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LDF Issues Statement Urging President Biden to Immediately Sign the Emmett Till Antilynching Act

Last night, the United States Senate unanimously passed the Emmett Till Antilynching Act, completing a more than 100-year-long, multi-generational campaign to enlist the significant powers of the federal government against a distinctly American form of violence and terror rooted in anti-Black racism.

The bill has already been passed in the House of Representatives and now moves on to President Biden to sign into law.

In response, [NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.](#) (LDF) Associate Director-Counsel Janai S. Nelson issued the following statement:

“After thousands of murders of Black people, nearly 200 separate attempts to enact legislation, and more than 100 years since the first anti-lynching bill was introduced, the U.S. government is on the verge of finally acknowledging and addressing a historical fact that has long been self-evident: the crime of lynching is a form of hate that the government must prosecute fully and with the full array of its powers.

“Until recently, the shameful and widespread use of lynching in this country’s history was often ignored. Over the last 20 years, though, awareness of this horrific and barbaric practice has grown — due in no small part to important and narrative-shifting publications like *On the Courthouse Lawn: Confronting the Legacy of Lynching in the Twenty-first Century*, which was written by Sherrilyn Ifill, LDF’s President and Director-Counsel.

“Now, almost 67 years since this bill’s namesake, 14-year-old Emmett Till, was beaten, tortured, shot, killed, and dumped into the Tallahatchie River by a group of murderous white supremacist white men — and decades after his mother, Mamie Till, helped spur the Civil Rights Movement by demanding that Emmett’s casket be left open for his funeral in Chicago, because, as she said, she ‘wanted the world to see what they did to my boy’ — our government has taken an important step toward a real reckoning with this country’s history of anti-Black violence.

“We applaud the passage of this long-overdue bill, as well as the clear and unquestionable message it sends about this nation’s determination to confront this shameful chapter of our history and deter future crimes. We thank those members of Congress whose tireless and noble efforts over decades have brought this vital legislation so close to becoming law. And we urge President Joe Biden to sign the Emmett Till Antilynching Act into law as soon as possible.”

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Founded in 1940, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) is the nation’s first civil and human rights law organization. LDF has been completely separate from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since 1957—although LDF was originally founded by the NAACP and shares its commitment to equal rights. LDF’s Thurgood Marshall Institute is a multi-disciplinary and collaborative hub within LDF that launches targeted campaigns and undertakes innovative research to shape the civil rights narrative. In media attributions, please refer to us as the NAACP Legal Defense Fund or LDF. Follow LDF on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#).