

Civil Rights

A Gift to the Nation

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The significance of Representative John Lewis of Georgia to the movement, the country, and the Congress.

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It's such a gift to the Congress. You know, I mean, he was one of the major players in the movement, clearly. But not the only one. And there are others around who have stories to tell that are comparable, with the exception, nobody else being still here who spoke at the March on Washington. But the others aren't in Congress, and don't have the opportunity to develop the relationships or be looked to as he is. So, to have someone of his stature in the movement, and I would say, there's no one who better embodies the spirit of nonviolence, and the commitment to it than John. So, to have him be who he is, with his history, in this body for how long now, '86 is when he was elected, 26 years. That's a gift to the nation, and that's a gift to the Congress, that's a gift to Capitol Hill. I guess it's all a gift to the nation, but that's very, very special. And Amo said, when he first went to Alabama, he said, "It's like going to Normandy with Dwight Eisenhower." {laughter}