Mental Hygiene.

11. Vocational Training for the Rural Poor

$382,000 to provide short-term vocational training for 500 students at the State University Agricultural and Technical Colleges.

12. Home Town Beautification Program

$175,000 for State support of local employment of youths, primarily disadvantaged youths, for home town beautification projects, primarily in urban core areas. This program has resulted in cleaner streets and parks, new urban recreation areas, new picnic areas and a general improvement and cleanup of riverbanks, roadsides and other scenic and recreational areas.

13. Leadership Training Program

$75,000 to provide special training for local youth leaders and workers in skills in developing and running youth programs geared especially toward depressed areas of the State. The training is given with a minimal disruption of their regular work in a series of three-day sessions at four different times during the year.

14. Civil Service Opportunities

$62,515 to provide on the job training for State employees from culturally deprived backgrounds to improve their Civil Service status and to provide pre-employment training for culturally deprived young people in State service.

B. Transforming Slums Into Decent Communities

1. Community Renewal and Urban Grants

$5 million for community renewal and urban grants to continue local renewal projects.

2. Rat Control

$3 million to aid local rat control programs.

3. Health Guides

$200,000 to expand the highly successful Health Guides Program under which housewives from local income areas are recruited and trained to provide their neighbors with information on health services.

4. Information Centers

$250,000 for establishing store front information centers to furnish slum residents with information on essential government services. Such centers would be established in slum neighborhoods in Harlem, Brooklyn, Albany, Buffalo, Syracuse and six other cities.

5. Business Service Offices

$46,390 to establish additional storefront business advisory services for small businessmen in urban core areas.

6. Mass Transportation

$20 million to help provide better mass transportation facilities so vital to those living and working in the urban centers. This amount would be shared equally by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority and the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority.

C. Narcotics Addiction Program

$10 million in operating funds to assure that all narcotic addicts now under treatment in the City of New York will be able to continue treatment during 1968-1969.

D. Parks and Recreation

1. New York City Park Region

$4.2 million of bond funds for the acquisition and development of State parks in New York City. Vacant sites and sites that need reclaiming would be used, such as one along the Harlem River near Yankee Stadium and another near the Brooklyn Navy Yard.

2. Other Park Programs

$15 million of bond funds for the development of State parks throughout the State, $5 million for the State's share of the cost of local municipal parks, and an additional $500,000 for State parks operations.

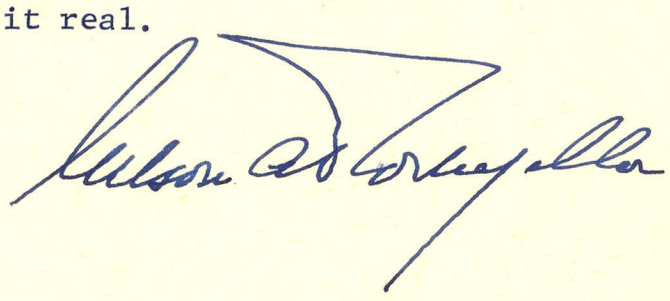
E. Harlem State Office Building

$10 million to permit the construction of this building to go forward as planned. I propose that this building be named the "Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., State Office Building" in his memory.

CONCLUSION

History will not judge kindly an affluent people indifferently tolerating the poverty and injustice that can tear their society asunder.

Your passage of these measures will give witness that we in this State have not failed Martin Luther King's faith in America.

I repeat: the American dream is not divisible. It is one dream - for all men.

And it is we who must make it real.