

September: The Month America Pretends It Doesn't Have a Memory

September is basically a highlight reel of the United States doing what it does best: **ignoring marginalized communities until the damage becomes too big to sweep under the rug**. So, here's a quick-and-dirty rundown for our M&A Caucus — the receipts, the patterns, and the reminders of why our work exists.

Indigenous Communities

- **Trail of Tears roundup begins (Sept. 3, 1838)** The federal government literally forced families from their homes at gunpoint — and we still have people arguing that “relocation” was voluntary.
- **Indian Health Care Improvement Act (Sept. 30, 1976)** Congress finally admitted Native health disparities existed... after a century of causing them.

African American History

- **First National Black Convention (Sept. 20, 1830)** Black Americans organized politically because the country refused to treat them as citizens.
- **“Our Nig” published (Sept. 5, 1859)** First novel by a Black woman — still not taught in most schools.
- **National Urban League founded (Sept. 29, 1910)** Because Black migrants were met with discrimination instead of opportunity.
- **Atlanta Compromise speech (Sept. 18, 1895)** A moment where Black leadership had to negotiate dignity with white power structures.

Latino / Hispanic Communities

- **Hispanic Heritage Month begins (Sept. 15)** A whole month of “celebration” while Latino communities still face disproportionate labor exploitation.
- **Mexican Independence Day (Sept. 16)** Celebrated widely — except when Mexican-Americans ask for equal treatment.
- **Grito de Lares (Sept. 23, 1868)** Puerto Ricans fought colonialism long before the U.S. picked up the baton.

Asian American / Pacific Islander

- **Civil Liberties Act reparations payments begin (Sept. 13, 1988)** Japanese Americans finally got acknowledgement for WWII incarceration — decades late and still minimized.
- **Rock Springs Massacre aftermath (Sept. 28, 1885)** Anti-Chinese violence in Wyoming, followed by the usual federal “restoring order” instead of accountability.

LGBTQ+

- **DOMA signed (Sept. 21, 1996)** The government codified discrimination and called it “defending marriage.”
- **Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell repealed (Sept. 20, 2011)** LGBTQ+ service members finally allowed to exist openly — after 18 years of forced silence.

Disability Rights

- **Section 504 signed (Sept. 25, 1973)** The first disability civil-rights protection — and activists still had to stage sit-ins to get it enforced.

Jewish American

- **High Holy Days (varies in September)** A time of reflection for Jewish communities — and a time when hate crimes historically spike.

Muslim, Arab, and South Asian Communities

- **9/11 (Sept. 11, 2001)** Followed by two decades of profiling, surveillance, and policies that treated entire communities as suspects.
- **AUMF passed (Sept. 17, 2001)** The legal foundation for endless wars and domestic targeting of Muslim Americans.

Immigrant & Refugee Communities

- **IIRIRA signed (Sept. 30, 1996)** The law that turbocharged deportations, detention, and family separation — still shaping immigration injustice today.

Women’s Rights

- **Sandra Day O’Connor sworn in (Sept. 25, 1981)** First woman on the Supreme Court — and still the only one for years because progress apparently has a waitlist.

Labor & Economic Justice

- **First Labor Day parade (Sept. 5, 1882)** Immigrants, Black workers, and women built the labor movement — and were promptly written out of the story.
- **Civil rights & labor rally (Sept. 19, 1981)** 400,000 people protested policies harming minority workers. The response? More policies harming minority workers.

Closing

September is a reminder that marginalized communities didn't get here by accident — they got here because the system was built this way. Our job isn't to "raise awareness." Our job is to **call out the selective outrage, the selective memory, and the selective justice** that still define who gets protected and who gets ignored.