

The ideals of martin luther king and the civil rights movement

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**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Both Clarence Pendleton and Jesse Jackson claim to be arguing for the ideals of Martin Luther King and the Civil Rights Movement. What accounts for their disagreements? Who do you think makes the better claim on the issue of affirmative action? Explain.

Pendleton vehemently criticized affirmative action because he felt that it took away the honor and the glory from deserving and talented African-Americans and referred to its supporters as new racists who wanted assured outcomes sans the competition. The underpinning of Pendleton's argument was that he wanted the African-Americans to rise above the rest on the strength of their own talent, hard work and perseverance competing with the rest of the country. He wanted them to stand toe to toe with everybody and not be isolated - a part of mainstream America. Jesse Jackson, on the other hand, who defended and supported the extension of affirmative action during the height of the US Supreme Court Affirmative Action case saw it as an assurance of African-Americans in achieving the American Dream. He saw it as a means of equal opportunity. To Jackson, Affirmative Action was still relevant because the issue at stake was not only racial but also economic justice and social equality. He believed that society must enter into a compromise to ensure that peace and harmony prevail.

The conflicting views of these two civil rights activists were a mere reflection of their personalities: Pendleton was a conservative, a pacifist and a proud man while Jackson is a go-getter and a realist who will leave no stone unturned to get what he wants. Their respective views may have different relevance then but today, with an African-American at the helm of the most powerful country in the world there is no doubt that the African-Americans

have no need to be treated as a race with inferior surviving wits. It is time that they are allowed to find their place in the sun on their own and receive full merit and recognition for it. In this respect, Pendleton's argument against Affirmative Action finds new relevance and makes a better claim on the issue.