

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 3

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By: **Senators Sydnor and Augustine**

Introduced and read first time: February 6, 2026

Assigned to: Education, Energy, and the Environment

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION

1 A Senate Joint Resolution concerning

2 **Apology and Acknowledgement of the State’s Responsibility in Racial Terror**
3 **Lynchings**

4 FOR the purpose of issuing an apology and acknowledging the State’s complicity and
5 negligence in allowing the perpetration of acts of racial terror lynching; committing
6 to taking reparative actions as recommended by the Maryland Lynching Truth and
7 Reconciliation Commission; and generally relating to racial terror lynchings in the
8 State.

9 WHEREAS, In Chapter 41 of the Acts of the General Assembly of 2019, the General
10 Assembly authorized the Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission to
11 research cases of racial terror lynching and to make recommendations “for addressing the
12 legacy of lynching that are rooted in the spirit of restorative justice”; and

13 WHEREAS, The Commission recommended that “the Maryland General Assembly
14 issue an apology and acknowledgment of responsibility” for its complicity and negligence
15 in allowing the perpetration of acts of racial terror lynching; and

16 WHEREAS, Between 1854 and 1933, there were 38 documented cases of racial terror
17 lynching in the State; and

18 WHEREAS, No one was ever held accountable for the commission of these crimes;
19 and

20 WHEREAS, Various State, county, and local government entities colluded in the
21 commission of these crimes and conspired to conceal the identities of the parties involved;
22 and

23 WHEREAS, The State failed to protect Black people who descend from U.S. chattel
24 slavery from being forcibly taken by lynch mobs and murdered without due process; and

25 WHEREAS, The State failed to pass anti-lynching legislation in 1898 and 1933; and



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1 WHEREAS, The only formal apology for a racial terror lynching in the State was
2 issued by the State's Attorney for Calvert County at the Commission's hearing for Southern
3 Maryland; now, therefore, be it

4 RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the State
5 apologizes for:

6 (1) its role in the murder of each victim in the 38 cases of documented racial
7 terror lynchings, any additional racial terror lynchings that have yet to be discovered, and
8 any attempted racial terror lynchings;

9 (2) failing to provide Black Marylanders with equal protection and due
10 process under the law in violation of the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution;

11 (3) dehumanizing Black Marylanders by violating their privileges and
12 immunities of citizenship through the enforcement of racially discriminatory laws in
13 violation of the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution;

14 (4) its role in facilitating racial terror lynchings in the State;

15 (5) conspiring and colluding with State, county, and local government
16 entities to conceal the identities of the parties involved in these crimes;

17 (6) taking the tax dollars of Black Marylanders while not providing equal
18 protection under the law, voting rights, in violation of the 15th Amendment of the U.S.
19 Constitution, or equal representation in government;

20 (7) the breakdown in trust between many Black Marylanders and law
21 enforcement and other governmental entities as a result of racial terror lynchings;

22 (8) failing to hold perpetrators of racial terror lynchings accountable
23 through State inaction constituting tacit approval of the actions of the perpetrators and
24 contributing to their sense of impunity;

25 (9) failing to pass anti-lynching legislation in 1898 and 1933;

26 (10) the destruction of the health, wealth, and sacred cultural heritage
27 spaces of the Black community, such as ancestral burial grounds and Black settlements,
28 that resulted from racial terror lynchings and de jure and de facto racial segregation;

29 (11) its role in contributing to the separation of Black families during
30 enslavement, through its support of the Maryland Colonization Society and the American
31 Colonization Society, through its enactment of de jure Jim Crow segregation, and through
32 mass incarceration, all of which contributed to the dehumanization of Black Marylanders;
33 and

1 (12) contributing to the erasure of racial terror lynchings from public
2 memory; and be it further

3 RESOLVED, That the State recognizes, despite its many failings, the resilience and
4 persistence of Black families and communities in Maryland that have been harmed by
5 racial terror lynchings and their enduring legacies; and be it further

6 RESOLVED, That the State commits to taking reparative actions as recommended
7 by the Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission, including the prevention
8 of the recurrence of racially motivated harms; and be it further

9 RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be forwarded by the Department of
10 Legislative Services to the Governor of Maryland; the President of the Senate of Maryland;
11 and the Speaker of the House of Delegates.