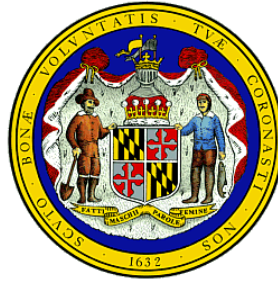


Chair
David Fakunle, Ph.D.

Vice Chair
Charles Chavis, Jr., Ph.D.

Staff
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Christopher Haley
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Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission



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Simone Barrett, Ph.D.
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Kirkland Hall, Sr. Ph.D.
Elizabeth Hughes
Elgin Klugh, Ph.D.
Gary Norman
Carl Snowden
Marshall Stevenson, Ph.D.
Tamara Wilson, D.Min.

January 17, 2021

The Honorable Delegate Shane E. Pendergrass
Chair, Health and Government Operations Committee
241 House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: HB0297 - Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission - Reporting and Sunset Extension (SUPPORT WTH ADMENDMENT)

Dear Chair Pendergrass,

As Chair of the Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission (MLTRC), I am proud to represent my fellow commissioners in voicing our unanimous support for HB0297.

My fellow commissioners and I knew that accepting an appointment to this commission would be a responsibility unlike any other. We are embarking on a journey to elevate the stories and bring justice to people whose lives were unjustifiably cut short, in such a sadistic and inhumane manner, simply due to their existence. Furthermore, we recognize that this experience can serve as one of many important steps towards addressing and bringing conciliation to a country that has yet to fully acknowledge the influence of and damage caused by systemic racism.

As such, we must do this work with the thoroughness and consideration that this history deserves. Whether it means contemplating the most appropriate research methodology, navigating avenues by which we engage descendants of racial terror lynching victims, perpetrators and witness, or nurturing relationships with existing lynching history coalitions, each decision we make will be subject to evaluation and judgment by many around Maryland, the United States and abroad.

Quite simply we must take our time and be meticulous with every decision we make. We are honored to have received nearly \$300,000 via the Emmett Till Cold Case Investigations Program through the U.S. Department of Justice, and are now financially positioned to acquire the necessary resources and assets to do due diligence by the legacy-defining task we are charged to undertake. We respectfully request that the bill be amended to provide the Commission time to

complete its obligations under the 3-year DOJ grant, specifically by extending the termination date to June 2024 and the final report submission deadline to December 2023.

We hope that you will vote favorably for HB0297, allowing the Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission the opportunity to both fully honor the courage exuded in passing the original bill and fulfill our duty to exercise the ideals on which this state and this country are meant to stand, now more than ever.

In Service to Justice,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David O. Fakunle". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "D".

David O. Fakunle, Ph.D.

Chair, Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission