

ASTI Students Embark on Civil Rights Pilgrimage With Congressional Delegation

Two ASTI students are accompanying a bipartisan delegation of US Congressional Representatives this weekend as they embark on a Civil Rights Pilgrimage sponsored by the [Faith and Politics Institute](#).

ASTI senior David Gaines and sophomore Charlotte Potes will go as part of their internships with the [Martin Luther King, Jr. Freedom Center](#), where they have been studying the life and teaching of King as well as developing leadership and professional skills. The ASTI students – along with a group of other Freedom Center youth from neighboring districts – are guests of Congresswoman Barbara Lee (D-California).

Representative John Lewis (D-Georgia) has chaired and led the pilgrimage for many years. This year the trip is expected to be especially poignant because the delegation will stop in at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Martin Luther King, Jr's assassination.

About 30 members of Congress will participate in the pilgrimage, which will also visit: the National Civil Rights Museum in Memphis; the Civil Rights Institute and 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham; and the Dexter Avenue King Memorial Baptist Church, the Civil Rights Memorial, Rosa Parks Museum, and the Southern Poverty Law Center in Montgomery. The pilgrimage concludes in Selma, with a program at the Brown Chapel A.M.E. Church and a walk across the Edmund Pettis Bridge.

This year's pilgrimage is hosted by Senator Doug Jones (D-AL) and Senator Lamar Alexander (R-TN), along with Congressman Lewis.

The Alameda students will be as much teachers as learners on the three-day trip. They will travel on the bus with the representatives, orchestrate reflection circles with them, and give presentations on civil rights and non-violent strategies.

When asked if he felt nervous about spending so much time with the representatives, Gaines said: "I see it as an opportunity to help them learn more about the ways of Dr. King."

“AUSD is extremely grateful for the leadership shown by these students,” said Superintendent Sean McPhetridge. “We want to praise them for their work as emerging civil rights leaders.”

Added Dr. Roy Wilson, executive director of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Freedom Center: “History will show that this year, 2018, was a moment of reawakening a spirit in the American people that is moved to protect and serve the common good. This reawakening, while involving all living generations, is propelled by the energy of youth. The role of students integrated into this year’s Congressional Civil Rights Pilgrimage offers hope and encouragement to all.”



Charlotte Potes and David Gaines listening through telephones to one of Malcolm X's debates. "When freedom calls we pick up the phone!," Potes says.