



Mandela Washington Fellowship Summit

AUGUST 3-4, 2021 | VIRTUAL

Leadership for the Future: Resilience and Inclusion

U.S. Congressional Welcome Transcript for U.S. Congressional Welcome

Speakers

- Cory Booker, U.S. Senator, New Jersey

Session Transcript

Greetings, 2021 Mandela [Washington] Fellows. I am so excited about your leadership. You are bringing the best of your countries and your communities here to the United States of America at a time that this world so urgently needs you. It needs the best of what you have to offer: your talent, your love, the light you bring through your commitment to others.

This has been a difficult, difficult time for the planet earth. We are seeing already the devastating impacts of climate change, growing refugee crises, instability all across the globe. And on top of that, it's all been compounded by this horrible pandemic. It's made your fellowship very different, so much of it being virtual. But amidst it all, I know you all have shown grit, and guts, and grace and goodness. You all have shown heart, and your commitment to the ideals of this fellowship.

If there's any advice I have for you, it is to continue to be bold. In your intellectual curiosity, and your willingness to call questions into this world. And then if they're not answered, to answer them yourselves. To be an agent or instrument of the highest of human virtues: hope, and love, and courage and service.

I know from looking at my own DNA that my ancestors come from West Africa. I know that that connection--one of my family members said that 'blood is thicker than the water that separates us.' I am proud of you, I am grateful for you, and the traditions that run deep in my DNA. I know that the best of those traditions is yet to come, because they will be made by the leaders of today gifting to future generations a better tomorrow. I wish you all the best. Thank you.

