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### **SPARK Reaffirms the Agency and Power of Black Women and our Civil Rights Legacy**

On Saturday, July 24<sup>th</sup> at 2:30 PM EST at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center at 449 Auburn Avenue, NE Atlanta, GA 30312, SPARK Reproductive Justice NOW, SisterSong Reproductive Justice Collective, and SisterLove, in partnership with community, social justice and civil rights organizations and leaders, will come together to collectively affirm the agency and power of Black women; to demand an end to the targeting of black women and black communities; and denounce the appropriation of the core values of Dr. King's commitment to advancing non-violent social change, social justice and human rights.

Over the last year, the anti-choice community and political opportunists have stepped up their assault on the character of black women, her ability to make decisions about her body, and posing her as a threat to her family and her community. Paris Hatcher, Executive Director of SPARK Reproductive Justice NOW, explains the implications of this coordinated legislative and grassroots assault by conservative anti-choice forces: "We are not persuaded by the anti-choice movement's oppressive and dangerous preoccupation with black women's fertility and our children. Nor will we be silent as the civil rights mantra is co-opted and employed in an effort to cause division between Black women, our children, our families, and communities. This tactic is inflammatory, misguided, and is made ineffective by the anti-choice movement's concern only *with some pregnancies* and not the long term development and success of Black children and families."

From a racist and sexist media campaign, to the provocative "endangered species" billboards targeting black communities, to their efforts to pass what we called the "OB/GYN criminalization and racial discrimination Act," these extremists have engaged in oppressive, misguided measures to push through their conservative agenda. [The latest provocation is the so-called "freedom rides," a series of anti-choice protests, manipulatively modeled after the historic civil rights freedom rides, from Birmingham to Atlanta, in an effort to capitalize and appropriate on the struggle for racial justice in this country. Furthermore, they are even trying to manipulate and exploit Dr. Martin Luther King's legacy by concluding their "freedom rides" at the King Center, to advance their](#)

[narrow, conservative, anti-reproductive justice agenda.](#)

Hatcher says, “It is important that we are reminded of the rich tradition of Black women Civil Rights leaders like Coretta Scott King, Ella Baker, and Fannie Lou Hamer, who not only believed but exercised their belief that we, as Black women, are capable of making critical, personal, and just choices about our bodies, our families, and our communities. It is in their tradition that the reproductive justice movement is rooted, and it is in their legacy that we renounce all attempts to vilify and shame the agency, power, and morality of Black women.”

### **About SPARK**

SPARK Reproductive Justice NOW is a community centered statewide reproductive justice organization based in Atlanta, Georgia. Our mission is to collaborate with individuals, communities and organizations to grow and sustain a powerful reproductive justice movement in Georgia. We do this by: Developing and sharing a radical analysis in order to change culture; mobilize in response to immediate threats and; organize for long-term systemic change.

For more information, visit [www.sparkrj.org](http://www.sparkrj.org)