

Joint Senate Resolution 3_MLMP Written (3.12.2026)

Uploaded by: Amy Millin

Position: FAV



Maryland Lynching Memorial Project

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March 9, 2026

Dear Senator Brian J. Sydnor and Distinguished Members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee,

The Maryland Lynching Memorial Project (MLMP) emphatically supports the passage of Senate Joint Resolution 3, sponsored by Senators Sydnor and Augustine to approve a bill to issue an apology and acknowledge the State's complicity and negligence in allowing the perpetration of acts of racial terror lynching; and for committing to taking reparative actions as recommended by the Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission in their final report, dated December 2025.

On a wall at Equal Justice Initiative's National Memorial for Peace and Justice in Montgomery, Alabama, a quote from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. reads: "True peace is not merely the absence of tension: it is the presence of justice." The State of Maryland took a significant step in holding itself accountable when it passed HB307 in 2019 to establish the Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission (MLTRC). The MLTRC was tasked with investigating documented cases of racial terror lynching in Maryland from 1854 to 1933, to hold public hearings in communities where racial terror lynchings occurred, and—importantly—to provide recommendations for reparations for the lasting impacts of these heinous crimes on the families and communities of the victims. These are all steps towards justice.

The MLMP played a significant role in establishing the MLTRC, and several members of its leadership have served as staff to the Commission and/or continue to serve as members of the Commission. It is appropriate—and long overdue—that the State acknowledge its role in the murder of each victim in the 38 cases of documented racial terror lynchings, any additional racial terror lynchings that have yet to be discovered, and any attempted racial terror lynchings.

Of the 38 known murders that were committed, two of the victims were children—just 13 and 15 years old. No one has been held accountable for their or the other 36 deaths. They, their families, and their communities have yet to receive an apology. The vigilantism made a mockery of the legal system, destroying communities and subsequent generations. The aftermath of the documented, attempted, and unknown racial terror lynchings remains today. This is why we must begin with an apology and an acknowledgement of past wrongs.

Upon the sunseting of the MLTRC, the MLMP remains committed to furthering the work as repair and reconciliation have yet to be accomplished. The MLMP will continue to research and document the history of such crime in the state; to advocate for public acknowledgement of these murders; and to honor and dignify the lives of the victims. An apology by the State of Maryland for its role in these murders, coupled with a commitment to taking reparative actions—including the prevention of the recurrence of racially motivated harms—are important steps towards justice as alluded to by Dr. King.

As such, the Maryland Lynching Memorial Project is in steadfast support of the Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission's recommendations. You now have the opportunity to take an important and historic step towards acknowledging the State's role. We strongly urge you to support the passage of this resolution.

On behalf of the Maryland Lynching Memorial Project, thank you.

Respectfully submitted,



Amy S. Millin
President



Dr. Terry Anne Scott.
Vice President

SJ 3 Racial Terror Lynchings Testimony - Sydnor FI

Uploaded by: Charles Sydnor III

Position: FAV

CHARLES E. SYDNOR III, ESQ.
Legislative District 44
Baltimore County

DEPUTY MAJORITY WHIP

Judicial Proceedings Committee
Executive Nominations Committee
Legislative Policy Committee

Joint Committees

Administrative, Executive, and
Legislative Review

Children, Youth, and Families

Senate Chair, Legislative Ethics



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony for Senate Joint Resolution 3
Apology and Acknowledgement of the State's Responsibility in Racial Terror Lynchings
Before the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
March 12, 2026**

Good afternoon, Chair Feldman and members of the committee.

In 2019, we unanimously voted to establish the Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission (the “Commission”)¹ and in 2023 we unanimously voted to support legislation I introduced extending the Commission’s termination date to June 30, 2026 and its deadline to submit its final report to December 1, 2025.² The Commission was charged to:

- hold public regional hearings in areas where a lynching of an African American by a white mob has been documented;
- receive recommendations from the public, including families and communities affected by lynching, for addressing, engaging, and reconciling affected families and communities, as specified; and
- make recommendations for addressing the legacy of lynching that are rooted in the spirit of restorative justice and may include the erection of memorial plaques or signage at or near sites of racially motivated lynchings.³

The Commission delivered its final report⁴ last December and identified 38 victims of racial terror lynching—which was defined as “the unlawful killing of an African American by white mob violence, often with the apparent complicity of state and local officials, intended to incite racial

¹ [2019 Maryland House Bill 309, House of Delegates Third Reader Voting Record](#); [2019 Maryland House Bill 309, Senate Third Reader Voting Record](#).

² [Chapter 12 of 2023](#).

³ [Chapter 41 of 2019](#)

⁴ [Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Final Report \(revised December 9, 2025\)](#). Unless otherwise noted, all statistics, facts, and quotations in this testimony are from this Report.

terror and subservience to white supremacy”—across the state of Maryland. The earliest victim the Commission identified was David Thomas, who was lynched in 1854 at age 34 in Caroline County. The most recent was George Armwood, at age 22, of Somerset County in 1933. According to the Commission’s report at least 38 Black Marylanders were “terrorized, brutalized, and murdered by white mobs” during this 80-year period.

I had the opportunity to personally visit the site in Allegany County where 18-year-old Robert Hughes (a.k.a William Burns) was accused of shooting Officer August Baker and lynched three days later by beating and repeated shooting on October 6, 1907. I also visited the site in Baltimore County where 15-year-old Howard Cooper was accused of rape and lynched by hanging on July 13, 1885. In both of these lynchings, the teens were abducted by lynch mobs from local jails and murdered.

Howard Cooper’s lynching took place as his lawyers attempted to take his case to the Supreme Court, with white residents fearing the prospect of a ruling in his favor. At around 11:00pm on July 12, 1884, a mob of masked white men broke into the jail using a flagpole, overpowering the local sheriff and watchman. The mob dragged Cooper out of his cell with a rope around his neck and hung him on the nearest tree outside the jail. A local Baltimore Sun reporter on the scene described as many as 40 men pulling the rope.⁵

In the lynching of Robert Hughes, the county sheriff deliberately declined to place additional guards at the jail, leaving one deputy sheriff to defend against a mob of masked men on the evening of October 5, 1907. By midnight, the mob had grown to several hundred and demanded that the deputy sheriff turn over his keys. Some reports claimed he refused, leading the mob to hold him at gun point, strip him, and seize the keys. Other reports claimed his wife arrived at the scene and convinced him to turn them over. As the mob stormed the jail, a local attorney attempted to find additional officers to urge them to respond, later describing that they “moved in a rather leisurely fashion” and “of course... arrived too late”. Robert Hughes had already been dragged into the street, shot repeatedly, and mutilated.⁶

These two incidents reflect a broader pattern of the deliberate failure of our state to protect the Black community from lynch mobs. The report’s findings noted the following themes of these extrajudicial killings:⁷

- **Accusations Without Due Process:** Lynching victims were often accused of crimes, not convicted. The allegations frequently involved an assault of a white women, which triggered mob violence without any investigation, evidence, or legal process.
- **Mob Violence Enabled by Law Enforcement:** In many cases, local law enforcement failed to protect prisoners in their custody, allowing or enabling mobs to seize and lynch them.

⁵ [The Lynching of Howard Cooper | CCBC Invisible History.](#)

⁶ [About William Burns — The Brownsville Project.](#)

⁷ [Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission, *Final Report*](#) (Page 117).

- **High Rates of Free Black Residents and Black Landownership:** Counties where lynchings occurred often had established and prosperous Black communities whose economic and civic success provoked resentment and backlash from white residents.
- **Segregation and Political Suppression Post-Emancipation:** Maryland’s white political leaders used tools like poll taxes, literacy tests, and gerrymandering to suppress Black political power, while mob violence reinforced that system of control.
- **Geographic and Jurisdictional Isolation:** In more geographically isolated counties, distance from state oversight often allowed local residents to carry out lynchings without outside intervention or accountability.
- **Erasure from Public Memory:** The victims and history of lynching were largely omitted from local histories, textbooks, and public commemorations.

The structures that enabled racial terror lynchings transformed into the structures that find today’s Black Marylanders facing more traffic stops, more incarceration, more maternal mortality, and more land loss than their white counterparts.

As Commissioners David Fakunle and Charles Chavis wrote in their introduction to the Report, “lynching was never solely about the individuals killed. It was a system of terror designed to subjugate an entire community and to enforce racial hierarchy.”⁸ The report expands on this point stating:

“Maryland’s history of racial terror lynchings cannot be fully understood without grappling with the structures that made them possible. The patterns across counties—law enforcement complicity, economic resentment, political suppression, and media normalization—reveal that lynching was never an isolated act of rage. It was a systemic tool of racial control, aided by public institutions and cultural gatekeepers.”⁹

In acknowledgement of this reality, the Commission specifically recommended that we enact legislation and support remedies in nine key categories. Senate Joint Resolution 3, seeks to enact one of those recommendations of Commission’s Reconciliation Committee: the Apology and Acknowledgment of Responsibility.¹⁰

⁸ [Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission, *Final Report*](#) (Page 4).

⁹ [Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission, *Final Report*](#) (Page 119).

¹⁰ [Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission, *Final Report*](#) (Page 132). The other categories include “(1) Material Reparations – proposing tangible investments to repair historical and ongoing harm; (2) Criminal Justice – strengthening due process protections for the accused and addressing the absence of accountability and broader failures of the legal system; (3) Community Healing – fostering spaces and practices for grief, remembrance, and resilience; (4) Educational – integrating the history of racial terror into curricula and public education and expanding opportunities for communities impacted by this legacy; (5) Mental Health – supporting culturally competent, trauma-informed services for descendants and communities; (6) Symbolic Reparations – including apologies, memorials, and public acknowledgments to honor victims and affirm the truth; (7) Media – promoting accurate, respectful storytelling to counter historical distortion; and (8) Funding, Implementation, and Monitoring – ensuring recommendations are resourced, enacted, and assessed with transparency and accountability.”

The Commission and I acknowledge that “There is no single act or policy that can undo this history. But by confronting it with honesty and committing to meaningful repair”, we have an “opportunity to lead.” The Commission was clear that this and its other These recommendations were offered “to restore what was taken, to remember what was lost, and to move—together—toward healing.”¹¹ It is this healing which “requires an honest reckoning with the past.”¹² Acknowledging and apologizing as a body for the role the State played is a small but necessary step. Not sufficient by any means, but necessary.

For these reasons, I ask for a favorable report on Senate Joint Resolution 3.

11 [Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission, *Final Report*](#) (Page 132).

12 [Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission, *Final Report*](#) (Page 123).

Carrington 2026 Carrington Testimony SJ3 Lynching.

Uploaded by: Darrell Carrington

Position: FAV



CARRINGTON & ASSOCIATES, LLC

Integrity. Passion. Results

Since 2006

SJ3 - Racial Terror Lynching – Acknowledgment and Apology

Position: Support

Carrington & Associates, LLC respectfully submits this testimony in support of Senate Joint Resolution 3. This Resolution acknowledges a painful and undeniable chapter in Maryland's history, the occurrence of racial terror lynchings and the failure of the State to protect Black Marylanders from mob violence during that period. By formally recognizing these acts and issuing an apology, the General Assembly is confronting history directly rather than allowing it to remain unspoken.

The Resolution also recognizes the work of the Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission, whose research and documentation have helped bring greater public understanding to these events. Their work has made clear that these acts were not isolated incidents, but part of a broader climate of racial terror that existed in communities across the State.

While no Resolution can undo the suffering inflicted on victims and their families, acknowledgement matters. A formal apology from the State represents an important step in recognizing the harm that occurred and affirming that the State has a responsibility to confront this history honestly.

For many Maryland families and communities, the effects of these acts have carried forward across generations. Recognizing the truth of what occurred and the State's failure to intervene when it should have is an act of accountability that strengthens, rather than weakens, our institutions.

For these reasons, Carrington & Associates, LLC respectfully urges a favorable report on Senate Joint Resolution 3.

Please contact Darrell Carrington at darrell.carrington@verizon.net if you would like any additional information.

SenateRezBaltCoStatement.pdf

Uploaded by: David K. Truscello

Position: FAV

Statement of the Baltimore County Lynching Memorial Project (BaltCoLMP) in Support of the Senate Resolution of Apology and Acknowledgement of the State’s Responsibility in Racial Terror Lynchings

The Baltimore County Lynching Memorial Project (BaltCoLMP) supports the Maryland Senate’s joint resolution concerning the *Apology and Acknowledgement of the State’s Responsibility in Racial Terror Lynchings*.

This resolution comes out of the Final Report of the Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission (MLTRC)—which was directly informed by the county hearings held in our communities and as a result of the partnership between the MLTRC and MLMP local coalitions. We add this statement to the hearing for this bill in the Education, Energy, and Environment Committee, Thursday, March 12th at 1:00 p.m.

In our work to inform citizens about the history of racial terror lynchings, the BaltCoLMP has discovered disturbing facts about the practices and decisions (allowed and implemented) by the State of Maryland regarding the lynching of Howard Cooper in Towson, Baltimore County; the lynching of Matthew Williams in Salisbury, Wicomico County; and many other occurrences of lynching in counties across Maryland.

BaltCoLMP is interested in an apology from the State especially because of one particularly disgraceful feature of the decisions condemning 15-year-old Howard Cooper to death. Records show that in 1885, the all-white jury appointed in the Cooper case was in violation of U.S. Supreme Court decision taken five years earlier in *Strauder v. West Virginia (1880)*. The resulting all-white jury never left the jury box to deliberate and returned its guilty verdict after only one minute. Somehow overlooking or ignoring *Strauder v. West Virginia*, the Appellate Court of Maryland turned down Cooper’s appeal. Cooper’s legal advisors raised the funds to prepare to file further appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court, but on the Sunday night before they could file, a mob of dozens of men, led by a well-known Towson lawyer, broke into the Old Jail in Towson, dragged Cooper from his cell, hung him from a nearby tree, and thereby murdered him. Judge William Shepard Bryan of the Maryland Court of Appeals expressed little sympathy and condoned the circumvention of the courts by mob violence by reportedly saying, “The summary disposition of the case would not have occurred if the friends of the condemned man had not resorted to the extreme measures they took to raise funds, *The Baltimore Sun, 14 July 1885*.

Similar disturbing facts were uncovered in the lynching of Matthew Williams in Salisbury in December, 1931. Williams was wounded in an exchange of gunfire with his white employer. While he was receiving medical

attention, a violent mob dragged him from the hospital. He was beaten and stabbed. His body was hung from a tree and set afire. None of the well-known perpetrators—whose actions and crimes were witnessed by hundreds of citizens—were ever charged much less prosecuted for the lynching.

The State of Maryland, and Baltimore and Wicomico Counties, could have and should have protected Mr. Cooper's and Mr. Williams' Fourteenth Amendment Rights of "equal protection" and "due process" as defined by the United States Constitution. These facts indicate that the State of Maryland failed in its responsibility under the Constitution to protect Mr. Cooper and Mr. Williams from the clear threat posed by lynch mobs that formed at the time.

For these compelling reasons, the members of BaltCoLMP support the joint resolution calling for the State of Maryland to apologize as partial remedy for the injustices caused by its failure to protect the rights of those lynched in the State.

An apology from the State of Maryland is highly warranted.

Teichert Testimony

Uploaded by: Diane Teichert

Position: FAV

I testify today before the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee in support of the Apology and Acknowledgement of the State's Responsibility in Racial Terror Lynchings: Senate Joint Resolution 3.

My seven years of experience with the all-volunteer, county-wide, non-profit Prince George's County Lynching Memorial Project brings me to present this testimony. PGC LMP's Mission is to **educate** the public on the truths of our nation's continuing legacy of the institution of slavery and its impact on enslaved persons and their descendants, **memorialize** victims of racial terror lynchings in our county, and **advance** the cause of racial justice and reconciliation through mutual support and collaboration.

Our work brings me in contact with descendants of the victims of the county's four documented racial terror lynchings and of their neighbors. As a White person, I deeply believe apologies are necessary for our Mission to succeed. Meaningful apologies are good for our souls and for our relationships. They are necessary first steps, after which reparative actions must be taken to address the harms to those particular families and communities, and to move systemically toward justice and equality in all spheres of our public lives. These recommendations are impactfully presented in the in the Final Report of your Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Please support this very first step, the Apology and Acknowledgement of the State's Responsibility in Racial Terror Lynchings.

Remember your childhood: when you grabbed a toy from your sibling, your parents insisted that you apologize, right? But your "I'm sorry" was insufficient, correct? Then you had to return the toy! It is too late for the return of lost lives, relationships and property, but it is not too late to apologize and then to make concrete amends. Please support Senate Joint Resolution 3.

Sincerely,
Rev. Diane Teichert
Minister Emerita, Paint Branch Unitarian Universalist Church
Co-chair, Prince George's County Lynching Memorial Project

Written Testimony for SJ0003.pdf

Uploaded by: Esi Fynn-Obeng

Position: FAV

Esi Fynn-Obeng

Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Senate Joint Resolution 3 (SJ0003)

10 March 2026

Written Testimony in Support of Senate Joint Resolution 3

My name is Esi Fynn-Obeng and I am second-year law student at the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law. I am testifying in favor of Senate Joint Resolution 3 (SJ0003) regarding the State's apology and acknowledgement in its responsibility in racial terror lynchings.

As a law student, I echo the work and findings of the Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission (MLTRC) which was granted the authority in 2019 to investigate, record, and reconcile the history of racial terror lynchings of Black Americans in Maryland. In its final report, contained 84 recommendations for reparations, repair, and legislative action all aimed at addressing the lasting impact of these lynchings and the disparities its created. As remedy, I support the commission's efforts to address this legacy of racial violence by promoting racial healing, action, and apologies for descendants of both victims and those from terrorized communities. Approving this apology is a vital step in acknowledging the state's historical involvement in these racial killings and fostering community-wide reconciliation. With this said, I urge the Assembly to approve this apology as well as the other 83 recommendations of the Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission (MLTRC).

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Esi Fynn-Obeng

University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law

HoCo AAPI Commission SJ0003.pdf

Uploaded by: Haley Moreau

Position: FAV

Date: March 12, 2026

To: Senators Sydnor and Augustine

From: Howard County Asian American & Pacific Islander (AAPI) Commission

Re: Support of State Joint Resolution 3: Apology and Acknowledgement of the State's Responsibility in Racial Terror Lynchings

Dear Senators Sydnor and Augustine:

We are the proud members of the Howard County Asian American & Pacific Islander (AAPI) Commission appointed by County Executive Calvin Ball. We are writing in **support of Senate Joint Resolution 0003** issuing an apology and acknowledging the state's complicity with racial terror and further take reparative actions as recommended by the Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

The AAPI Commission comprises 20 members representing diverse ethnicities among the AAPI community and agencies in Howard County. The AAPI Commission is dedicated to advising the Howard County Executive on policy initiatives, advocating for issues that impact the AAPI community, and cultivating a safe, welcoming community where AAPI residents feel seen, valued, and heard. We are compelled to speak on this issue in solidarity with Black communities who have faced racial terror lynching in Maryland.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in the state of Maryland, 32% of 6.3 million Marylanders are Black or African American. In Howard County, 22% of our County's 340,000 population is Black or African American. The Black community is a vibrant and integral part of our county's fabric and has worked diligently—alongside the AAPI community and other protected classes—to advance justice and equity for all.

The 38 documented cases of murder by racial terror lynchings were committed in collusion with various state, county, and government entities, with none of the murderers being held responsible for their heinous crimes. This is evidenced by the state failing to pass anti-lynching legislation in 1898 and 1933, which only furthered the state's role in failing to protect Black Marylanders and bolstering systemic racism. We

know that Asian Americans have also been targets of racial terror, with one of the largest mass lynchings in U.S. history taking place in Los Angeles, CA, on October 24th, 1871.¹ Nearly 20 Chinese immigrants were shot and killed or hanged by an angry mob of nearly 500 people in the “Chinese quarter” of Los Angeles. The history of racial terror lynching is horrific; it is also awful to not apologize for and acknowledge the violent actions of the perpetrators, the collusion of the government in failing to protect Black Marylanders, and the glaring silence around this period of Maryland history.

At the core of restorative justice is fostering accountability, understanding, and healing.² Repairing relationships, rebuilding trust, and addressing the needs of those targeted is crucial in this process. The Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission has made clear that the State failed to protect Black Marylanders and violated their constitutional rights. This failure has contributed to long-term harm for generations. While nothing can bring back the 38 victims murdered in Maryland, a formal apology and acknowledgement by state officials in their predecessors' roles in the perpetration of the violent acts would foster commitment to restorative justice. We are proud to live in Maryland and we want state leaders who are bold enough to face the past in order to build a unified and stronger Maryland for each and every person in this great state. We respectfully request you do the right thing, and pass SJ0003.

Sincerely,

Membership of the Howard County AAPI Commission

¹ <https://asianamericanedu.org/chinese-massacre-of-1871-connecting-past-with-present.html>

² <https://law.wisc.edu/fjr/rjp/justice.html>

HoCo Alianza Latina Commission SJ0003.pdf

Uploaded by: Haley Moreau

Position: FAV

**Written Testimony – In Support of Senate Joint Resolution 3 (SJ0003)
Submitted to the Maryland General Assembly – Senate Education, Energy, and the
Environment Committee**

Position: SUPPORT

Date: March 12, 2026

Chair Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan, and Distinguished Members of the Committee,

The La Alianza Latina Commission of Howard County is an official advisory body dedicated to uniting and elevating the voices of Latinos in Howard County through advocacy, legislation, inclusive policies, and partnerships to ensure every individual's potential is realized. Our vision is to advance the highest quality of life for the Latino community in Howard County by centering equity, empowerment, and collaborative leadership in all that we do.

Our commission strongly supports Senate Joint Resolution 3 (SJ0003), which acknowledges Maryland's responsibility in historical racial terror lynchings and commits to pursuing reparative actions. Supporting this resolution is consistent with our responsibility to advocate for policies that advance dignity, opportunity, and shared prosperity for *all* Marylanders.

Systemic racism is not an isolated historical footnote; it has profoundly shaped institutions and public policies, creating inequities that continue to affect communities of color across Maryland. While SJ0003F directly addresses the specific racial terror inflicted primarily upon Black Marylanders, the Commission recognizes that the pursuit of justice is indivisible.

The resolution's commitment to truth, reconciliation, and repair does not merely benefit one community, but rather, it strengthens the very foundation of justice and equity for all marginalized communities, including our Latino residents. A state that openly acknowledges its past injustices and commits to meaningful repair is a state better positioned to foster trust, dismantle persistent systemic barriers, and ensure truly inclusive growth for everyone.

For these reasons, the La Alianza Latina Commission respectfully urges a favorable report on SJ0003.

Thank you for your consideration,

Membership of the Howard County La Alianza Latina Commission

HRC Senate Joint Resolution 3 Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Haley Moreau

Position: FAV



HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

HOWARD COUNTY OFFICE OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUITY
9820 Patuxent Woods Drive, Suite 237 • Columbia, Maryland 21046 • 410-313-6430
Calvin Ball, County Executive, • Brandee Ganz, Chief Administrative Officer
LaKeisha McClendon, Administrator

hrc@howardcountymd.gov

To: Chair Senator Brian J. Feldman, Vice Chair Senator Cheryl C. Kagan and members of the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

From: The Howard County Human Rights Commission

Re: TESTIMONY REGARDING Senate Joint Resolution 3: Apology and Acknowledgement of the State's Responsibility in Racial Terror Lynchings

Dear Chair Senator Feldman, Vice Chair Senator Kagan, and members of the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee:

The Howard County Human Rights Commission, the purpose of which is to protect and promote human rights, supports Senate Joint Resolution 3. The resolution formally acknowledges Maryland's complicity and negligence in allowing the perpetration of acts of racial terror, including lynching, for which no one was held accountable, and failing to provide Black Marylanders equal protection and due process under the law.

The resolution recognizes the lasting harm these injustices caused and commits the State to taking meaningful reparative actions recommended by the Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Passing the resolution is an essential step toward truth and accountability.

Sincerely,
The Howard County Human Rights Commission

Testimony- SJ0003.pdf

Uploaded by: James Yamakawa

Position: FAV

My name is James Yamakawa. I founded the Wicomico Truth and Reconciliation Initiative in 2019 for the express purpose of educating on the history of white supremacy in our community. It is largely due to our efforts that in 2021, the eastern shore of MD (once known as “the lynching shore”) had installed the first memorial to the three “known” victims of racial-terror lynching in Wicomico County. Garfield King (May 25th, 1898), Matthew Williams (December 4th, 1931) and Unknown (December 4th, 1931).

I will not retell the history of what was done to them; as Marylanders you should already know some of it, or at the very least know where to find out more.

My purpose instead is to call upon you to support and pass Senate Joint Resolution 0003, which would apologize for and acknowledge the state of Maryland’s role in the racial terror lynching of 38 of its citizens.

These acts of domestic terrorism were targeted not only at the individual victims, but at the Black community as a whole. Oftentimes these acts of violence were followed by further actions taken against said communities. For example, following the racial terror lynching of Matthew Williams, the black neighborhood of Georgetown - located in downtown Salisbury - was targeted for systematic destruction and its citizens forced to move to other parts of the county. The only surviving structure from this thriving neighborhood is the former John Wesley United Methodist church (Matthew’s home church- now the Charles Chipman Cultural Center). Most of it lies underneath Route 50, Route 13, and a parking lot...

Racial terror lynchings were tools of white supremacy, designed to exert control over Black lives. That they served this purpose is exemplified by the fact that no one was ever meant to be held responsible.

That does not mean that those responsible were not known.

In his 2021 book “The Silent Shore: The Lynching of Matthew Williams and the Politics of Racism in the Free State”, author and professor Charles Chavis Jr. details the result of years of research into an undercover investigation paralleling the “official” one. In it, he reveals evidence that implicates local officials directly involved in the lynching. Among them are two Wicomico sheriffs (Murry Phillips and Donald A. Parks), the city police chief (Nicholas H Holland), and most notably Salisbury Fire Chief Frederick A Grier, who supplied the mob with the rope that was used to hang Williams.

That it took several years and countless meetings to even get a watered-down apology from the city of Salisbury (one that refused to take responsibility for the targeting of the larger Black community- one of the hallmarks of racial terror lynchings) even though the evidence was made

clear, speaks not only to the constant struggle to keep history from being buried once more, but to the reticence of local municipalities to even begin to grapple with their own complicity.

Malcolm X once compared the oppression that Black Americans regularly experience as having a “knife in the back”. He goes on to say that progress is not just pulling the knife out partway - or even all of the way - but in healing the wound. But they (America) will not admit that the knife is even there.

That is why I call on members of the Maryland legislature to stand behind and fully support SJ003. It is time that this history be fully accepted and acknowledged. And it is well past time that the legal, financial, and moral debt which is owed to the residents of our communities is paid in full.

To do so would be the first step towards a true “unity” based on our common humanity. A step which not only removes the knife from our collective backs, not only cleans and bandages the wound which was made (and continues to be made), but ensures that no more harm will come because of willful ignorance and purposeful forgetting.

To do so would be brave, indeed.

But to ignore this moment, would be to prove the lynch mob right.

Sincerely,

James Yamakawa
Founder- Wicomico Truth and Reconciliation Initiative

MBSA Testimony

Uploaded by: Jim Pauli

Position: FAV



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Baltimore, MD 21201

Canton Office
3700 O'Donnell Street
Baltimore, MD 21224

Annapolis Office
200 Duke of Gloucester Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

To: **Members of the Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee**

From: **Jim Pauli and Cynthia Lifson, Co-Chairs, Legislative Committee, Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Section Council**

Date: **March 11, 2026**

Subject: **SJR 3, Apology and Acknowledgment of the State's Responsibility in Racial Terror Lynchings**

Position: **Support**

The Maryland State Bar Association's Alternative Dispute Resolution Section Council supports Senate Joint Resolution 3 (SJR3), calling for the State of Maryland to apologize and acknowledge the State's responsibility in racial terror lynchings.

SJR 3 sets forth certain fundamental facts noted by the Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission (the Commission). The Commission was authorized by the Maryland General Assembly in 2019. SJR 3 lists, among others, these basic findings:

- Between 1854 and 1933, there were 38 documented (emphasis supplied) cases of racial terror lynchings in the State of Maryland;
- No one (emphasis supplied) was ever held accountable for the commission of these crimes;
- Various State, county, and local government entities in Maryland colluded in the commission of these crimes and conspired to conceal (emphasis supplied) of the parties involved; and
- The State of Maryland failed to pass anti-lynching legislation (emphasis supplied) in 1898 and 1933.

Marisa A. Trasatti
President

Natasha Dartigue
President-Elect

Randolph S. Sergent
Secretary

Natasha M. Nazareth
Treasurer

Anna S. Sholl
Executive Director

As acknowledged in the text of SJR 3, at a recent hearing by the Commission, the State's Attorney for Calvert County issued a formal apology on behalf of Calvert County for its involvement in lynching and racial terror. It is now time for Maryland as a whole to do the same.

The Maryland State Bar Association represents not only the specific interests of attorneys and their private concerns, but a deep and abiding commitment to the pursuit of justice. We, as members of the Alternative Dispute Resolution Section Council, have a special place in the overall mission of the Maryland State Bar. As practitioners of mediation, we have the opportunity to engage in a confidential process where parties in dispute can speak to one another without fear of undermining their legal rights. Often, what we see in the process is the presence of pain, hurt, and emotional upset that money, in and of itself, cannot heal.

By way of contrast, what we also see in the mediation process is that a sincere acknowledgment of responsibility and an apology for inflicting pain is frequently the key that opens the door to a resolution of the specific dispute, to the appropriate assessment of damages, and ultimately to the healing of pain. All of this leads to peace between the parties and then to peace in our communities.

SJR 3 opens the door to all of us in Maryland as we grapple with the legacy of our state's history of lynching and racial terror. SJR 3 does not present us with specific answers on how to compensate those who either suffered from racial terror or those with ancestors who suffered from racial terror. Similar to the apology issued by the United States government for its role in the internment of US citizens of Japanese ancestry during World War II, SJR 3 is a necessary first step to begin the long and necessary process of healing in Maryland. We will be a better place following the passage of SJR 3.

For the reasons stated above, we at the Maryland State Bar Association Alternative Dispute Resolution Section Council support and urge a favorable report on SJR 3. If you have any questions, please contact Jim Pauli, Co-Chair of the Legislative Committee of the Maryland State Bar's Alternative Dispute Resolution Section Council at jim.pauli.ajs@gmail.com and 301.452.0449.

Senate Joint Resolution 3 Favorable One Pasadena 2

Uploaded by: John Jasen

Position: FAV

Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Senate Joint Resolution 3
Favorable

Honorable Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee;

Please give Senate Joint Resolution 3 a Favorable report.

Maryland has a lot to apologize for, and apologies are great. Reparations are better. It doesn't matter that no one in the current state government perpetrated the actions. No one is asking you to feel guilty or responsible for those actions. Those who committed the crimes are dead, but they were enabled by the state and you now represent the state. There can be no building of trust or security without accountability.

Those who oppose this bill could try thinking of the state as a business, and you are the new CEO. Some past employees did something that harmed a lot of people and the previous CEO didn't do anything about it. Perhaps he was even part of it. No one is saying that you participated in the actions, but you are still expected to apologize on behalf of the company and to adequately address the grievances of those who were affected. This is definitely an imperfect analogy, but perhaps it will help.

We urge a favorable report for Senate Joint Resolution 3. Thank you.

Sincerely,
The One Pasadena Steering Committee
Pasadena, MD

SJ3 Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Nicholas Creary

Position: FAV

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify remotely. And thank you, Sen. Sydnor, for the courage to introduce this bill.

I have anticipated this moment since I approached Speaker Peña-Melnyk to establish the Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission. This bill is the beginning of the culmination of the Commission's work: it is the first of 84 recommendations for reparations for racial terror developed from six years of research, including 14 public hearings. It is a first step to provide some accountability for the State's simultaneous complicity in perpetrating and dereliction of duty in allowing these crimes to occur. We will never achieve justice for the men and boys who were murdered, or for their families, or for their communities that were terrorized and traumatized. And so, our recommendations are designed to hold the state, counties, and local communities accountable for their actions.

Bryan Stevenson, the founder of the Equal Justice Initiative, stated that truth and reconciliation must be sequential. That is, we must acknowledge the truth of the past before there can be any meaningful reconciliation between perpetrators and the people that they've harmed. This apology, therefore, is a necessary first step in the reconciliation process.

There is a common misperception that equates reparations exclusively with monetary compensation. Reparations, however, encompass far more, including symbolic measures such as this apology.

The General Assembly failed to pass anti-lynching legislation in 1898 following the lynching of William Andrews, and again in 1933 following the murder of George Armwood. Including Armwood, the General Assembly's failure in 1898 contributed to the deaths of ten victims of racial terror lynching. You now have the opportunity to do the right thing and acknowledge the State's responsibility. And so I strongly urge you to support the passage of this resolution. Thank you.

SJ 3 - MoCoLMP - Favorable.docx.pdf

Uploaded by: Paul Holmes

Position: FAV

**Testimony on SJ 3 - Favorable
Apology and Acknowledgement of the State's Responsibility in Racial Terror Lynchings**

March 12, 2026

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

The Montgomery County Lynching Memorial Project (MoCoLMP) offers **favorable testimony in support of SJ 3 - Apology and Acknowledgement of the State's Responsibility in Racial Terror Lynchings**. Of the 38 documented lynchings in Maryland, three occurred in Montgomery County: Mr. George Peck in Poolesville in 1880, Mr. John Diggs-Dorsey in Rockville in 1880 and Mr. Sidney Randolph in Rockville in 1896. Like every other lynching in Maryland, each of these three men was denied any semblance of due process and each racially violent death was determined to be "at the hands of parties unknown."

MoCoLMP is a grassroots organization and a designated Community Remembrance Project of the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI). We have spent years documenting the lives and extrajudicial murders of these three men. Our work, in partnership with the Maryland Lynching Memorial Project, Montgomery History and EJI, revealed the painful truth that these were not just isolated acts of mob violence, but public spectacles often facilitated by the failure of state and local officials to provide equal protection and due process. And there is a direct line between these racial terror lynchings and the racial challenges we continue to face today. MoCoLMP seeks to educate and engage communities about our history and the legacy of slavery, racial violence, racial terror lynching and systemic racism by promoting truth, remembrance, reconciliation, and reckoning in Montgomery County.

Bryan Stevenson, founder of EJI, said "Reconciliation with a difficult past cannot be achieved without truthfully confronting history and finding a way forward that is thoughtful and responsible." That quote applies to this Joint Resolution. Sometimes apologies and acknowledgements can ring hollow or seem performative. But the actions called for in this Resolution are not "one and done." They are modest, common sense and essential steps enabling our county and Maryland to move toward a more equitable and just society.

Senate Joint Resolution 3:

- **Formally acknowledges and apologizes for the state's role** in facilitating these murders and its collusion in protecting perpetrators.
- **Helps restore public trust** between Black communities and government entities that resulted from decades of state-sanctioned terror.
- **Recognizes the impact of such violence**, including the destruction of Black communities' wealth and health, the separation of families, and the lasting trauma caused by these murders.
- **Commits the state to reparative actions** recommended in the Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission, ensuring that MoCoLMP's motto "remembering is resistance" fosters healing and translates into meaningful policy.

- **Helps educate future generations**, thereby helping to prevent the "erasure of these events from public memory" and supporting our mission to educate the community about the enduring legacy of systemic racism.

The MLTRC, established in 2019, is the nation's first government-backed, state-level commission dedicated specifically to investigating and documenting racial terror lynchings. While other states and cities have formed commissions to address systemic racism or specific violent events, Maryland was pioneering in its focus on these lynchings. Accordingly, passage of SJ 3 will signal to all Marylanders that the state is continuing to work to right the wrongs of the past and help ensure justice for all.

For these reasons, **the Montgomery County Lynching Memorial Project strongly urges the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee to issue a favorable report on SJ 3.**

Submitted by Paul Holmes (D-19, Silver Spring)
For the Montgomery County Lynching Memorial Project

Testimony SB0003 Philip Dutton.pdf

Uploaded by: Philip Dutton

Position: FAV

Testimony – SB0003 Apology and Acknowledgement of the State’s Responsibility in Racial Terror Lynchings

I am writing on behalf of the James Taylor Justice Coalition (JTJC) of Sumner Hall in Chestertown, Kent County, Maryland. Since 2019 the JTJC has been actively working to inform and educate our community on the actions and inactions committed by officials in Kent County that resulted in the extrajudicial lynching of Mr. James Taylor on May 17, 1892. Mr. Taylor was removed from the county jail and lynched by a mob of about 60 masked individuals while as many as 800 citizens stood by and watched. Mr. Taylor never got his day in court and no one was ever charged with the lynching despite the fact that the leaders of the lynching party met with town officials in advance who simply asked that they lynch Mr. Taylor outside of town. The County Officials at the time refused to pay the cost to protect Mr. Taylor despite knowing that a lynching was being planned. On May 17, 2026, on the 134th anniversary of Mr. Taylor’s lynching, the JTJC will erect and dedicate an Equal Justice Initiative historical marker on the site of the lynching.

The JTJC supports SB0003 and believes the State of Maryland, Kent County and the Town of Chestertown need to apologize and formally acknowledge their responsibility in the racial terror lynching of Mr. James Taylor and all others who were lynching in the State of Maryland.

Respectfully,

Philip Dutton

Co-Chair

James Taylor Justice Coalition

Cell – 443.480.3134

Testimony in support of SJ0003 - Actions on MD Res

Uploaded by: Richard KAP Kaplowitz

Position: FAV

SJ0003_RichardKaplowitz_FAV
03/12/2026
Richard Keith Kaplowitz
Frederick, MD 21703

TESTIMONY ON SJ#/0003 – FAVORABLE

Apology and Acknowledgement of the State's Responsibility in Racial Terror Lynchings

TO: Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard K. Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3. I am submitting this testimony in support of SJ#0003, Apology and Acknowledgement of the State's Responsibility in Racial Terror Lynchings

The Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History & Culture, has opened a new permanent installation, *Lynching in Maryland*. The Lynching in Maryland installation seeks to honor the victims of the 38 documented racial terror lynchings that occurred in the state between 1854 and 1933. The installation serves as a solemn reminder of the atrocities committed, while also educating the public about the lasting impact of racial terror on African Americans and their communities.¹

This resolution will acknowledge this sad history of racial violence in Maryland and strive to issue an apology and acknowledge the State's complicity and negligence in allowing the perpetration of acts of racial terror lynching; and commit to taking reparative actions as recommended by the Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

As Civil Rights icon Ida B. Wells declared **“The way to right wrongs is to turn the light of truth upon them.”**

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report and pass SJ0003.

¹ <https://www.lewismuseum.org/lynching-in-maryland/#:~:text=Wells,African%20Americans%20and%20their%20communities.>

SJ0003-Apology & Acknowledgement of MD Responsibil

Uploaded by: S. Spencer Dove

Position: FAV



State of Maryland Commission on Civil Rights

Respect...Integrity...Effective Communication

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Wes Moore

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**Education and
Outreach Director**
Candice Crenshaw

March 12, 2026

Senate Joint Resolution 3 – Apology and Acknowledgement of the State's Responsibility in Racial Terror Lynchings Position: Support

Dear Chairperson Feldman, Vice Chairperson Kagan, and Members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

The Maryland Commission on Civil Rights (“MCCR”) is the State agency responsible for enforcing Maryland’s laws prohibiting discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, state contracts, commercial leasing, and health services based on race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, physical and mental disability, source of income, and military status.

In its Final Report issued on December 9, 2025, the Maryland Lynching Truth & Reconciliation Commission (“Commission”)¹ recommends that the Maryland General Assembly issue an official apology and acknowledge Maryland’s responsibility for the 38 documented cases of racial terror lynching in the State between 1854 and 1933. SJ3 adopts the Commission’s recommendation, issuing the first apology within Maryland for the State’s failure to address and prevent the atrocities faced by Black families and communities throughout Maryland for generations. SJ3 also commits our public policy to taking reparative actions as recommended by the Maryland Lynching Truth & Reconciliation Commission.

For these reasons, the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights urges a favorable vote on SJ3. Thank you for your time and consideration of the information contained in this letter. MCCR looks forward to the continued opportunity to work with you to promote and improve civil rights in Maryland.

¹ MCCR has served as an agency member since the Commission’s inception.

“Our vision is to have a State that is free from any trace of unlawful discrimination.”

Written Testimony In Support of Senate Joint Resol

Uploaded by: Sophie Asike

Position: FAV

**Written Testimony of the Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission
In Support of Senate Joint Resolution 3 (2026)**

Apology and Acknowledgement of the State's Responsibility in Racial Terror Lynchings

**Submitted to the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee Hearing
Date: March 12, 2026**

Submitted on behalf of: The Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission (MLTRC)

Chair Brian J. Feldman and Distinguished Members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

The Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission (MLTRC) submits this written testimony in strong support of Senate Joint Resolution 3 (SJ 3), sponsored by Senators Sydnor and Augustine. The passage of this resolution would fulfill one of the Commission's most foundational recommendations and represent a defining act of moral courage by the Maryland General Assembly.

I. The Commission's Mandate and the Final Report

The MLTRC was established in 2019 by the Maryland General Assembly as the first state-sponsored commission of its kind in the United States — charged with investigating, documenting, and reckoning with the history of racial terror lynching within Maryland's own borders. Over more than six years, the Commission held fourteen public hearings in counties across the state, examined thousands of pages of archival records, and received testimony from descendants, historians, community leaders, and advocates. The Commission's Final Report, issued in December 2025, documents the stories of 38 known victims of racial terror lynching between 1854 and 1933 and puts forward 84 recommendations for repair and reconciliation. It is a record of extraordinary scope, rigor, and moral weight.

SJ 3 is the direct legislative expression of the Commission's first and most foundational category of recommendations: *Maryland's Apology and Acknowledgment of Responsibility*. It is not incidental to the Commission's work — it is its necessary predicate.

II. What the Record Shows

The Final Report bears witness to a chapter of Maryland's history that has been too long denied. Between 1854 and 1933, Black Marylanders — many of them farmers, laborers, veterans, and fathers — were terrorized, brutalized, and murdered by white mobs, often with, at best, the negligence and, at worst, the complicity of local and state institutions. Not a single perpetrator of these 38 documented racial terror lynchings was ever held accountable.

The Final Report is unsparing in its findings:

"These crimes against humanity were not isolated acts of violence; they were part of a system designed to enforce an unfounded racial hierarchy, White power, through fear."

The Report further documents that the harms of this era did not end in 1933. The systems and structures that enabled racial terror lynching — disparities in law enforcement, economic exclusion, educational inequity, and health injustice — did not disappear. They transformed. The racial wealth gap, disproportionate incarceration rates, maternal mortality disparities, and land loss among Black families are, as the Commission found, direct descendants of the policies that racial terror lynching was designed to enforce.

The Final Report also offers this sobering reminder: there is no statute of limitations on murder. The Commission's work represents, among other things, an opportunity to investigate and address 38 open cases — crimes against humanity for which no one was ever held accountable. Delay has not diminished this harm; it has compounded it.

III. Why an Apology Is Essential

SJ 3 asks the State of Maryland to do what justice has long required: to acknowledge the truth of its history, name its complicity and negligence, and commit to reparative action. This is not a symbolic gesture divorced from consequence. It is, as the Commission's Final Report makes clear, the moral and legal foundation upon which all other repair must rest.

Acknowledgment matters for descendants, for communities, and for the integrity of our democratic institutions. The men whose names are recorded in the Final Report — John Simms, Howard Cooper, Matthew Williams, George Armwood, and 34 others — were denied due process, denied a fair trial, and denied the protection of the very government that SJ 3 now asks to account for its failures. Passing this resolution does not assign personal guilt to individual Marylanders living today. As the Chair and Vice Chair wrote, it asks only what we owe one another as members of a shared community: *acknowledgment of truth and participation in repair.*

The Commission's Final Report is unambiguous on this point:

"Accountability for these crimes cannot be limited to individual acts of violence; it must address the institutional structures and state actors who enabled, encouraged, or failed to prevent these murders."

A formal apology by the General Assembly is how Maryland's institutions begin to discharge that accountability.

IV. The Moment Calls for Action

The Commission recognized in its Final Report that Maryland faces fiscal and political challenges. It also recognized — clearly and without equivocation — that the cost of continued inaction is far greater. Lost human potential, economic inefficiency, social instability, and the compounding burden of unaddressed historical harm impose real costs on Maryland and its people. As the Chair and Vice Chair wrote:

"The question is not whether Maryland can afford to act, but whether we can afford to continue bearing the mounting costs of unaddressed historical harm."

The Commission's six years of work — its public hearings, its historical research, its engagement with descendants and communities across every region of Maryland — culminated in a Final Report and a set of 84 recommendations that chart a clear path forward. SJ 3 is where that path begins. It is the act that makes all subsequent repair possible. As the Chair and Vice Chair concluded:

"The choice before us is not whether to pay for the past, but whether to invest in a future worthy of our highest values."

V. Conclusion

The Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission respectfully and strongly urges this Committee to support and advance Senate Joint Resolution 3. Passage of this resolution would honor the courage of those who survived and witnessed racial terror in Maryland, restore dignity to the 38 known victims and the countless others whose names are lost to time, and fulfill the promise that motivated the creation of this Commission: that Maryland would reckon honestly with its history in pursuit of justice, healing, and reconciliation.

May truth remain our guide, justice our practice, reconciliation our legacy, and peace our goal.

Submitted on behalf of the Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Dr. David O. Fakunle, Chair

Dr. Charles L. Chavis, Jr., Vice Chair

Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission

For questions regarding this testimony, please contact Dr. David O. Fakunle at david.fakunle@morgan.edu.

SJ0003.FAV.MCCRR.pdf

Uploaded by: Stephanie Joseph

Position: FAV



March 10, 2026

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman, Chair
The Honorable Cheryl C. Kagan, Vice Chair
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Maryland General Assembly
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chairman Feldman and Vice Chair

Montgomery County's Commission on Remembrance and Reconciliation urges you and your committee colleagues to vote in favor of Senate Joint Resolution 3, which calls on the State of Maryland to apologize for its role in racial terror lynchings across the state.

At least three lynchings – acts of racial terror – were perpetrated in Montgomery County, Md., against Mr. George W. Peck on January 10, 1880; Mr. John Diggs-Dorsey on July 24, 1880; and Mr. Sidney Randolph on July 4, 1896. This traumatic violence, coupled with a long and persistent pattern of racial discrimination across the County and throughout the State of Maryland, created an environment where African Americans were treated as inferior citizens.

Before the Civil War, the County had long been home to thousands of enslaved individuals, and its economy benefited from the exploitation of their labor. Following emancipation, segregation was enforced in schools, public facilities, and housing. Covenants and zoning plans were adopted to separate African Americans and White people, while unequal and inferior public services were provided to African American neighborhoods and residents.

That history, even from the County's most distant past, created inequalities and disparities that still appear in Montgomery County's social, economic and political landscape today.

Montgomery County's Commission on Remembrance and Reconciliation, created in 2019 by the County Council and still managed by the County Government, has a mandate to promote better recognition and understanding of that complex history – principally through public commemoration of the lives and murders of Mr. Peck, Mr. Diggs-Dorsey and Mr. Randolph. Also, drawing on these lessons, the Commission encourages a variety of reconciliation activities enabling County residents to build a better future.

In the spirit of reconciliation, the Commission therefore strongly urges the adoption of Senate Joint Resolution 3, which apologizes for Maryland's role in racial terror lynchings. Such an apology is an essential first step in any effort to transcend the unfortunate legacy we have inherited from those who came before us, and enables us and those who come after, to shape a new and better path forward.

Respectfully submitted,

Montgomery County's Commission on Remembrance and Reconciliation
c/o Montgomery County Office of Human Rights
21 Maryland Avenue, Suite 330
Rockville, Maryland.

2026_03_12 Racial Terror Lynchings Apology.pdf

Uploaded by: Tiffany Clark

Position: FAV

CAROLYN A. QUATTROCKI
Chief Deputy Attorney General

LEONARD J. HOWIE III
Deputy Attorney General

CARRIE J. WILLIAMS
Deputy Attorney General

SHARON S. MERRIWEATHER
Deputy Attorney General

ZENITA WICKHAM HURLEY
Deputy Attorney General



PETER V. BERNS
General Counsel

CHRISTIAN E. BARRERA
Chief of Staff

STATE OF MARYLAND
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

ANTHONY G. BROWN
Attorney General

March 12, 2026

TO: The Honorable Brian Feldman
Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

FROM: Tiffany Clark
Director, Legislative Affairs, Office of the Attorney General

RE: Senate Joint Resolution 3 – Apology and Acknowledgement of the State's
Responsibility in Racial Terror Lynchings (Support)

The Office of the Attorney General (OAG) supports Senate Joint Resolution 3 – Apology and Acknowledgement of the State's Responsibility in Racial Terror Lynchings. Senate Joint Resolution 3 formally apologizes for Maryland's role in 38 documented acts of racial terror lynching between 1854 and 1933, acknowledges the State's complicity in those crimes (including the failure of government entities to protect Black Marylanders, pass anti-lynching legislation, or hold perpetrators accountable), and commits the State to taking reparative actions as recommended by the Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

This resolution directly supports the OAG's commitment to equal justice, civil rights, and the restoration of public trust in government institutions. The 14th and 15th Amendment violations the resolution acknowledges, including the denial of equal protection, due process, and voting rights, are not merely historical wrongs. They are part of the constitutional foundation the OAG is charged with upholding and defending every day. A formal apology from the General Assembly affirms that commitment and signals to Black Marylanders that the State takes both the harms of the past and its obligations in the present seriously.

We also recognize the importance of this resolution emerging directly from the work of the Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission, whose findings and 84 recommendations provide a rigorous evidentiary foundation for the State's acknowledgment of responsibility. The Commission's process reflects the kind of deliberate, community-rooted

accountability that is essential to genuine reconciliation. We encourage the General Assembly to carry that momentum forward by moving expeditiously to implement the Commission's recommendations.

We appreciate Senators Sydnor and Augustine's leadership on this resolution and welcome the opportunity to share our perspective. For the foregoing reasons, the Office of the Attorney General respectfully urges the Committee to give Senate Joint Resolution 3 a favorable report.

Cc: Members of the Committee

Letter of Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Trish Floyd

Position: FAV

Written Testimony in Support of Senate Joint Resolution 3

Apology and Acknowledgement of the State's Responsibility in Racial Terror Lynchings

My name is Trish Floyd, and I respectfully submit this testimony in support of Senate Joint Resolution 3.

From December 2023 through April 2025, I had the honor of serving as the Project Manager for the Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission. In this role, I worked closely with commissioners, researchers, community members, and families as the state undertook the important task of confronting the history of racial terror lynchings across Maryland.

During this time, I witnessed firsthand the profound impact this history continues to have on communities throughout the state. The Commission held hearings and listening sessions across Maryland where individuals came forward to share deeply personal testimony. These testimonies came from many perspectives, including descendants of victims as well as descendants of those connected to the perpetrators. Despite the different backgrounds of those who testified, one message remained remarkably consistent.

Families of victims repeatedly shared that no formal apology from the State of Maryland had ever been given to them or to their ancestors. For many, this absence of acknowledgment has prolonged generational pain and left families feeling that their loved ones' suffering was never formally recognized by the institutions responsible for protecting their lives.

Listening to these stories was both humbling and sobering. Many descendants spoke about how the trauma of racial terror lynchings continues to echo through generations. Others described how the silence surrounding these events created a void where justice and recognition should have been.

The Commission's work made clear that acknowledgement matters. A formal apology from the state is not simply symbolic. It is a meaningful step toward recognizing historical truth, honoring the victims, and affirming the dignity of the families who have carried these stories for generations.

Senate Joint Resolution 3 represents an important moment for Maryland. By acknowledging the state's responsibility and issuing a formal apology for racial terror lynchings, the General Assembly affirms that these acts were grave injustices and that the lives lost deserve remembrance and respect.

Having witnessed the courage of those who shared their stories before the Commission, I believe strongly that this resolution is a necessary step in the ongoing work of truth, reconciliation, and healing in our state.

I respectfully urge the members of the General Assembly to support Senate Joint Resolution 3.

Sincerely,

Trish Floyd

Former Project Manager

Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission

December 2023 through April 2025

SJ 003_HB 008_ Apology and Acknowledgement of the

Uploaded by: Trudy Tibbals

Position: UNF

SJ 003/HB 008: Apology and Acknowledgement of the State's Responsibility in Racial Terror Lynchings: Please vote to **OPPOSE** this bill.

Dear Education, Energy & the Environment Committee and Rules and Executive Nominations Committee:

I am writing to strongly urge you to **OPPOSE SJ 003/HB 008** during committee consideration or floor votes.

SJ 003/HB 008's language of "the State's responsibility" implies direct, institutional culpability in lynchings and racial terror acts. Attributing collective, institutional guilt to the modern State of Maryland for actions of private citizens or failures of prior eras unfairly stigmatizes current Maryland residents and institutions that had no part in those events.

Official state apologies for specific historical injustices should be reserved for clear, documented instances of state-sponsored or state-directed wrongs. Broadly declaring the State responsible for private racial terror acts opens the door to endless, selective resolutions that divide Marylanders along racial lines, rather than unite Marylanders.

This resolution does not advance concrete justice or education about history. It is symbolic, politically charged, and likely to be perceived by many as an attempt to assign inherited guilt rather than foster shared understanding or practical solutions to present-day challenges.

Maryland should focus on forward-looking policies that promote equality, opportunity, and safety for all residents—without symbolic gestures that inflame division and assign collective blame across generations.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask you to **vote against SJ 003/HB 008**.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration of my concerns regarding this historical and social policy matter.

Sincerely,

Trudy Tibbals