

# Senate OKs Money to Start MLK Memorial

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WASHINGTON (AP) - The Senate approved \$10 million to help begin groundbreaking for a memorial to Martin Luther King Jr. on the National Mall here - the first monument there to a person of color.

The \$100 million memorial to King is to be built on a four-acre site next to the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial. Construction is scheduled to begin in November 2006, provided sufficient fund-raising progress is made by the Martin Luther King Jr. National Memorial Project Foundation. The group has already raised almost \$40 million in private funding for the memorial to the slain civil rights leader.

"I have come to appreciate how Martin Luther King Jr., sought to help our nation overcome racial barriers, bigotry, hatred, and injustice, and how he helped to inspire and guide a most important, most powerful, and most transforming social movement," said Sen. Robert C. Byrd, D-W.Va., the sponsor of the measure.

When he was a young man, Byrd was a member of the Ku Klux Klan and as a junior senator filibustered the 1964 Civil Rights Act. With time, he has changed his views and has spent decades rehabilitating his reputation.

The amendment was attached by voice vote to a spending bill financing the Interior Department for the budget year beginning Oct. 1. The Senate is set to pass the bill Wednesday. The House version of the measure, passed last month, does not contain funds for the memorial.

"This exciting news reconfirms Dr. King's place in history as an American hero to all citizens regardless of political affiliation, income, education, race, gender and/or lifestyle," said Harry Johnson, Sr., president of the King Memorial Foundation.

In an interview, Johnson predicted the Senate's action would invigorate the campaign to secure private donations to build the memorial.

The underlying \$26.3 billion measure provides, about \$542 million more than President Bush's request but \$751 million less than current spending levels. The EPA would absorb a \$144 million cut, about 2 percent, though senators rejected a \$370 million White House-proposed cut to an EPA clean-water fund that gives grants to states.