



KENTUCKY MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. STATE COMMISSION

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Statement from the Kentucky Martin Luther King, Jr. State Commission Regarding Events at Tennessee State University • Tuesday, September 23, 2025 “Be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.” — Matthew 10:16

The Kentucky Martin Luther King, Jr. State Commission denounces the disruptive, unauthorized campus intrusion that occurred at Tennessee State University (TSU) on Tuesday, September 23, 2025. Reports indicate that a group identifying itself as the “Fearless Tour” entered TSU without approval and established a so-called “debate table,” prompting campus officials to intervene and remove the group. We commend TSU’s administration and students for their restraint and professionalism under pressure, and we affirm the right of historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) to maintain safe, orderly environments that protect their students’ well-being and learning.

In the spirit of Matthew 10:16, we urge our students to exercise both wisdom and peace. The wisdom of serpents means anticipating tactics designed to provoke chaos and refusing to be baited into confrontation. The harmlessness of doves calls us to pursue principled, nonviolent responses—even in the face of provocation. These values reflect the legacy of Dr. King and the long tradition of disciplined, strategic nonviolence that moved this nation toward justice.

Kentucky is home to two distinguished HBCUs—Kentucky State University in Frankfort and Simmons College of Kentucky in Louisville. While there is no place for harassment or deception on any campus, we remind our students and campus communities to be vigilant, observant of their surroundings, and mentally focused. If unpermitted activity occurs, avoid escalation: notify campus authorities, document facts, and follow university protocols. Do not engage in retaliatory behavior; your safety and your future are paramount.

We are grateful that the incident at TSU concluded without physical harm. However, this season requires mental preparedness and emotional intelligence. Bad-faith actors may seek viral confrontation to fuel division and spread false narratives. Our students should not be the content for someone else’s agenda. Remain calm, stay in community, and let policies—and the truth—do the work.

We also acknowledge the national grief and rising tensions following the tragic killing of Charlie Kirk earlier this month. Violence—political or otherwise—has no place in our civic life. As a Commission, we reaffirm our commitment to nonviolence, honest dialogue, and the equal dignity of all people.

Call to Action: We urge every campus in the Commonwealth and across the nation to recommit to nonviolence. Cease all forms of violence, intimidation, and retaliation—online and offline. Choose disciplined courage over outrage, facts over rumor, and peace over provocation. Be wise. Be harmless. Be steadfast.

For media inquiries: Kentucky Martin Luther King, Jr. State Commission • Frankfort, Kentucky