**A Resolution for Informational Briefing by the Province III Synod on May 2, 2022**

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**Resolution #D015
A Resolution to Adopt the Emmett Till Antilynching Act**

Resolved, the House of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ concurring, that this 80th General Convention of The Episcopal Church hereby direct and encourage that the United States Senate in the strongest possible terms to promptly pass The Emmett Till Antilynching Act (HR 55) in substantially the form passed by the House of Representatives; and be it further

Resolved, that this 80th General Convention directs, consistent with established policies and procedures, that the Executive Council refer this Resolution to the Office of Government Relations, so that it may take all actions necessary to accomplish the intentions and purposes of this Resolution.

**Explanation**

*And what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?* Micah 6:8

We are all inheritors of multi-generational trauma. We are all inheritors of the great chasm of racial divide. The time for action is now. We are all inheritors, but we who believe that every human being is created in the image of God are choosing to no longer be spectators. We refuse to participate through silence and inaction. We are called upon to use our voices, to build relationships and to unify.

In the famous words of Thomas Jefferson when he wrote The Declaration of Independence, *“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."* Sadly, not only historically but presently, most in the Black population have not started life in conditions that promote these ideals. One of the conditions that suppresses, traumatizes, and continuously re- traumatizes African Americans is the chronic and real threat to personal safety. While the definition of lynching was once relegated to the end-result of executioner-style hanging, the actual act of lynching is a series of brutal acts committed against the body involving beatings, torture, maiming,

dismemberment, burning, murder, and desecration, including using parts of the body as souvenirs or as trophies. These cruel and brutal acts have produced an atmosphere of terror in the hearts of African Americans, limit the physical movements of African Americans and continue to subjugate African Americans to white American interests. Unfortunately, African Americans and white Americans, though they may reside in the same neighborhoods, often live in two different worlds, having different sets of rules, treatment, and quality of life.

Terrorism through vigilantism sends a message to all Americans that Black and Brown people have reduced roles, reduced economic opportunities, and reduced resources. Now is the time to stand with all people regardless of skin color to uphold the American values that we consider to be “self-evident” by boldly acknowledging lynching as an everyday occurrence and by standing as a Church with one unified voice in favor of The Emmett Till Antilynching Act.

Within the last 100 years, there have been almost 200 attempts to pass an antilynching act in Congress, and yet each attempt has been blocked by either the House of Representatives or the Senate. On February 26, 2020, The Emmett Till Antilynching Act passed the House by a vote of 410-4. On the day of George Floyd’s funeral, the Senate had the opportunity to make the passing of the first antilynching act a symbol and legislative contradiction to the heart wrenching institutional murder of Mr. Floyd, but the Senate failed to act yet again.

We Episcopalians have the moral responsibility and Christian duty to take concrete action to ensure that atonement, reconciliation, and creating a sustainable transformational atmosphere of safety is an ongoing priority. Of the 4,743 lynching’s that have taken place between 1882- 1968, 72.7% have been attacks against African Americans, mostly males. Many additional lynching’s have been recorded as “suicides.” The impact upon Black bodies is not just reserved for lynched victims, but upon their families, their friends, and the Black community at large, including clergy. Trauma is built into our bodies through this domestic terrorism. The traumatization affects people of every “color.”

We are all inheritors of racial trauma. Let us embody Thomas Jefferson’s words that all are created equal, let us as The Body of Christ come together to unify, to bridge, and to heal this racial divide. We are reminded of the words of The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. who said, *“He who passively accepts evil is as much involved in it as he who helps to perpetrate it. He who accepts evil without protesting against it, is really cooperating with it.”*

 [https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/55?](https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/55?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22emmett+till%22%5D%7D&s=5&r=5)

[1] *Why it took a Century to Pass an Anti-Lynching Law,* Washington Post, December 28, 2018 Louis P. Masuro

[2] *H.R. 35: Emmett Till Antilynching Act* https://www.govtrack.us/congress/votes/116- 2020/h71 22 July 2020

[3] *Lynchings by State and Race, 1882-
1968* http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/shipp/lynchingsstate.html 22 July 2020

[4] *How White Americans Used Lynching to Terrorize and Control Black People.* The Guardian by Jamiles Lartey and Sam Morris, 26 Apr 2