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**PASS THE WORD**   
A PROJECT OF THE KENTUCKY ORAL HISTORY COMMISSION

## CIVIL WAR TO CIVIL RIGHTS: MARCH ON FRANKFORT, MARCH 5, 1964



*Kentucky Historical Society collections*

On March 5, 1964, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., professional baseball player Jackie Robinson, future Kentucky Sen. Georgia Davis Powers, Rev. Ralph Abernathy and 10,000 Kentucky residents marched on Frankfort to demand a state law to end segregation in public accommodations — including restaurants, hotels, theaters and stores — in the Commonwealth.

Louisville's Allied Organization for Civil Rights (ACOR) organized the march to take place while the legislature

was in session. Like the much-celebrated March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom the previous August, the March on Frankfort featured folk singers, a speech by King and a nonviolent march up Capitol Avenue.

Lawmakers were considering a bill in 1964, but it failed to garner enough votes to pass. Undeterred, Kentucky's civil rights leaders continued to push for a strong state law. The March on Frankfort was the largest public gathering of Kentucky's civil rights leaders and the most significant civil rights activity in Kentucky to date. It provided important momentum to change state public accommodation statutes and challenge Jim Crow discrimination in the Commonwealth.

*The Kentucky Oral History Commission (KOHC), administered by the Kentucky Historical Society, is dedicated to supporting documentation of Kentucky's rich history along with the issues confronting its people. Pass the Word ([passtheword.khs.gov](http://passtheword.khs.gov)) is an online database from the KOHC that facilitates discovery of more than 30,000 oral history interviews from Kentuckians in all 120 counties, located in more than 100 repositories across Kentucky.*

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