THE EMMETT TILL ANTILYNCHING ACT ACTION ALERT
DATE: March 6, 2020

NAACP-SUPPORTED LEGISLATION MAKING LYNCHING A FEDERAL HATE CRIME GETS OVER A MAJOR HURDLE TOWARD BECOMING A LAW

BILL PASSES U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES; VERY SLIGHT CHANGE MEANS IT MUST PASS THE SENATE AGAIN

THE ISSUE:

Lynching is, by the very definition, a hate crime. Not only is the victim subjected to a heinous murder (and most often tortured while being lynched), but the lynching is intended to cast fear and to intimidate entire communities.

On February 14 of last year (2019) the Senate passed, by unanimous consent (there was no recorded vote) S. 488, the Justice for Victims of Lynching Act, which was introduced by Senators Kamala Harris (CA), Cory Booker (NJ), Tim Scott (SC), and over 40 of their colleagues from both sides of the aisle. This crucial legislation would officially make lynching a hate crime, therefore eligible for the additional federal tools and resources used to investigate and prosecute hate crimes. Included in the legislation were two “findings,” which stated “Lynching prompted African Americans to form the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (referred to in this section as the “NAACP”) and prompted members of B’nai B’rith to found the Anti-Defamation League.” and “Mr. Walter White, as a member of the NAACP and later as the executive secretary of the NAACP from 1931 to 1955, meticulously investigated lynchings in the United States and worked tirelessly to end segregation and racialized terror.”

Similar, though not identical, legislation was introduced in the House of Representatives by Congressman Bobby Rush (IL). Congressman Rush’s bill, H.R. 35, the “Emmett Till Antilynching Act,” passed the House of Representatives on February 26, 2020 by a recorded vote of 410 yeas to 4 nays. Prior to being sent to the Senate for reconciliation, with the permission of Congressman Rush and others, all the language of the bill, with the exception of the title, was changed to be identical to the Senate language.

Because of the minor difference between the bill which passed the House and that which passed the Senate in 2019 (the title), the bill must once more be passed by the U.S. Senate before it can go to the President for his signature and become law. While Senate passage is expected soon, and every indication is it will enjoy strong bipartisan support.

Thus, we must urge every member of the Senate to support the swift passage of the newly titled bill and then we must urge the President to sign it into law as soon as possible.

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TAKE ACTION

Contact your Representative and both your Senators and URGE THEM TO PASS THE EMMETT TILL ANTILYNCHING ACT as soon as possible. To contact your Senators and Representative, you may:

MAKE A PHONE CALL
Call your Senators and in Washington by dialing the Capitol Switchboard and asking to be transferred to your Senators' offices. The switchboard phone number is (202) 224-3121 (see message section, below).

SEND AN EMAIL
To send an e-mail to your Senators, go to www.senate.gov and click on “Contact” under “Senators.” You can look up your Senators by name or state; go to their web sites to send an e-mail.

WRITE A LETTER
To write letters to your Senators, send them to:
The Honorable (name of Senator)
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

(Because the bill may come up very soon, please email or fax the letter!)

REMEMBER TO CONTACT BOTH YOUR SENATORS!

THE MESSAGE
• Lynching is a form of torture, intimidation and domestic terrorism. For over a century, it has been used to torture, terrorize and intimidate African Americans;

• At least 4,742 people, predominantly African Americans, were reported lynched in the United States between 1882 and 1968. 99% of all perpetrators of lynching escaped from punishment by Federal, State or local officials;

• Protection against lynching is the most basic of Federal responsibilities;

• By making lynching a hate crime, we will be bringing additional federal resources and strategic coordination to the investigation and prosecution of this heinous act;

• The U.S. Senate needs to demonstrate the same courage as it did before, and as the U.S. House did on February 26, 2020, and pass H.R. 35 the *Emmett Till Antilynching Act* swiftly

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SAMPLE LETTER

(date)

The Honorable ___________________________
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

STRONG SUPPORT FOR SWIFT ENACTMENT OF H.R.35, THE EMMETT TILL ANTILYNCHING ACT

Dear Senator ______________________________;

As your constituent, I strongly urge you to do everything you can to see that the "Emmett Till Antilynching Act" passes the Senate as soon as possible and is signed into law. This crucial legislation, which first passed the Senate by Unanimous Consent over a year ago is now before you again with a very small change -- the name. Once it passes the U.S. Senate and is signed into law by the President of the United States and becomes law, the "Emmett Till Antilynching Act" would make lynching a hate crime, and therefore provide additional resources to local law enforcement agencies for the investigation and prosecution of these heinous acts of bias motivated violence.

I look forward to your response regarding the "Emmett Till Antilynching Act" and the opportunity to work with you on any ideas you may have to see this crucial legislation become the law of the land.

Sincerely,

(sign and print your name and remember to include your address)

Remember to contact BOTH your Senators.
ACTION ALERT
SIGN-UP

Please Print Clearly

Name ________________________________________________
Title ________________________________________________
Address / P.O. Box ______________________________________
City ___________ State ___________ Zip Code ___________
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