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One of the most inspiring concepts grasped by mankind is hope for the better. Despite a present reality of utter pain, injustice, failure, or loss, hope transforms adversity into a challenge worthwhile. Only 57 years ago, Martin Luther King Jr. spoke his famous “I Have a Dream” speech at the March on Washington, sharing his dream that one day “the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners [would] be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood”. Dr. King’s aspiration to eradicate the internalized racial prejudice in America resonated and still resonates with people of all backgrounds, because it demonstrates the American ideal of believing in a better future for oneself, while also urging citizens to value the betterment of their community. Dr. King’s personal dreams were not based on individual gain over others in society but were intertwined with the public welfare. This holistic awareness of his accountability as a citizen of America reflects Dr. King’s message of brotherhood; compassion should be held equally for those similar and unlike oneself because progress is ultimately spurred from understanding, not friction. In America, a nation built by people of various ethnic, racial, economic, and political backgrounds, it often seems like there is far more that sets us apart than unites us. How truly can we walk in another’s shoes when we are limited to a perception of the world developed from our own unique experiences? With this in mind, Dr. King’s dream reminds me that empathy does not necessarily stem from relating to someone else’s experiences. Empathy resides in caring enough to meet those we do not understand at the “table of brotherhood,” and validating their experiences. As this nation encounters the voices of women, black Americans, survivors of sexual harassment, LGBTQ+ communities, and countless others sharing their own aspirations for America, I am assured that compassion is ever important to achieving any necessary changes and resolutions. My own “dream” is to live in a society where debate is driven by conversation. I commend that our society has established the norm of free speech so strongly that even when others attempt to restrict it for means of oppression we continue voicing our views with the knowledge that it is within our rights to create a better life for ourselves. However, I aspire for this debate to now better emphasize shared desires and compassion over differences and self-interest. As Dr. King says, “we cannot walk alone,” since “their destiny is tied up with our destiny” as citizens of one nation. Today, our Democracy strives to balance the voices of many factions, and progress will only be possible with constant reminders of our shared traits as American people.